



Our Name Has Changed

The North Douglas Herald is now the Oregon News Herald

Yes, after a year and a half of expansion and growth, we have changed our name to reflect that change. We started in the summer of 2023 to service a region that was in a newspaper "desert". North Douglas county is mostly a rural and small town area that seemed starving for the printed news and information small town newspapers used to serve in this country. Bringing local, community and municipal news, public safety reports, along with school

sports and a splash of entertainment and even a monthly crossword seemed to catch on. From a little over a thousand circulation to twenty five hundred within the first few months seemed to confirm my own suspicions of the need for the printed word.

It was an auspicious start and has been a steady incline in both successes and obstacles to overcome. Our number one goal was to be able to provide a free newspaper to those who wish

to read and have an actual printed newspaper. Initially we mailed the newspaper to local residences but over time we began to get requests from out of the county and even out of state. Since our funding is totally from advertising the mailing costs soon outstripped our advertising revenues by the time we reached about 3200 mailing circulation.

About that time, the North Douglas Herald, had also embarked on a distribution

model that started as small stacks of newspapers on businesses shelves and racks around the North Douglas county area. As we received new requests for the newspaper outside of the local area, the Herald began branching out, first in Cottage Grove and then Sutherlin, but soon in Reedsport, slowly branching out and adding more news subjects and information as we spread the word. Since mailing was stifling

Continued on Page 6

Pass Creek Park Recommended for Sale

Story by Rusty Savage Photos by Joe Ross ... Advisory Council Hears Public Input



When it was announced last September, that the Pass Creek Park was going to be closed, it came as quite a surprise to Curtain and North Douglas County area residents. The Douglas County Commissioners announced the closure, citing low use and revenues, major repair and renovations needed and lack of resources to maintain the Park.

It didn't take residents long to begin launching a citizen response in opposition. The online campaign pitted numerous arguments for keeping the Park. Some objected to the seemingly indifference that the county showed for residents' opposition and their points of view. Some were solution oriented and some questioned the intent of the county to deprive



and squander their resource.

The back and forth online and various attempts to get answers through county meetings and other conversations were not very productive nor informative. It came down to

Continued on Page 6

Willamette Valley Motoplex

Lane County's 1 stop Motorcycle Mall

Story & Photos by Rusty Savage

Last month you were introduced to Joshua Sklaroff, Owner & General Manager at Willamette Valley Harley-Davidson® at 86441 College View Rd and Willamette Valley Indian Motorcycle® at 86463 College View Rd, both in Eugene. As Josh told us, they have added the Royal Enfield® brand of motorcycles to their line up and with that they have launched the Willamette Valley Motoplex.

The Willamette Valley Motoplex represents all of their model line ups in a veritable one stop motorcycle mall. Motorcycles for every type of rider with accessories, apparel and first rate service for all 3 brands. The Willamette

Valley Motoplex has something for everyone, even non riders need a t-shirt or souvenir and a tour through the showrooms. Yes it is the Motoplex, that



Continued on Page 5

Bird Flu in Oregon & across the US

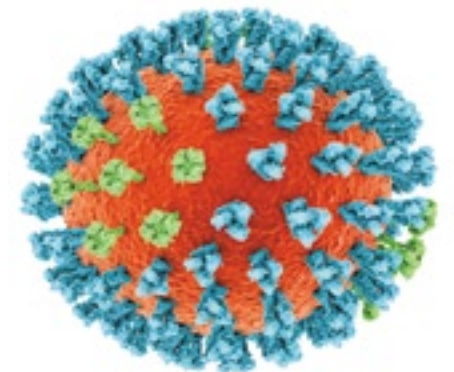
It is a Growing Concern

Story by Rusty Savage

Bird Flu is becoming more of a concern to Oregonians and all Americans, especially since the first known case of avian influenza in a pig in the United States was confirmed at a small farm in Central Oregon last October. Agriculture officials say there is no concern about the safety of the nation's pork supply at this time and if we didn't hear any more about it, then maybe it is of no concern.

But we do hear more. Since 2022 we have heard of nearly 1 million commercial chickens, in Oregon alone, (100M in the US in the last 7 years) have been destroyed due to Bird (Avian) Flu. Still the official standing is that there is no cause for concern for the flu crossing into humans. The news around the nation includes tidbits of possible cross over infection of H5N1 with a dairy cows in central California, 1 death. There was the reported deaths of 20 big cats, including cougars, tigers, and lynxes, at the Wild Felid Advocacy Center in Shelton Washington. Detected around Thanksgiving, some succumbed to the disease within a day or two of symptoms.

