CURRY COUNTY NEWS

WILD RIVERS COAST REVIEW

SPRING 2015

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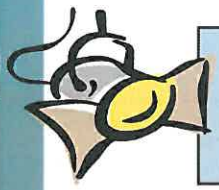
New Commissioner on Board

The New Year brought a new County Commissioner to the Curry County Board of Commissioners. Thomas Huxley defeated incumbent David Itzen in the November election to serve a four year term as a County Commissioner.

Huxley joined his fellow Commissioners, David Brock Smith and Susan Brown, in setting goals for 2015. His primary goals are listed as follows: website redesign, audio/video equipment for public meetings, redesign and/or create County procedures for the submission of documents that require the Board of Commissioners' approval, and expense reporting. He also listed 911 consolidation, digitizing the county fee schedule, update the public records policy, support the recruitment of volunteers to collate the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Codes and updates to the Commissioners' Journal.



County Spotlight:

County Task Force Talks Fiber

In 2013 approval was given to start a task force to look at ways to take advantage of any opportunities associated with the then new fiber optic loop. That loop allowed Curry County to connect with the rest of the world and opened up possibilities for job growth. This spring the Strategic Technology and Economic Development Task Force was finalized and members began work immediately on how to use the fiber to the county's benefit. It was soon realized a call center could easily be established and employ low skill labor. Other ideas considered by the task force were the possibility of a data center, and a need to promote the county to people that can work remotely from their home. Although the group is not done meeting, their research and ideas are inspiring! Imagine the possibilities...

What's it Worth?

The May ballot will pose a familiar question to voters—will they support a tax levy? This year though there's a new Sheriff in town, and things could be different.

John Ward was sworn in as the new County Sheriff this past fall. In an effort to help fund his department and the county jail, Ward requested the following be posed to voters: A proposed three year local option tax provides funding that can only be used for Sheriff's Office purposes. It will provide for Jail Operations and 24/7 Patrol Services. In addition, it will provide funding for: Dispatch, 911, Criminal Investigations, Crime Prevention, Search & Rescue, Marine Patrol, Civil Process, Drug Enforcement/Prevention/ Education, Traffic Safety, Adult Parole/ Probation, Wild Land Fire/ Tsunami Evacuations and Emergency Services.

This measure proposes split rates. While the Sheriff's Office services benefit all residents, the taxpayers in Brookings, Gold Beach and Port Orford will pay a lower rate because cities fund police departments and patrol officers. This proposed local option tax is estimated to raise $5,240,000 in 2015-16, $5,400,000 in 2016-17, and $5,560,000 in 2017-18. Tax cost's for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based upon the best information available from the County Assessor at the time of the estimate.

The Board of Commissioners will annually review this tax, considering any Federal Safety Net payments received, in consultation with the Sheriff's Citizens Advisory Group for recommendations on reducing future amounts levied.

And the Survey Says...

It was the talk of the town for over a year, and the results are finally in! Two years ago the idea of a community survey was introduced to the public. The survey occurred this winter, with the results tallied this spring. Highlights and some comments include:

* **Encourage new business. Does not require funding it. Just encourage it, so they pay taxes too.**
* **Address tax. Everyone who receives mail and has an address should be taxed.**
* **Change council members to volunteer position instead of paying them $68,000 a year.**
* **Do what needs to be done. Lead. Educate.**
* **Work together! Get over your differences!**

The Curry County Citizen's survey was open for input November through December 2014.

Curry County children help plant a redwood sapling at a county campground in the mountains east of Gold Beach OR.

Jurassic Event at County Park

They stood in the wet grass, silently. He had made a circle, ninety-five feet in circumference, with bright white rope which contrasted brilliantly on the grassy meadow. They stood there, around the circle, almost touching hands with each other. A feeling of pride rushed over those that were part of the historical event. It was almost magical how one small tree commanded an endless ring of children, strangers, friends, co-workers, and County Commissioners—all of which set differences aside to be part of the overwhelming circle of unity.

The circle represented how large the tree they were about to plant could become. The on-lookers stood still in awe; this was unheard of. But they planted the little sapling, and about a dozen more, knowing each had the potential to grow to be a giant the guests would personally never witness, but people who had no idea they were there, would someday enjoy.

"We found the largest stump we could find—it was over 32 feet in diameter—and we took DNA from it. We cloned it to start a new generation of giant Redwoods", explained Terry Mock of the Ancient Tree Archive Organization and Port Orford land owner. And with that the politicians shoveled the first scoop of freshly uncovered soil back into the hole where the unique little tree was to take root. One by one children came forward and tossed a handful of dirt in the hole. And so began the life of the Redwoods at Lobster Creek County Park on March 1, 2015.

Oregon planning goals encourage government to partner with non-profit and other organizations to help meet state planning goals. Re-populating the coast with Redwoods helps meet sustainability goals, bank carbon for use as a future fossil fuel, and encourage green-land management. Trees safely capture and store excess carbon dioxide from our atmosphere, and give off oxygen required by all living things. Trees regulate our climate, clean our water, provide habitat, foods, and perform many other essential life-sustaining functions.

National Arbor Day is April 24, 2015.

Business Spotlight:

Agates Food & Bar

460 Madrona St., Port Orford, OR 97465

541-332-4515

Agates Food and Bar opened for business in early February 2015.

WildSpring.com notes that Agates has "a modern take on coastal comfort food. Not-your-typical entrees, plus pasta, salads, burgers, wings, homemade pizza (with handmade crust made from special Italian pizza flour!) and desserts."

They open at 7:00 a.m. and serve breakfast all day all.

Sicilian Style Tuna Burger made from Locally sourced Port Orford Sustainable Seafood Albacore Tuna

Controversy or Conversation?

Can industrial hemp add volume to what is processed in our sawmills, add jobs, and be socially acceptable?

Industrial hemp has an outer bark that contains long, tough fibers similar to wood fibers. Industrial hemp fibers are used in hemp rope and clothing. Inside the bark is a stalk with short fibers. The short fibers can be used for particle board, pet bedding and plastics.

Oregon recently issued its first Industrial Hemp License. According to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), "While industrial hemp, as defined in Oregon Statutes, is arguably a safe crop, growing or handling it is still classified by the federal government as illegal. The goal of ODA and the Rules Advisory Committee was to write regulations that met state laws, in a manner tolerated by federal enforcement agencies".

Industrial hemp comes in different varieties, but typically requires a lot of moisture for growing. The plant prefers a well-drained loam soil; neutral to slightly alkaline is preferred. A favorable climate would have 10-13" of rainfall. Too much water, especially at a young age, can stunt plant growth.

The Last, but not least — Hurrah!

Oregon's unemployment rate peaked in May, 2009 at 11.9 percent. In January, 2015, the rate was almost half—unemployment was at 6.3 percent. January employment was 3.3 percent higher than the previous January. For the fourth time in five months more than 6,000 jobs were added. In addition to the state's continued growth in employment, the mild winter weather allowed outdoor jobs to flourish, whereas normally outdoor related workers would be off the job during the winter months.

Just for Fun: What's In a Name?

The historical community of Eckley (also known as Eckely) is gone but would have been located within present day Curry County, Oregon. Eckley was 480 feet above sea level and its geographical coordinates were 42° 50' 20" North, 124° 11' 0" West. Langlois is located 14 miles to the west northwest from Eckley. It was described in the Rand McNally Atlas as having a post office and no railroad service.