

Volunteers make sure meals get to Basin Community Center

By GLENN HARBISON
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What started as a temporary problem to get meals to senior citizens on the East side of Polk County has resulted in a group of residents stepping up to volunteer and solve what is a long range issue.

County Executive Robby Hatcher explained last week that he learned earlier in the week that Will Wallace would not be able to take the Meals on Wheels meals from Benton to the Copper Basin Community Center Friday morning.

Wallace, who is the county's Litter Grant coordinator, makes the weekly trip as a separate duty from his litter grant position, using his own vehicle.

Hatcher would have normally filled in, but was not going to be able to leave his office that Friday morning.

The county executive said he reached out to District 3 Commissioner Sa-

mantha Trantham for help, telling her that volunteers were needed for the next two Fridays.

Hatcher said Trantham had previously offered to help with the program when she learned there was no one committed from the East side for the meal transportation.

Unable to help last Friday because of her work schedule, Trantham reached out to Monica Farrow, the secretary of Polk County Industrial and Economic Development Board (IED Board).

Farrow stepped up and made the trip last Friday morning.

District 3 Commissioner Keith Barker has also volunteered to help with the meal deliveries.

"I am excited that she (Trantham) and Commissioner Barker are leading on such an important issue," Farrow said.

"Meals on Wheels is a necessity for our seniors

and community," Trantham said.

Greg Barker, another member of the IED Board, also praised the work of the commissioners. "Our seniors play a vital role in the Copper Basin community. I am happy the District 3 commissioners focus on ensuring nutritious meals reach our community center."

Jake Reuse, a member of Copperhill's Planning and Zoning Board, has also volunteered to be part of the meal delivery program.

Hatcher explained the meals are picked up every Friday morning at the courthouse in Benton at 9 a.m. and taken directly to the Copper Basin Community Center. There they are picked up by those needing them. Anyone needing meals should contact Vicky at the Basin senior center, Hatcher said.

Farrow said more volunteers are being sought to strengthen the program



News Observer photo/Glenn Harbison

Monica Farrow takes boxes of meals from the driver who comes weekly from Chattanooga, delivering the food to the courthouse in Benton for both the East side and West side Meals on Wheels programs. Farrow is one of the East side volunteers who have agreed to make sure the meals are transported.

and make sure meals reach the East side of the county. Anyone wanting to volunteer should email polk-mealsonwheels@gmail.com.

GDOT: School board agrees to fight state over safety

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during construction while they had originally planned to shut it down.

When school board members began discussion of the GDOT ideas, numerous concerns were echoed.

School Superintendent Shannon Dillard said she had argued against GDOT's proposal from the time she saw the offer and

GDOT's plan. "I've been fighting it since I've been here," she said.

Board member Terry Bramlett began the board's

discussion saying, "The bottom line, are we going to be able to get our buses and our teachers and our parents into and out of that facility safely?"

School board attorney Lynn Doss warned that her belief is the concessions already made by GDOT "are the best we're going to get." She said the school could only argue what the property is worth, but not whether or not GDOT can take it.

agreed the level of care was their priority.

The RFP will be presented to the full commission at its regular meeting Thursday, August 15 at the Copper Basin Community Center.

School board member Chad Galloway warned the system would "lose

all of our leverage if we just go ahead and give in." He said the money is likely just "a drop in the bucket" if the entrance to the school has to be moved once the highway work is complete.

Board member Lewis DeWeese said GDOT's priorities "are entirely out of place. It's just unthinkable to do our kids that way."

DeWeese said the board should, "Stop it until we can run free course to talk to everyone." The vote to table GDOT's proposal was unanimous.

Goal: Polk wants better EMS service

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At any time the service is found to be in breach of contract, a \$2,500 penalty would be assessed after ten days, an additional \$5,000

after 20 days, and then an additional \$7,500 after 30 days.

Third District Commissioner Keith Barker summed up the top priority for an RFP saying the

county must get "the number of trucks and the level of care" stipulated.

Besides Hardin and Barker, Third District Commissioner Samantha Trantham was present. All

Haights asking attorney fees be paid from lawsuit

By GLENN HARBISON
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Rhonda and David Haight want their attorneys fees paid in their lawsuits against the City of Blue Ridge and three of its city council members.

In their Verified and Recast Complaint, the Haights ask that they "be

awarded their attorneys fees, costs and expenses of this action if permissible under applicable law."

The Haights' lawsuits ask separately that Angela Arp, Jack Taylor and Bill Bivins all be removed from their city council seats.

The lawsuits also demand that the city charter be changed so that the

mayor cannot be removed from office by council members.

The Haights have filed motions asking for mediation, but as of Friday there had been no motions filed in response.

Both are suing as citizens of Blue Ridge, and Rhonda Haight is also suing as mayor.

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