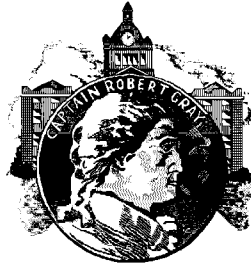


Department of Public Services

Phone: 360-249-4222

Fax: 360-249-3203



100 West Broadway; Suite 31
Montesano, Washington 98563
www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us

GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

STATE OF WASHINGTON

February 14, 2011

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive S.W.
P. O. Box 47250
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

Attn: David Donner
Executive Director and Secretary

RE: TR-110157- Hewitt Street (USDOT #096647C)
TR-110162- North 17th Street (USDOT #096641X)

Dear Mr. Donner:

Grays Harbor County does not support the petitions seeking to close these two railroad crossings.

These roads provide access to areas with the potential for development. The traffic volumes will increase in the future.

These roads provide the most direct route for many existing homes, businesses and services. They also provide an alternative access for emergency services when long trains block adjacent crossings. Both of these crossings are 90° crossings whereas the adjacent crossings are angled.

Grays Harbor County requests your support in opposing these petitions. I am attaching a recent article from the Montesano Vidette concerning these proposed closures.

Sincerely,

Russell D. Esses, P.E.

County Road Engineer

RDE/tab

2011 FEB 15 PM 9:50

The Vidette

The voice of Elma since 1883

75 CENTS



ONLINE — WWW.THEVIDETTE.COM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2011



Elma to districts

Lady Eagles soar over competition to qualify, B-1

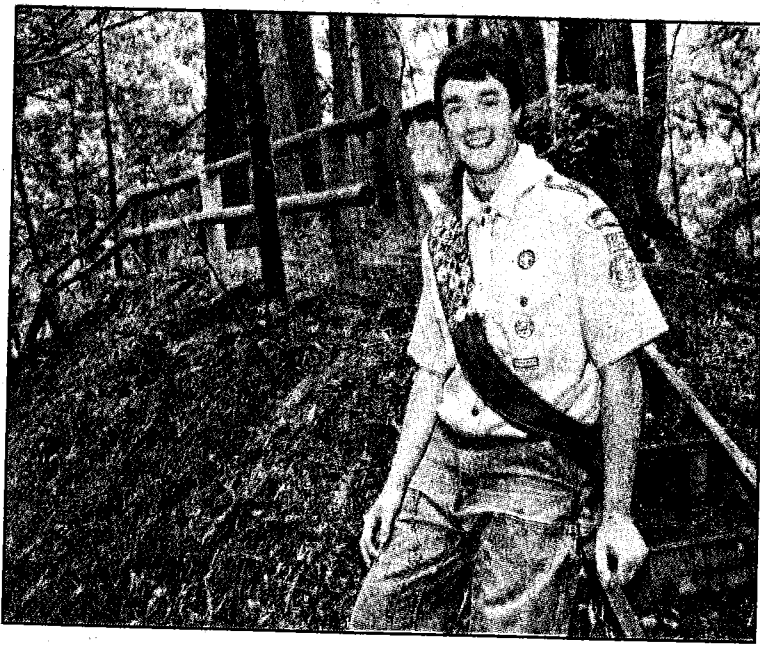
I	Calendar	A-2
N	Opinion	A-4
D	Columnists	A-5
E	Valentine's Day	A-6, 7
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	Flashback	A-10
	Schools & Clubs	A-12
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County Eagle Scouts



ler



Contributed

Jesse Latch of Montesano led an effort to improve a trail at Lake Sylvia State Park to earn his Eagle Scout rank.



1



Train plan miffs Elma

Proposed closures not well received

BY TOMMI HALVORSEN GATLIN
Vidette Reporter

ELMA — The Elma City Council was no happier Monday at the suggestion of closing several street crossings to accommodate train traffic than when the issue arose last spring.

The Puget Sound & Pacific Railroad, headquartered in Elma, has petitioned

See Train on A-3

Audit finds police fraud

Auditor's Office agrees with WSP

BY LEIF NESHEIM
Vidette Editor

MONTESANO — A state fraud investigation found evidence of misappropriation in the city's police department too.

