

\$1.50



Rotary Oktoberfest
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BRIAN WILSON/THE STAR NEWS

Medford Area Senior High teacher Doug Eichman helps his students raise a wall section of the new concession stand at Raider Field. With the help of local contractors, the students are building the structure as a class project. They plan to have the building enclosed before winter and do interior work at that time. The building will have a metal exterior matching the existing team building.

Making a change

Medford School Board chooses Security over Aspirus for cost saving

BY BRIAN WILSON
NEWS EDITOR

Employee health insurance at Medford Area Public Schools will be through Security Health Plan beginning January 1.

At Monday night's regular school board meeting, board members voted to make the change from Aspirus and in the process save the district more than \$100,000 compared to the renewal rate from Aspirus.

The school district's annual health insurance premium is \$7.29 million. According to district administrator Pat Sullivan, the budget approved at the district's annual meeting last month included a 10% increase. Minus the portion of the premium paid by staff members, the district projected to pay about \$639,000 more in premiums in 2023 based on the 10% increase.

Sullivan said things came in better than that. Aspirus presented a renewal rate of 7% (\$447,000 in premium cost) and Security Health Plan affiliated

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County looks at borrowing for budget

Would use short-term borrowing to exceed levy cap, close budget hole

BY BRIAN WILSON
NEWS EDITOR

Taylor County is looking at a combination of cutting costs, increasing revenues, applying fund balance and utilizing short term borrowing for capital projects to bring its 2023 budget into balance.

At Monday's budget review session, county finance director Larry Brandl laid out a plan that he said would still result in an overall tax rate decrease while ensuring the county had the ability to maintain services. State law caps the amount county boards can increase the levy to the percentage of increase in new growth in the county. However, the law exempts debt service payments from that cap and many other counties have utilized short-term debt as a way to meet budget needs.

While common in other counties, this is new territory for Taylor County which has traditionally favored cuts or

only allowed narrow levy increases.

"It is a tool in the toolbox and we have to take advantage of it sooner or later," said committee chairman Chuck Zenner. While acknowledging that cutting costs has its place, he said it can only go so far.

"Even if you cut a lot of services this year, where will you be next year? You can't keep cutting," Zenner said.

Brandl said there is a lot he has to research checking with the county's financial advisors, auditors and bond counsel about what kind of impact it will have. He noted that while this would be new

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Pat Sullivan

Page 9: Area veterans receive quilts



SPORTS: Area volleyball action continues



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