

# Linn County commissioners approve \$10 million grant for intermodal facility

ALBANY — At their Tuesday morning meeting, Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker approved a \$10 million grant for the intermodal project under construction in Millersburg using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act.

Board Chair Nyquist said that when the Oregon Department of Transportation commissioners approved providing \$25 million for the facility in 2019, they could not foresee the COVID-19 pandemic, nor its effects on construction costs and market conditions.

The grant was made to the Albany-Millersburg Economic Development Corporation/Linn Economic Development Group.

The commissioners agreed that the project is important to the local economy and will allow local businesses — especially those that are agriculturally oriented — to move their products to ports more efficiently and decrease truck congestion in metro areas.

The intermodal facility will allow producers to drop shipping containers in Millersburg, where they will be loaded onto trains for shipment to northern ports.

Linn County was chosen from a field of eight applicants for the project supported by the Oregon Transportation Commission. A similar facility will be constructed in Nyssa in eastern Oregon.

The local facility plans to be operating by late January 2022.

Linn County purchased the 190-acre site which had been idle for many years from International Paper and then sold 60 acres to AMEDC for the intermodal project. The county plans to develop the other 130 acres as an industrial park.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Were told by Linn County Health

Officer William Muth that the number of COVID-19 cases is increasing nationwide to the point hospitals are concerned about bed capacities. Some hospitals have already begun postponing elective surgeries. Muth said the number of cases are “skyrocketing.” He said Linn County is experiencing a spike in daily cases, 47 on average recently, with a high of 84 one day. Muth said that although the majority of new cases are among unvaccinated individuals, the number of breakthrough cases — among people who have been vaccinated — is also increasing. Samaritan Health Services has 38 hospitalized cases — 24 in Corvallis, five in Albany, six in Lebanon, two in Newport and one in Lincoln City.

- Learned there were 62 births — 34 girls and 28 boys — and 134 deaths last month in the county.
- Were told there were 10 cases of syphilis last month and the number continues to increase locally and statewide.
- Began discussions about possibly creating the position of Land Use Hearings Officer that would replace the Board of Commissioners when making final local decisions about land use issues.
- Approved a contract for \$99,995 with McClinton Painting of Albany to paint the Linn County Expo Center. The last time the facility was painted was in 2005. Also bidding was Fitzpatrick Painting, \$102,960. The project is to begin immediately and to be completed by the end of October.
- Set a public hearing for 10 a.m. on Sept. 7 so the city of Millersburg can petition to reassign the entire city to the Albany Ambulance Service Area 1.

- Approved an agreement to provide practicum learning experiences for students in the master’s degree level of social work programs at Capella University and approved an agreement with Linn-Benton Community College to provide practicum experience for nursing students.
- Approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Health Authority to provide Linn County with TORT liability coverage as a provider for the Psychiatric Security Review Board.
- Approved receiving funding from the Oregon Department of Human Services so the county can provide supported employment for clients working with Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- Approved an intergovernmental agreement with Benton County to provide each other with back up services from each county’s Public Health Medical Director. Benton County will pay Linn County \$120 per hour and Linn County will pay Benton County \$125 per hour.
- Approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Health Authority to fund the Parent Child Interaction Therapy Services program for children ages 2 through 6. The agreement is not to exceed \$126,300.

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