2 house cats died in Oregon and Washington, contracting the H5N1 from a commercial raw Cat food product in December and several more cats in northern California were infected and died as well. So far it looks like Bird Flu is crossing the species boundaries at every juncture. The official word is that there is little chance of Avian Flu becoming a serious problem for human beings and that significant



mutations would have to occur before any fears of say - a pandemic - and even then the symptoms and efficacy would likely be mild.

Now zoom forward to the CDC report of December 26th 2024. A person that has contracted H5N1 in Louisiana is now severely ill from the infection. The report reveals a concerning mutation has occurred in this patient that makes transmission easier among humans.

Genetic analysis suggests the H5N1 virus has the capacity to mutate in ways that could make it more transmissible to humans. H5N1 bird flu samples collected from a severely ill patient in Louisiana show signs of mutations that may make the virus more transmissible to humans, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Thursday, December 26th.

An unidentified patient, who was

Continued on Page 10

Elk Creek Watershed Coalition Meeting

Story by Rusty Savage

I was really encouraged to learn that there is a new Watershed for Elk Creek forming in Douglas county. You know the old

Elk Creek Watershed Council voted to dissolve over a year ago. The ECWC was run by James Mast and with long time member Lee Russel

Continued on Page 10



An example of watershed improvement from perched culvert to flowing stream tributary crossing.



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The Oregon News Herald News-
paper, published once a month in Drain
Oregon, is owned, operated, published
and printed in the State of Oregon. It
is our mission to bring the news and
information that our readers find per-
tinent, useful and with some insight to
our common values and sensibilities.
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*“Our liberty depends
on the freedom of the
press, and that cannot
be limited without
being lost.”*
- Thomas Jefferson

*“The man who does not
read has no advantage
over the man who
cannot read,”*
- Mark Twain



<https://gofund.me/e68f1fcf>
Oregon News Herald
North Douglas Herald
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Drain OR 97435
Rusty Savage, Editor
541 221-3283
www.ndherald.com

*Free Papers can be found, upon
availability, in all of the following
town's and these fine establishments*

