

Heyburn revenue covers expenses

By Chris D'Angelo

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Heyburn State Park has an advantage over every other park in the state.

It pays for itself. And then some.

"We are the only park in the state that has such a high self-supporting percentage," Park Manager Ron Hise said. "We make more money than any other park."

Mr. Hise says this often proves helpful when the park needs money for smaller projects. Instead of competing with every other park in Idaho for state money, Heyburn can often just use its own.

In 2008, Heyburn brought in approximately \$666,000 in total revenue. This number includes everything from camping and daily parking fees to the privately owned cabins which lease land from the state.

As for expenses, the park's 2008 total was approximately \$628,000, which includes operating costs as well as the cost of paying both its seasonal and six permanent staff members.

Heyburn is in the process of developing a 20-year plan for the more than 100 year old park. It is a plan that will include both improving the parks' facilities and maintaining its natural beauty, said Mr. Hise.

As part of the park's master plan, Mr. Hise said the park distributed surveys to see what its visitors like about the park and what they want to see change in the future.

"We did surveys all summer long, we just haven't received the results," Mr. Hise said.

Although he wasn't sure when the results of the surveys would be available, Mr. Hise said he could use that information when he applies for grants this winter.

As for how the park's budget might affect its 20-year plan, Mr. Hise wasn't sure.

"Ideally, you would think we'd be able to get all kinds of stuff done," he said. "But often that's not how things work."

For larger, costly projects - like those Heyburn may propose as part of its master plan n it will have to compete against all the other parks for state money.

One thing Mr. Hise is sure about, however, is the opportunity to increase revenue in the future.

"We have the potential to bring in even more money if we improve and bring in more developments," he said. "By adding and improving facilities we can definitely up revenue."

Furthermore, Mr. Hise predicts cottage lease fees to double next year.

At Heyburn, the state leases land to the 166 cabin owners in the park at an annual rate equal to five percent of the land's appraised value. Those values have all gone up, according to Mr. Hise.

"Everybody's lease fees are going to go up 100 percent," he said. "There's also a fee that's going to be included for the sewer system."

Work on the \$5.2 million sewer system is scheduled to be completed in May.

The next Stakeholder's Advisory Meeting to discuss the park's 20-year plan will be Oct. 28 from 6 till 9 p.m. at the Park Headquarters.