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Little Ones!
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Bridge Replacement Detailed, Explained

By TOM BURNETT
Of The Star

Construction details and the answer to “how will it work” were answered last week when those responsible for building a new bridge across the tracks on Highway 53/41 met the public during an open session at Rathdrum City Hall.

Justin Wuest, project manager with the Idaho Transportation Department continually outlined plans for the \$6.2 million bridge as some 50 interested citizens came-and-went during the 90-minute public session.

Several maps, projections and cut-away drawings lent credibility as Wuest explained how all traffic patterns will remain somewhat the same while the “new” span is being constructed. Once the first two lanes – of the planned four new traffic lanes – are completed, traffic will be rerouted onto the new lanes and the existing two lanes removed.

Construction is thought to begin next summer.

Removal of the existing traffic lanes, he admitted “is

will separate the walkways from the traffic lanes while a wrought iron fence will serve as the outermost guardrail.

The new span will be twice as long as the current 126-foot long bridge and measure 74 feet wide against the 44-foot wide bridge of today. The new span will be seven higher.

The current bridge was built in 1936. A casual observation of the bridge reveals exposed framework and broken-away cement as the 75-year-old bridge is showing its age.

The new one, according to its designer, is being built to “last forever!”

Funding for the \$6.2 million project is coming, largely from funds previously earmarked for the now-shelved, mega-million-dollar Bridging the Valley project.

Planning, design and engineering along with associated detail work for the new bridge, Wuest said, represented “just about a year” in the making. After ITD staff completed their portion of the

‘Good News’ for M. Evarts, Bike Rider

Good news has come Matt Evarts’ way!

He’s the guy that a couple months back set out to ride his hand-me-down bicycle 1,000 miles to Boise just to prove “I could do it.” The 30-year-old outgoing individual suffers from astrocytoma, a form of cancer that attaches itself to one’s brain – and is generally inoperable.

Everts’ tumor grew to roughly the size of a softball and was beginning to affect his memory, behavior, speech and other motor functions.

Last Friday, skilled surgeons at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle worked six hours on Evarts and the conclusion was that “they say they got all the tumor,” reported his grandmother, Margaret Evarts of Post Falls.

“He’ll be in the hospital another five days before he can return home in Rathdrum. We all are so thankful...”

Before the operation and not one to give up easily, the Lakeland High School graduate vowed “to live life to the fullest – at least as best I can. I simply want to prove to myself, first, and to others, the importance of not giving up, not throwing in the towel.”

So, in early October, Evarts packed what he could carry on his bike and headed for Highway 95 and to Boise. He got as far as the infamous Lewiston grade, when...

“I got to going pretty fast and reached for the front handbrake to slow down. The brakes locked,” he said, sending him sailing over the handlebars and head-first onto the pavement.

Injuries included cuts, scrapes and bruises to his head, back, arms and stomach. A helmet lessened what could have been a severe head injury, he said.

The bike didn’t fare as well as Evarts explained how both wheels were bent beyond use, the handlebars twisted and the overall future of his two-wheeler in serious doubt.

“Tossed it in the bushes and hitchhiked home,” he said.

“Haven’t given up on my ambition,” he said before the operation.

To try the journey again... come spring, he reported.

Veterans Day Remembered...

A stirring, albeit sparsely attended celebration at Pinegrove Cemetery Friday morning topped off a week of Veterans Day activities which included an equally emotional assembly at Lakeland High School earlier in the day.

Meanwhile, assemblies were staged at John Brown, Betty Kiefer, Twin Lakes, Garwood and Spirit Lake Elementary Schools last Wednesday – many with brief talks from the young students on what America means to them. Several veterans were in attendance at each function, adding a “real” image to their testimonials.

In his keynote address before a packed gymnasium at the high school, Dustin Franz likened the day to the nation’s 35th president, John F. Kennedy.

“Probably his most honored statement, ‘Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country,’ is as important today as it was in the 1960s.

“Don’t expect a free lunch out there; but give a free lunch,” Franz said. “Go out and do for others.

“This nation is spending billions of dollars to make the lives better for so many others.”

Several hands went up when the speaker asked “How many of you know” what’s currently happening on Wall Street – that those protestors are demanding employers create more jobs.

Jobs, he said, should include innovators, strong political figures, leaders; “People to do things. People willing to give of themselves for a better world...”