Virek
2/18/11

FROM THE FRONT

Train:

Continued from A-1

the regulatory state Utilities and Transportation Commission to close three crossings inside Elma and another the city shares with Grays Harbor County.

The council directed a letter be sent strongly opposing closures of any crossing at North Second, North Fifth and North 10th streets, as well as North 17th Street bordering the town.

A train on the east-west tracks through town can cut off some 500 residents on the north side. Because emergency vehicles would be blocked from getting to a fire or person in medical distress on that side, the city for a while explored building a substation on that side.

Residents have also expressed deep displeasure at being blocked when trains have stopped, sometimes for more than an hour, though that's improved since a public meeting

on those concerns last May. But train traffic from the Port of Grays Harbor is expected to increase.

Documents railroad general manager Steve Hefley submitted to the commission in January request the closures inside town for the same reasons: "improving public safety by reducing the potential for train/vehicle crossing accidents, reducing railroad maintenance cost and improving railroad operations."

Not good enough Monday for the council, Police Chief Jeff Troumbley and some audience members, though. They especially weren't buying the notion of improved safety.

"I really don't think any of our positions have changed," Councilman Jim Sorensen said, and Councilman Tom Boling gave some reasons why.

If the 10th Street crossing along the route to the city's baseball park is closed, "they're going to have to put up a 10-foot-high fence and totally enclose the

park," Boling said. "Those kids are ... going over the tracks.

And, "we're going to have to put a stoplight at 11th and Wakefield because when they have tournaments, people that live around there know what it's going to be like to try to get out on 11th Street," Boling added.

He also said impact fees would be needed, as much as \$1.5 million for closing the Second Street crossing alone. And there would be problems for school buses, said Boling, Elma School District's transportation director.

Besides safety worries at the 10th Street crossing, "when we have floods down there, we have bad floods down there," Troumbley said. "And there's no way to get in and out of there, except sometimes down 10th Street."

Troumbley said his officers also have reservations about closing the 17th Street crossing because when a train blocks the other crossings, "they are able to gain access" there.

Forest:

Continued from A-1

Howard said. "Yeah, there's a lot of money in the bank, but it's not just for anything."

He objected to calling vehicles and street repair capital improvements. City Administrator Kristy Powell said vehicles are considered "rolling stock, which is operational capital," while street repair is necessary city infrastructure.

The city's streets are in dire need of repair, Schillinger said. Prior to declaring the surplus, the city had just allocated \$18,500 for street repair.

A recent city survey showed that a significant majority think

the city should repair its streets but most people don't want to pay for it, Schillinger said. Likewise, those at a well-attended street task force meeting Feb. 7 stated a strong desire to improve city roads, he said. Many suggested seeking state and federal grants.

However, most of that money has dried up, Schillinger said. But even were grants still available, Montesano likely wouldn't get any money, the mayor said. In comparison with neighboring communities, Montesano fares poorly in competition for grants because residents make more than their neighbors and the city has lacked matching funds for grants, he said.

"Our streets are in such bad shape and we (have an opportu-

nity to do something about it)," Councilman Rich Klinger said. "This is an opportunity ... to fix what we can fix. We need to take care of our streets."

The streets task force is working to create a list of priorities and estimated costs that the council will use to determine how to spend the money in the road budget, Schillinger said.

The council will determine how to spend the rest of the surplus on a case-by-case basis.

Councilman Chris Hutchings suggested using part of the \$100,000 to cover wetland mitigation necessary to allow completion of Beacon Park.

The council voted 6-0 in favor of declaring the surplus. Councilman Doug Streeter was absent.

Audit:

Continued from A-1

Washington State Patrol.

The state patrol's investiga-

Sowers was placed on a second administrative leave and later was demoted. He resigned in September after the state patrol investigation recommend-

The audit recommends that the city seek to recoup the cost of the fraud investigation — \$2,940.72 — from Sowers and continue monitoring its poli-

128TH YEAR

Valentine shares s
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