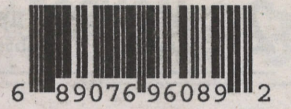


THE MONROE MONITOR & VALLEY NEWS

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75¢



INSIDE



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HANDUP PROJECT - Pg. 24

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...y "Hamlet" on July 26, at 5



Photo by Chris Hendrickson

swimming team is a multi-jurisdictional team of trained rescue swimmers who are able to deploy on a county-wide level. Approximately 20 firefighters from Monroe, Clearview, Gold Bar and Everett attended the drill, which took place at Lake Tye Park on June 1. Rescue swimmers undergo a rigorous process to become certified to perform subsurface

rescue and must continually work to maintain their skills.

The initial training includes a four-day certification class during which firefighters must demonstrate their proficiency in the water with free-dives up to a depth of 40 feet, long-distance swims, rescue drills and holding their breath for a minimum of 60 seconds. Additionally, the

certification requires eight hours of ongoing hands-on training and an annual evaluation.

Expanded efforts

Gold Bar Fire Chief Eric Andrews, who also serves at the assistant fire chief in Clearview, has rescue swimmers in both of

► RESCUE, Page 4

Downtown businesses hit by construction

By Chris Hendrickson

Business owners in Monroe's downtown core say they have taken a hit during the ongoing construction project that started at the end of April.

The first phase of the Main Street Plaza project is on track for its target completion date of June 30. One of the key elements of the project is disconnecting the storm drains from the sanitary sewer system, which will remove approximately 7.6 million gallons of stormwater from the sewer system. The city is able to accomplish this through the use of materials like pervious concrete and PaveDrain, which allow the stormwater to pass through a bed of drain-rock and infiltrate the underlying soils.

New construction

The city received a \$859,710 grant from the Department of Ecology to compete the project, which will save the city roughly \$2,600 per year in electricity costs.

The project has not included replacements or upgrades to existing sewer mains. One small, aging section of waterline underneath Lewis Street was replaced with new pipe.

So far, the southern sidewalk along East Main Street from Lewis to Ferry streets has been removed and replaced with

► DOWNTOWN, Page 3

Sultan Boys & Girls reopens

Girls Club is finally open for business.

Open since Tuesday, May 26, the newly constructed 6,000-square-foot building features a games room, office space,

teen center, technology lab and classroom space for preschool students and Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) students. The new club was made possible through a

collaborative partnership between the Boys & Girls Clubs of Snohomish County, the City of Sultan and the Volunteers of America

► CLUB, Page 11



Photo by Chris Hendrickson

Wildwood Trails
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Downtown Monroe now have the option to use sidewalk space for retail and dining. Photo by Chris Hendrickson

Downtown sidewalks opened to new uses

The City Council has been in the process of establishing an ordinance governing the use of the sidewalks in Monroe's downtown core. The new ordinance was passed on June 2, during its regular meeting. The ordinance allows for three levels of sidewalk use. The first level, called "tables and chairs," allows for the use of sidewalk space for retail and dining. The second level, called "sidewalk café," allows for the use of sidewalk space for outdoor seating. The third level, called "sidewalk cafe," allows for the use of sidewalk space for outdoor seating and food service.

The seating in this second level of sidewalk use would be considered open to the public and not restricted to customers only.

The third level, called "sidewalk café," affords a business the exclusive use of the sidewalk. This means a portion of the sidewalk abutting the business could be used for its customers who wish to be served outside. The seating in the sidewalk café environment would be available to customers of the business only.

"You can also serve food out there, you can have table service and, if you have the Washington State Liquor Control Board approvals, you can also serve alcohol out there," said Monroe Public Works Director Brad Feilberg.

Applications for sidewalk café service are available on the Washington State Liquor Control Board website (liq.wa.gov/)

► **SIDEWALKS**, Page 5

Phase two of construction begins in July

► **DOWNTOWN**, from Page 1

The previous concrete that is flush with the parking lane and the roadway. Since previous concrete needs between seven and 14 days to cure before it can accommodate the weight of a vehicle, the parking lane was reconstructed using PaveDrain, a material that could be parked on right away.

The sidewalk has been completed on the west side of South Lewis Street and is nearing completion on the east side, in between Main and Fremont streets.

Unsatisfied residents

Colleen Gallagher, owner of the Camp 1923 antique gallery at 108 West Main St., has concerns over the way the project has been handled so far and is dissatisfied with the city's plan to incorporate parallel parking on the south side of West Main Street.

Gallagher, who opened her business two years ago, provides a storefront to 16 individual antiques vendors. To her, the loss of parking spaces along Main Street is of significant concern.

The city contemplated three different options when planning the Main Street Plaza project. The first option kept the existing angular parking with 11-foot sidewalks, while the second incorporated parallel parking on both the north and south side of Main Street with 19-foot sidewalks. After business owners expressed strong opposition to the idea of converting the parking to parallel because of the number of parking spaces that would be lost in the transition, the city created a third option.

Option three incorporated angular parking on the north side of the street and parallel parking on the south side, with 15-foot sidewalks.

"Although the third option was devised to be a compromise, numerous downtown business owners remained opposed.

"It wasn't a compromise for people that have their business on this side and lose a third of their parking," Gallagher said. "That's not a compromise — it's just not."

Due to the construction and the resulting accessibility issues, several

businesses on East Main Street have experienced a notable decrease in revenues that they attribute directly to the project. Moises Velasco helps his parents operate Tijuana Restaurant (118 E. Main St.), which is on the south side of the street near Player's Music Mart. Tijuana's sales were down between 60 and 70 percent during the month of May, Velasco said.

"It's absolutely terrible," he said.

A large part of the problem, Velasco explained, is that crews used temporary construction fencing to contain the area, which made it look as though everything behind the fence was closed. Both Main Street Books (110 E. Main St.) and My L.A. Fashion (110 E. Main St. Suite 200) have reported that business has been extremely slow throughout the construction and continues to be slow even though the sidewalk on the south side of Main has been completed.

Gallagher estimated that her sales are down by at least half.

"This has been a disaster," Gallagher said, "an absolute disaster for businesses."

The City of Monroe sought to minimize the impact to the downtown busi-

"It wasn't a compromise for people that have their business on this side and lose a third of their parking."

- Colleen Gallagher, Camp 1923 owner

nesses on East Main Street by doing one side of the street at a time. At one point, crews worked through the night to lessen the amount of time that business entrances were

blocked.

Businesses were closed for a total of one day to facilitate the construction.

Phase two of the project, which will involve West Main Street from Lewis to North Blakeley streets, is scheduled to begin around the beginning of July.

The contract was awarded last week to SRV Construction, who will submit a construction plan to the city within the next week. It is unclear whether workers will need to engage both sides of West Main Street in order to meet the construction deadline of late August.

For more information on the Main Street Plaza project, visit www.monroewa.gov/mainstreetplaza.

To comment on this story, write to editor@monroemonitor.com.

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