“Remember that what you give out will come back to you...”



Veteran Butch Bickford salutes during last Friday’s Veterans Day ceremony at Pinegrove Cemetery. Additional Veterans Days pictures on Pages 4 and 5.



Justin Wuest, project manager with the Idaho Department of Transportation talks with an interested citizen last week during ITD’s public hearing dealing with the proposed new bridge over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway tracks on the Highway 53/41 overpass.

somewhat a delicate process as it has to be coordinated with the railroad.” Small pieces of broken concrete which could fall on the tracks would be no match against a huge diesel locomotive, while larger chunks of debris “could.”

Actual demolition, he added, must occur quickly as holding up rail traffic is “something worth avoiding.”

Once completed – estimated at “just about a year” – the new bridge will be four lanes wide with 10-foot wide pedestrian walkways on either side. A concrete barrier

project, “a battery” of engineers with Burlington Northern Santa Fe “took a crack at the project,” politely indicating railroad people were not the quickest.

Meanwhile, another public session – totally unrelated from the bridge project – is scheduled for tonight (Wednesday) when the ITD listens to suggestions on improving traffic safety along Highway 53 from Stateline to Highway 95. The sessions are planned for 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at Hauser City Hall and from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Rathdrum City Hall.

Voters Return Incumbents

Rathdrum voters returned Vic Holmes to the city’s top job for the coming four years while voting their approval of his first four years as mayor, 478 votes to 285 over his opponent businessman Kevin Randles.

Voters also returned Debbie Holmes to her position on the City Council in a victory over write-in candidate Len Newton, 632 votes to 67. Councilman Fred Meckel received 661 votes in his uncontested campaign to retain

his 4-year council seat.

Meanwhile, Spirit Lake Council members Diane E. Berg and Gary Ventress received 50 and 69 votes respectively in their bids to retain position on the City Council. Rosemary Wheaton garnered 39 votes in her challenge for a council position.

Bill Erickson was elected to a 2-year term, receiving 88 votes. He ran unopposed.

In the Hauser Lake election, both incumbent Councilmen Roger Lefebvre and

Gary Mallon were elected with 22 and 20 votes respectively.

Following what he termed “a challenging election,” Mayor Holmes said he “was pleased, in fact very pleased with the outcome. Mr. Randles staged a good campaign and seemed to work very hard during his campaign.

“Meanwhile, I have to view my victory as an indication the people liked what they saw these past four
See VOTE Page 3

Need a Locally-Made Gift? Check With Elsie...

Just do as she says...

Exactly 2.6 miles up Hidden Valley Road to Song Bird Road and turn right, “and there we are.”

Or, follow the many way-finding red and white Christmas canes that dot the route to her rural setting.

In her living room, her dining room and in her kitchen, Elsie Harvey is offering one of the nicest arrays of holiday gifts, all handcrafted by 27 local artists and all priced very affordably.

On this table are hand-embroidered dish towels for \$5 each, and over there, cute little Santa pins for five bucks while a local artist, Cecil, is offering the most unusual jewelry made of bullet shells for \$5 up to \$30. A knit cap and scarf set is priced at \$10.

On another table, offerings include hand-crafted sportsmen knives from \$130 to \$180. Another display features attractive bell chimes made of discarded oxygen tanks for \$180 give-or-take a few dollars.

In her words, “I do this every year – this is my eighth – just because I truly enjoy local artists and being able to give them a location to offer their crafts during the holiday season,” Ms. Harvey said last week.

“I used to attend craft shows and get a chance to talk with the artists; but not so much anymore. I have my favorites and I’ll call them each year, simply to tell them to bring an assortment of their handiwork – and they do!”

Several artists, she said, have maintained booths at past Farmers Markets.

“I still, however, maintain my notebook, ‘Artists to Know’, where I keep track of

my many artist friends.

Harvey charges nothing for her time, her location or her efforts. Her holiday shopping “center” is open from early November through the holiday season.

“I’m here every day except for church on Sunday. Whatever price the artists put on their items is what I charge the buyers – I keep nothing.”

She does, however, offer her pressed floral art for sale, also at a very reasonable price considering the time and effort that goes into each piece.

On another shelf are several jars of jams and jellies she makes herself.

“Funny thing, though,”

See GIFTS Page 3



Elsie Harvey opens her home to Holiday arts and craft shoppers.