Locations for Pick up Points

- Drain**
Rays Food Place, 308 N 1st St.
Country Cabin Coffee & Laundry, 438 W “B” Ave Hwy38
The Rose Bar, 413 Umpqua Hwy 38
Mildred Whipple Library, 205 W. “A” Ave.
Beaver Creek Unique, 416 W “B” Ave.
Zolezzi Insurance Agency, 208 W C Ave
CG Market, 333 W B Ave
US Bank, 229 N 1st St
Hacienda Viera, 237 West B Ave
Brothers Cafe, 439 W B Ave
Studio Tattoo, 329 N 1st St
- Yoncalla**
Eagle Valley Supply, 2570 Eagle Valley Rd
Food Center & Deli, 2580 Eagle Valley Rd
Why Not Bar and Grill, 164 Main St
Yoncalla Public Library, 194 Birch St
- Elkton**
Arlene's Cafe & General Store 14858 State HWY 38
Elkton Station 14940 State HWY 38
Tomaselli's Pastry Mill & Cafe, 14836 OR Hwy 38
Elkton Community Education Center, 15850 HWY 38 W
- Rice Hill**
Buy 2 Arco, 614 John Long Rd
- Scottsburg**
Riverbanks Speedy Mart 32841 State HWY 38
LULD Library Box at Fire Station, 33237 OR HWY 38
- Reedsport**
Jacks Barber Shoppe, 1199 Highway Ave,
TRMF Smokes, 1898 Winchester Ave. US-101
Don's Main Street Family Restaurant, 2115 US-101
Recreation Station, 1575 Winchester Ave US-101 S
Creative Mercantile, 392 Fir Ave.
High Water Cafe, 427 Fir Ave.
Lower Umpqua Library, 395 Winchester Ave.
7-11 Store, 2011 Winchester Ave. US-101
Oregon Coast Restaurant, 2165 Winchester Ave
Harbor Light Restaurant, 960 Highway Ave
- Cottage Grove**
Old Mill Farm Store, 327 South River Rd.
Kwik Pik Market #2, 925 E Gibbs Ave.
Daves Comer Market, 633 N 9th St.
Crafty Mercantile, 517 E Main St.
The Book Mine, 702 E Main St.
Dari Mart, 1200 E Main St.
Cottage Market, 603 OR HWY-99
Medication Station, 1041 N Pacific HWY-99
American Market, 911 E Main St
- Eugene**
Willamette Valley Motoplex, 86441 College View Rd
Dairy-Mart, 1495 River Rd #2
Dairy-Mart, 2920 W 11th Ave
Dairy-Mart, 4099 W 11th Ave
7-11, 3762 W 11th Ave
7-11, 1107 S Bertelsen Rd
7-11, 895 River Rd
7-11, 3821 River Rd
7-11, 190 Hwy 99
7-11, 701 Polk St
7-11, 590 E Broadway
7-11, 445 Coburg Rd,
Market of Choice, 1960 Franklin Blvd
Classic Smoke Shop, 733 State Hwy 99 N
The Embers Lounge, 1811 Hwy 99 N
- Springfield**
Dari-Mart, 1950 Mohawk Blvd #38
Dari-Mart, 1875 Main St
Dari-Mart, 1554 M St
7-11, 1396 Main St
Heartless & Hopeless Tattoo, 329 Main St
- Winchester Bay**
Beck's Winchester Bay Market, 245 8th St.
Pelican Market, 75298 Pacific Coast HWY US-101
- Oakland**
Bart's Oakland Market, 204 SE 1st St
Tyee Landing, 11424 Oregon HWY 138
Oakland Tavern, 104 Locust St
- Sutherlin**
Kwik Pik Market & Deli, 551 W Central Ave.
Smitty's Food Mart & Deli, 1367W Central Ave.
Center Market, 1230 W Central Ave.
Smoke Shop, 1230 W Central Ave.
Center Market #32, 206 E Central Ave.
Center Smokes #32, 206 E Central Av
S-Mart, 333 E Central Ave.
Central Food Mart, 1021 E Central Ave.
Chevron/S-Mart, 1484 W Central Ave.
DC Precision Lube & Tune, 489 E Central Ave.
- Roseburg**
News & Smokes, 457 NW Garden Valley Blvd
Ridgeway Market, 1800 NW Garden Valley Blvd
Safeway, 1539 NE Stephens St
Roseburg Tobacco & Food Mart, 2050 NE Stephens St
1 Am Market, 1931 NE Stephens St
Lil' Pantry, 2611 NW Edenbower Blvd
Buy 2 Arco, 2530 NE Stephens St
Mini Pet Mart, 333 NE Garden Valley Blvd
Mini Pet Mart, 2820 NE Stephens St
- Albany**
7-11, 333 34Th Ave SE
AM PM, 33200 OR-34

Government
Know your local Representatives!
Drain

Mayor: **Erin Sparhawk**
Council Position #1: **Melanie Lymath**
Council Position #2: **Kevin VanPelt**
Council Position #3: **Katie Decker**
Council Position #5: **Aaron Lymath**
City Administrator: **Jeni Stevens**
City Council Meeting: 1/13/25 - 6pm

Yoncalla
Mayor: **Kathleen Wertz**
Councilors: **Amy Grabinski**
Open Seat
Harold Gilpin
Bryce Wertz
City Administrator: **Jennifer Bragg**
Council Meeting: 1/14/25 - 6pm

Elkton
Mayor: **Daniel Burke**
Council President: **Joan Smith**
Council Members:
Kim Moore
Dan Shepherd
Sandra Galli
Public Works Supervisor: **Gary Trout**
Council Meeting: 1/19/25 - 8:30am

Oakland
Mayor: **Bette Keehley**
Counselor: **Jan Wier**
Counselor: **Kent Rochester**
Counselor: **Sky Ironplow**
Counselor: **Betty Tamm**
Council Meeting: 1/13/25 - 7pm

Sutherlin
Mayor : **Michelle Sumner**
Council President **Debbie Hamilton**
Councilor **Lisa Woods**
Councilor **Larry Whitaker**
Councilor **Adam Sarnoski**
Councilor **Shawn Smalley**
Councilor **Gary Dagal**
City Manager **Jerry Gillham**
Council Meeting: 1/13/25 - 7:15pm

Reedsport
Mayor : **Linda McCollum**
Council Position #1: **Rob Wright**
Council Position #2: **Clifton Jackson Jr**
Council Position #3: **Sandra Rose Donnelly**
Council Position #5: **Allen Teitzel**
Council Position #5: **Rich Patten**
Council Position #7: **Debby Turner**
Council Meeting: 1/6/25 - 7pm

