



# Linn County NEWS



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## Commissioners hear Harrisburg area land use request

ALBANY — Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker will decide whether a piece of property on the Linn and Lane county line near Harrisburg should be rezoned from Farm/Forest to Non-Resource 5-acre minimum on Nov. 23.

The commissioners held a public hearing about the issue Tuesday morning at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center. The Planning Commission has already given its approval.

James Olsen and family owned 67.1 acres south of Mt. Tom Drive about 7 ½ miles southeast of Harrisburg. The Linn and Lane county line borders the property's southern boundary line. The property is part of a 290 acre parcel, but according to Olsen and his representative, this portion of the property is conducive to crop production.

Olsen said both sides of his family have farmed in the Willamette Valley since the 1800s — from Salem to Halsey and Brownsville to Corvallis — and they have knowledge about numerous forms of crop production.

Olsen said the family has tried to grow cannabis and grapes on the parcel and both crops failed. He said the ground would only yield about \$5 per acre if rented out for pasture.

Attorney Joel Kalberer of Albany remind-

ed the commissioners the application is for a rezoning and not for development of a subdivision at this time. He noted there already is a subdivision near the north side of the property.

He said the property's potential to support a tree farm "is exceptionally low", and an independent agronomist noted it is not suited for crop production.

Opponents of the proposal said they are concerned that a housing subdivision could negatively effect water wells; lead to groundwater contamination and possibly pollute Coleman Creek which flows into Muddy Creek leading to riparian issues; create conflicts with cattle ranchers in the area and pose accessibility issues concerning police, fire and ambulance services.

Some neighbors said they are already seeing production from their water wells decreasing due to climate change.

The commissioners said they will keep the record open for written comment for two weeks and allow four more weeks for the give and take of the land use process. The commissioners will hold another public hearing at 10:15 a.m. on Nov. 23 at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center to render a decision.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved a temporary easement for \$2,190 with Shonda Warner of Osprey Corner LLC for the construction of the Folsom Road, Mill Creek Bridge project.
- Approved a letter of support so the Road Department can apply for a grant from the Oregon Federal Lands Access Program. If successful, the \$4.38 million grant will be used to improve five single-lane bridges on Upper Calapooia Drive south of Sweet Home as part of a road improvement project. The road provides access to 7,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service lands and almost 1,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land.
- Approved a request by John Pascone, manager of the Linn County Enterprise Zone, to add 98 acres owned by Knife River to the Linn County Enterprise Zone. The company has constructed an employee training center on Kennel Road and is bringing in people from across the country. Being part of the Enterprise Zone will provide the company with tax incentives due to the addition of new jobs in the county.

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By Alex Paul  
Communications Officer

**C**LEAR LAKE — The sound of hammers at work filled the air on a recent cool summer day at Clear Lake Resort as staff and volunteers with HistoriCorps made repairs to the log picnic shelter that has stood through rain and snow for more than 90 years.

A Civilian Conservation Corps project from the 1930s, the shelter is showing its age.

It now boasts a new hand-split cedar shake roof, a refurbished lava stone fireplace and some new logs to replace those that had been battered by time.

Jason Benson, who hails from northwest Washington, and Remy Buxton of Corvallis, are the only paid staff members on this project. The others over coming weeks are all volunteers.

Benson has been fixing up old things since he was 5 years old and helped his parents rehabilitate a 1914 farm. He earned a degree in botany, did trail work and then became a preservationist with the National Park Service. He has been restoring historic structures up and down the West Coast for 20 years.

Benson said he is a “carpenter/preservationist” and this is his first season with the program.

Buxton loves being in the outdoors, for work or pleasure.

He has a degree in anthropology from the University of Georgia at Athens and joined HistoriCorps in 2021 after volunteering in 2020.

Recent volunteers included Eric Acosta, Jeunilyan Stenske and David Freeman with Northwest Youth Corps in Eugene.

HistoriCorps spokeswoman Charlotte Helmer said HistoriCorps’ mission is to inspire a preservation ethic by en-



*HistoriCorps staff member Jason Benson, left, talks about the Clear Lake picnic shelter project with Linn County Parks Director Brian Carroll.*

gaging volunteers to save historic places.

“We prioritize experiential, hands-on learning above all else,” Helmer said.

The program relies on a small cadre of paid staff members and a large contingent of volunteers across all age groups and possessing a variety of skill levels.

The concept for HistoriCorps sprang from a project to restore building in the Pike-San Isabel National Forest from 2002-2007.

In 2009 the U.S. Forest Service approached the Colorado Preservation Inc. with the idea of forming a “corps” much like the original Civilian Conservation Corps and since then dozens of special places have been saved for future generations.

Helmer said HistoriCorps works like a traveling road show, pop-

## About HistoriCorps

- People from all walks of life can volunteer with HistoriCorps.
- No prior construction experience is necessary, but it helps to have a positive attitude and a strong work ethic.
- Projects range in skill levels and degree of difficulty, from easy to difficult, so participants can choose for themselves.
- HistoriCorps provides meals, lodging, tools, training, safety equipment and materials.
- Lodging ranges from tent camping to indoor facilities.
- Travel and access information is available for each project — some projects can only be reached by hiking) or by four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Learn more about HistoriCorps by watching the documentary, “Saving Places”, call 720-287-0100 or visit <https://historicorps.org/>.

ping up on public lands across the

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country every year.

“Each project is made possible by government partners, generous donors, and passionate volunteers,” Helmer said.

The restoration of Clear Lake picnic shelter involves the Willamette Na-