

## Contract to design railroad extension approved

By Joe Chapman, Herald staff writer

A new railroad extension in east Pasco would complete a five-year plan to develop a new 400-acre industrial center on the south side of East A Street, near Highway 12.

The Pasco City Council on Monday approved a \$43,000 contract with HDR Engineering to design the extension.

The city has worked with the Tri-City Development Council, the Port of Pasco, BNSF Railway Co. and private landowners to develop the industrial area, called Heritage Industrial Center. Once the rail extension is designed, the city and its partners expect to seek state or federal grant money to help with the estimated \$1.3 million cost to build it.

Potential grant programs would favor "shovel ready" projects, City Manager Gary Crutchfield said. HDR Engineering agreed to design the rail extension within 60 days.

"I'm optimistic this Heritage Industrial project will bear fruit for us," Mayor Joyce Olson said. "If it does, that'll lessen the (tax) burden on residential property taxpayers. Sometimes it takes a long time for these things to come to fruition, so we'll have to see in five years from now where we are with this."

In a memo to the city council, Crutchfield outlined steps that have been taken to develop the area so far.

The city extended Heritage Boulevard from the Highway 12/East Lewis Street interchange south to intersect with A Street. The property owners along A Street agreed to form a local improvement district to widen the street and improve it as a truck corridor.

The Port of Pasco recently approved a contract to install a mainline rail switch at the west end of the center and got property owners to agree to provide for the easterly extension of a rail line to serve it.

Also Monday, the council approved the purchase of materials for the renovation of Memorial Pool.

The city will buy a stainless steel and PVC-fused panel system, which reportedly works well for renovating existing pools, for about \$420,000. Myrtha Pools, a commercial pool company based in Italy, is the supplier.

The city expects to approve a separate contract for installation. About five contractors in the Pacific Northwest are qualified to install the system.

The city also will consider spending about \$300,000 to buy materials for a zero-depth leisure pool that would be installed next to the main pool.

The Memorial Pool renovation is expected to start in late summer, after the swim season is over.