Cottage Grove
Mayor: **Candace Solesbee**
Councilor Ward 1: **Christine Hyink**
Councilor Ward 2: **Randell Lammerman**
Councilor Ward 3: **Dana Merryday**
Councilor Ward 4: **Greg Ervin**
Councilor: **Jim Settelmeyer**
Councilor: **Darrel Wilson**
Council Meeting: 1/13/25 - 7pm

County State & Federal
Douglas County Commissioners:
Tom Kress(Chair) **Tim Freeman**
Chris Boice **Jennifer Miller**
Lane County Commissioners:
Dist 1: **Ray Ceniga** Dist 2: **David Lovall**
Dist 3: **Laurie Trieger** Dist 4: **Pat Farr**
Dist 5: **Heather Buch**
Oregon House Representative:
District 02: **Virgle Osborne**
Oregon State Senator:
District 1: **David Brock Smith**
U.S. Senate Oregon:
Jeff Merkley
Ron Wyden
U.S House of Representatives:
District 4: **Val Hoyle**
Secretary of State: **Tobias Read**
Attorney General: **Dan Rayfield**
Governor: **Tina Kotek**
Vice-President elect: **JD Vance**
President elect: **Donald Trump**

*It is important to know your representation
in your State, Districts and Municipalities. RE-
MEMBER it is vital to your freedoms to vote.If
you would like to have your own towns municipal
officers listed please send title & names only to
citydesk@ndherald.com*



Oregon News Herald
Editorial
By Rusty Savage

Welcome 2025. Ring in the new and
keep the old in the rear view mirror. I'm not
one for burning bridges but I do like exploring
new vista's. With the new year, comes new
laws, new politicians, new promises and new
problems. That's the way with renewal it seems,
ya gotta make a little room for improvement
and it doesn't quite fit without cleaning out the
closet, so to speak.

I'm ready though. Last year left a
little something to be desired for this year.
Hope. Hope for a little better year this time
around. One thing I do realize and that is that
I do hope for better, for more. For that I think
I should be prepared to do my best to do what
I can to make it a better year. It's not a stretch
to imagine that part of expecting better things
to happen, is that I need a better frame of mind
than I had last year. OK, I can do that, I'm an
optimist, a glass half full kind of guy. I hope all
of you are optimists, it will serve us well.

It is winter weather out there. Not
much for freezing cold yet but the rain. Oh
the rain. I'm never sure when those "10 year"
or "100 year" or "500 year" events are due, it
seems like they are always a surprise. At least
to me. These late December and early January
rains are skirting one of those nom de plume
designations. Flooding seemed eminent for a
while there but has resided for now.

It brings to mind the community
needs for emergency events planning and
implementation. There are a lot of low lying
lands and downhill lands that are susceptible
to flood and water damage. Loss of power
is a major storm concern along with fallen
trees and debris. Notification of the public
and communication is of first concern. These
procedures should be in place to combat and
prevent confusion as well as implementing
plans of action when needed. Inventory of
resources and man power should be also the
first part of the game plan to provide help
where needed. I was encouraged to find some
communities were preparing sand bags and
making resources available. Including Cottage
Grove, who announced the availability of sand
bags, come and get what you need. In others
there was confusion and questions, but no
results, like in Drain where the threads on social
media showed a lack of cohesive plan or action.
There is never a guarantee of good results when
it comes to the fickleness of "Mother Nature".
But the good results can be maximized for us
all with good emergency event planning.

Well our big news for the year is
our evolution and name change to the Oregon
News Herald, you can still call us The Herald.
In fact we will continue under the moniker the
North Douglas Herald along with our new
name. The Masthead is little changed and so
is our dedication to bring pertinent news and
information to all of our readers across the state
of Oregon.

It has been quite an adventure on
this journalistic journey and I am encouraged
by the support we continue to receive. It
has been a journey, a pilgrimage if you will,
like the song says, "is rough and steep". As
we struggle to spread our brand of local and
community news and information, I find more
and more encouragement to fulfill the dream
of providing a printed newspaper, FREE to
anyone who's looking for news. Our current
distribution seems to be the best way to make
the Herald available to the public at large.
We are providing FREE newspapers to our,
over, 80 locations across the region. The next
shortcoming we have is to have a dedicated
newsrack to help the public find us and to
improve our delivery vehicles reliability. We
have started a GoFundMe campaign to help
us in this endeavor. We are soliciting donations
large and small to get over this hump and help
insure a prominent display for the Herald and
so that we can give them away for FREE!

