

Vehicle Weight Limit Reviewed By Town Council

By Donna Reibslager

At a council meeting in June, Patagonia's Town Council voided the ordinance (Sec. 11-4-4) created in 2011, which imposed weight limits for use of town roads by double axle vehicles. The ordinance, which limited vehicle weight on town roads to 17,500 lbs., had not been enforced and was determined to be problematic. Mayor Ike Isaksen stated that enforcement would require that every street in town display signs stating the restriction, and it was noted that the town would have to purchase a weight scale to check incoming truck traffic. Both measures were said to be beyond the town's budget.

After reviewing the issue, the town's attorney, Mike Masee, introduced a draft for a new ordinance pertaining to overweight vehicles at the town council meeting on September 28. His recommendation was that the town's vehicle weight limits conform to federal regulations, which limit gross vehicle weight to 80,000 lbs. That limit is 4.5 times the limit imposed by the 2011 ordinance. There were questions from the audience as to the weight-bearing standards for Patagonia's town roads as compared to those of state and county roads and highways, and the concern as to who would pay for town road repairs that might be needed due to heavier traffic. After further discussion, the council asked Masee to continue his review of state and federal regulations and how they need to apply to any town regulations. He was asked to present an updated draft for consideration in 2-4 weeks.



Photo by Ali Morse

These two vehicles recently drove past the post office on their way from Harshaw Road



Photo by Janie Trafton

SITA To Manage Visitors Center

By Ann Katzenbach

Back in the spring, the Patagonia Area Business Association (PABA) changed its name to Sky Islands Tourist Association (SITA) because there was a general feeling on the board of directors that the organization needed to make a fresh start.

Since the launch of the Regional Visitor Center at the corner of McKeown and Third Ave., the Patagonia Regional Times has shared the rent and management of the Visitor Center with PABA (now SITA). In recent months the newspaper's financial priorities have changed and it can no longer afford to share the Visitor Center rent. Thus, full responsibility for the center has shifted to SITA. The newly-hatched tourist association is determined to keep the center open as its volunteers have given out information and assistance to thousands of visitors since it opened in March of 2015.

The dedicated volunteers who run the center met with SITA board member Rita Johnson in October and shared ideas about how to move forward. Most of the volunteers spend two hours a week keeping the center open. They get training, hand out information and make visitors feel welcome. All kinds of expected and unexpected things can happen at this busy corner of town.

Volunteers without regular hours fill in when regulars can't be there. They all agree that it's fun and fascinating to chat with people who come from all over the country and the world.

The Regional Visitor Center is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at this time of year. If you would like a small, interesting, volunteer job, call Ann Katzenbach at 360-385-9771. If you would like a larger, more challenging job, there is an opening as Volunteer Coordinator.