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Legislative roundup

Horse arena clears Senate committee

A horse arena proposal in Lewis County cleared another legislative hurdle Thursday, winning quick approval in committee for a public-facilities district financing bill.

Project director Larry Hewitt said that the Southwest Washington Regional Equestrian Center could employ 150 to 300 people during construction in 2009 and 30 to 50 full-time workers once it is up and running. The public-facilities district would retain up to \$542,000 a year in state sales tax under Senate Bill 5390, which is sponsored by Sen. Dan Swecker, R-Rochester.

It now moves to the Senate Ways and Means Committee, where it faces an uncertain future. A similar measure, House Bill 1164, is sponsored by Republican Rep. Gary Alexander of Thurston County; it won approval earlier this week in an economic development committee, which moved the bill to the House Finance Committee.

-- *Brad Shannon*