Letters to the Editor

Hello

I am one of several hundred friends of, residents of, family's members of, generations of loyal users of Pass Creek Park, in Curtin Oregon. Our only Park and open space for 10 miles is being taken from us. OUR Board of County Commissioners and Park Director have decided to sell our park. They plan on using the money for other parks. Parks that are not even close to our location. They seem to have had this in their plans for months, if not years. They have not done anything to fix or enhance our beautiful Park for several years.

We were not informed of these plans until September 2024. They then sent out a little flyer to residents within 750 feet, which only includes 5 or six family homes. It is commercial property between the I-5 freeway and the railroad road tracks. Most people, we talked to, didn't understand the questionnaire and didn't respond. All of the Curtin residents should have been informed, but we were not. The Board Of Commissioners, then put on their agenda items about old items, and other

PUBLIC STATEMENT BY JOE ROSS BEFORE THE DOUGLAS COUNTY PARK ADVISORY BOARD ON DEC 19, 2024

I'm Joe Ross from Roseburg. Mildred Kanipe was a wise person, and there are many wise men & women with great comments & ideas in the audience today. In keeping with the Christmas spirit, I come bearing a gift of Lois Eagleton's book, "For Love of the Land: The Legacy of Mildred Kanipe" for you to read. I've highlighted pages that deal with parks, good land management & stewardship, logging, etc.

Regarding Pass Creek Park (PCP), the county kicked a big hornets' nest & a swarm of angry little critters awoke! A PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE in Curtin is needed to hear intentions, answer questions & get input without time constraints...and when people don't have to work.

If the county considers PCP as a "red-headed stepchild" and no longer wants it, I support its transfer to another jurisdiction but not sold for commercial development. Those 23 acres should remain as a park of some kind. Please pass an advisory motion to that effect.

Sale of PCP is inconsistent with the County Parks Master Plan implemented in 2017. Of 66 properties listed, Pass Creek was one of 16 keystone properties classified for "Active" management. A 17th (Umpqua Dunes) was added in May 2018. The PAB approved "asset sales" at your May 23 meeting. Pass Creek, Hedden & Green Oaks. Today the public is being presented with info about Pass Creek's infrastructure, landscaping & finances. I note that it operated profitably in FY22. Alternatives to sale should be considered. Also, a similar process to today's action item should be presented for Hedden Park (Scottsburg) & Green Oaks (Green District).

If the Parks Master Plan isn't going to be followed, advise the Parks Department to clarify its Mission, Goals & Objectives in writing in another document. Involve the public. Provide Annual Updates as conditions or situations change. Please identify & answer a key question, "What is the Department's No-Fail Mission?" I think it's protection & development of our 17 actively-managed parks, as well as maintenance of our 40 passively-managed parks. Closure, rezoning, sale of PCP is a massive failure.

The self-imposed "self-sufficiency" business model isn't working. It may be achievable over a long-term but shouldn't guide short-term management from year

insufficient ways to inform the public of their intentions. There were also several meetings that were canceled, so the public could not respond. We ended up with one meeting with the Parks Advisory Board, to respond to our ideas and comments.

I had no idea that this meeting was the final vote for the sale. They listened, but did not except phone responses, then voted to advise the BOC to sell our park.

These BOC and their Parks Director are not being transparent or even legal. They tag team each other and make sure they have their own puppets on the boards. There are no open application, just appointments. There was one Park Board member that voted to hold off the sale. To give us time to come up with solutions.

Please, we need help to keep these guys in check, and do what's right and legal for our community.

Thank you for your time and any and all ideas or thoughts would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Colleen Shaw

to year. The department's structure, staffing & operational needs should drive annual funding instead of profitmaking. When a park like Umpqua Dunes is added to the system (as in May 2018), the millions of dollars needed to purchase & develop it only mean that others suffer, get logged, closed or sold. Will Amacher, Stanton, O.C. Brown, Iverson or others be next to support development elsewhere? Please reassess your "Self-Sufficiency" policy. Provide year-to-year flexibility for good management. In FY24, the Parks Department is running a \$300,000 deficit. Does that mean another park must be closed, sold or logged? Ask the County to suspend the misguided departmental "Self-Sufficiency" model for our Parks. Develop short-term & long-range goals & budgets to address needs of all 17 actively- & 40 passively-managed parks in the inventory. Reestablish day use fees, increase camping fees, get more grants, and mobilize more volunteers before closing, selling or logging county parks.

Umpqua Dunes Re-Development Plan was prepared in May 2019 by I&E. Despite the need for millions of dollars to purchase & re-develop Umpqua Dunes, the plan doesn't address funding sources or issues created by the "self-sufficiency" business model. It concluded that Umpqua Dunes is "consistent with the direction of the Parks Master Plan." I beg to differ as no logic backs up that unsubstantiated assertion. Advise the County to amend the Parks Master Plan to include Umpqua Dunes as an actively-managed park & reclassify PCP (active to uncategorized) if that's your intention. Public comment opportunities should be scheduled. Advise the County to make a Site-Specific Umpqua Dunes Mini Park Plan as was done for 7 other actively-managed park properties (see Appendix of Parks Master Plan).

** Umpqua Dunes Re-Development Plan includes two phases: Phase 1 (southern loop) & Phase 2 (northern loop). Please explain why you recommended & Commissioners approved on December 4th the expenditure of \$1.5M for a Phase 3 development when there is no reference to a "Phase 3" in the Re-Development Plan. Without a clear paper trail and substantiation, you've potentially set up yourselves personally and the county

Continued on Page 5

Oregon Public Safety

One Killed In Myrtle Creek Shooting
Myrtle Creek OR. – A 22-year-old Myrtle Creek man was arrested on suspicion of murder Saturday, December 7th, 2024, after a disturbance with shots fired at the Rivers West RV Park in Myrtle Creek.

At about 1:35 pm, deputies from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office responded to the area of the RV park, 333 Ruckles Drive, after receiving information about a physical disturbance and shooting.

Responders located a male suffering from multiple gunshot wounds just south of the park on Booth Ranch Road. He was later identified as Damion Sumner, 29, of Dillard. Deputies and a Myrtle Creek Police Officer provided Sumner aid, but he succumbed to his wounds and was declared deceased on scene.

Daniel Hetrick, 22, of Myrtle Creek was taken into custody nearby without incident. Hetrick has been charged with second-degree murder and unlawful use of a weapon and lodged at the Douglas County Jail.

The Douglas County Major Crimes Team was activated and continues to investigate. The team consists of detectives from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Roseburg Police Department, Oregon State Police, and members of the Douglas County District Attorney's Office. Cow Creek Tribal Police is also assisting in the investigation.

Suspect arrested for Murder 2nd Degree
Lane County OR – On December 26th at about 10 p.m., Lane County Sheriff's deputies, Oregon State Troopers, and Springfield Police officers responded to a residence in the 95000 block of E. Five Rivers Road, Tidewater, for a report of a dispute with shots fired. A caller reported one person was deceased.

When law enforcement personnel arrived and attempted contact with people at the property, a resident fired shots toward law enforcement after they arrived on scene. This resident was struck by gunfire from law enforcement and died from their injuries. No officers were injured. The officers involved in the shooting have been placed on traumatic event leave as is standard protocol in deadly force incidents.

Further investigation determined that a person of interest in the initial shooting was 55-year-old Everett Scott Fuller of Tidewater. On the afternoon of December 27th, Everett Scott Fuller turned himself in to the Lane County Sheriff's Office. Fuller was arrested and lodged at the Lane County Jail on charges of Murder in the 2nd Degree.

The investigation is being conducted by the Lane County Inter-Agency Deadly Force Investigation Team (IDFIT), pursuant to the Lane County District Attorney's Office Deadly Force Plan under Senate Bill 111 of the 2007 Oregon Legislative Session. IDFIT is comprised of investigators from the Oregon State Police, Lane County Sheriff's Office, Eugene Police Department, Springfield Police Department, Cottage Grove Police Department, and Florence Police Department.

Any further information on this case will be released by the Lane County District Attorney's Office. - LCSO Case #24-6800

Search & Rescue on Christmas Day
Lane County OR – On December 24th at about 6 p.m., the Lane County Sheriff's Office received a report of a missing mushroom picker in the area of Big Fall Creek. The person was somewhat prepared for the weather, but not to stay out overnight.

Lane County Sheriff's Search & Rescue

responded and searched the area until the early morning hours without success. They resumed the search Christmas morning, and also deployed a drone to assist in the search. At about 10 a.m., the SAR team found the subject. After warming the subject and providing dry clothes, they hiked out of the area and reunited the person with friends.

The Lane County Sheriff's Office would like to thank the many SAR volunteers involved in the search who gave up their Christmas eve or Christmas morning with family to make sure the missing person was rescued. LCSO Case #24-6784

Lane County OR – On Friday, December 20th, at about 9 p.m., Lane County Sheriff's deputies and Cottage Grove Police responded the area of Nichols Lane in Cottage Grove for a report of a 2003 Acura RSX that was driving at a high rate of speed before crashing into a power pole. The driver ran from the vehicle before medics or police arrived. Through investigation, deputies identified the driver as Ryan Michael Best, 28, and located him at an area hospital. Deputies observed signs of impairment, and after further investigation Best was arrested and cited in lieu of custody at the hospital for DUI and Failure to Perform Duties of a Driver - Property Damage. He was also cited for Driving While Suspended and Driving Uninsured, and the vehicle was impounded.

About three hours later, deputies responded to Dillard Road at Sisters Loop for another crash into a power pole, involving a 2014 Subaru Forester. A deputy observed signs the driver, Thomas James Coffin, 35, was impaired. After investigating, Coffin was arrested and lodged at the Lane County Jail for DUI, Reckless Driving, and Criminal Mischief in the 1st Degree, and the vehicle was impounded.

On Sunday, December 22nd at about 6 p.m., a deputy observed a driving violation on Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy. in Springfield and initiated a traffic stop. The deputy observed signs the driver, Chandler Chase Valenzuela, 24, was impaired. After investigating, Valenzuela was arrested and cited in lieu of custody for DUI.

About three hours later, deputies responded to a dispute in the 38000 block of Highway 58, Dexter. Upon arrival, they discovered an off-road motorcycle had crashed and the rider, Lukas Homer Wayne Humphrey, 40, had significant injury. Deputies observed signs of impairment, and after further investigation Humphrey was arrested and cited in lieu of custody at the hospital for DUI.

- Plan your safe ride home ahead of time
- If someone you know has been drinking or using drugs, don't let them get behind the wheel
- If you drink or use drugs, do not drive (or ride) for any reason
- If you're hosting a party where alcohol will be served, make sure all guests leave with a sober driver
- And please, always wear your seatbelt (or helmet)!

Stolen equipment, guns, illegal marijuana at licensed marijuana grow

Lane County OR – On December 20th, Lane County Sheriff's detectives and deputies served a search warrant at a residence in the 86000 block of Mahogany Lane, south of Springfield. Detectives had conducted a months-long investigation after a traffic stop in Illinois turned up 242 pounds of marijuana.

The investigation led back to the address

Continued on Page 7



Letters from the Librarian

"I keep turning over new leaves, and spoiling them, as I used to spoil my copybooks; and I make so many beginnings there never will be an end."

-from Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Are you a resolution maker? A word-of-the-year chooser? I love the Little Women quote about new beginnings precisely because it allows for multiple starts and failures and then of course restarts.

Everyone deserves a restart. It need not be January 1 — or September, or June, or any specific day, really. Once we recognize that a practice or habit isn't working for us, we can make the determination and adjustment. Isn't that delightful? The possibility for growth and change any time we like!

This reminds me of one of our library practices with young people who might be having a hard time meeting the code of conduct. We talk it over and decide together whether it's possible to do a u-turn in behavior that might have disturbed other patrons' use of the space. Is that offender then banned? Not at all. We try again. Sometimes we take a break for the rest of the day, but the next day is always a fresh start.

I want that kind of grace and possibility for all of us. What better time than 2025 to begin?

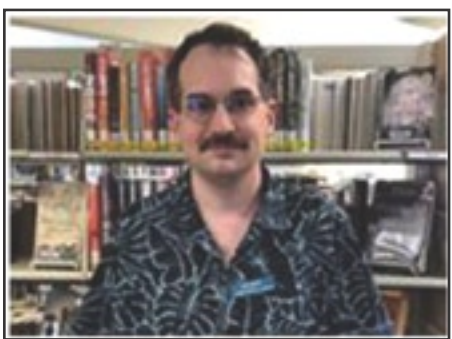
And before I forget, it's always a great time to stop in the library to check out a book or a program or a puzzle. Meet up with a friend or make a new one. Read the papers or work the community puzzle. Tuesday 11-6, Wednesday 12-7, Thursday 11-6, Friday and Saturday 11-4.

"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for extraordinary destiny." — CS Lewis

Miriam Sisson, Director
Mildred Whipple Library,
North Douglas Library District
ndld.org 541-836-2648

New Year, new beginnings. The start of a calendar year is a time to reflect on what's going well and what adjustments we'd like to make. The good news is we can have as many new beginnings as we need or want.

Lower Umpqua Library Announcements



Lower Umpqua Library District (LULD) currently has five active neighborhood library modules. These are located at:

- 1.) Highland Swimming Pool – 2605 Longwood Drive, Reedsport
- 2.) Scottsburg Fire Station – 33237 OR-38, Elkton
- 3.) Smith River Store – 16334 Lower Smith River Road, Reedsport
- 4.) Winchester Bay Fire Station – 125 North 6th Street, Winchester Bay
- 5.) Ash Valley – corner of Loon Lake Road and Elk Ridge Forest Road, Reedsport

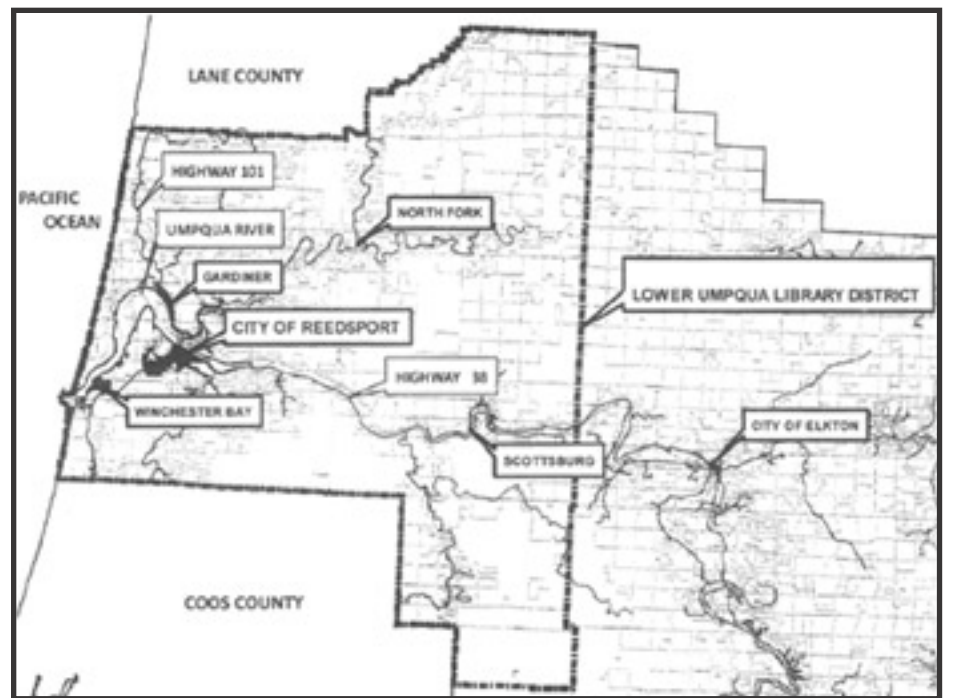
Books and DVDs are available at neighborhood library modules on an honor system basis. Please remember to return items borrowed in this manner

so that other people can use them too.

LULD is looking for volunteers to help restock the neighborhood library modules by picking up books and DVDs from the library in Reedsport and bringing them to the modules in outlying areas. Volunteers are also needed to help the library with activities such as shelving and processing books. If you are interested in being a volunteer, either on these projects or others, please contact or visit the library.



While it is not necessary to have a library card to use the neighborhood library modules, a card is required to borrow materials from Lower Umpqua Library in Reedsport. The library district's borders are shown on the map. Anyone who is a resident of LULD may obtain a library card free of charge. Nonresidents may obtain a card for a \$30 annual fee. Library cardholders may borrow up to 25 items at a time. The library has a wide selection of materials available for borrowing, including books; DVDs;



audiobooks; music CDs; magazines; newspapers; electronics such as Wi-Fi hotspots, computer accessories, and mobile chargers; and recreational equipment such as bicycle locks, umbrellas, and trekking poles. While the vast majority of LULD's titles are in English, there is also a World Languages section for people interested in other languages, including but not limited to Spanish, French, and Chinese. eBooks and eAudiobooks may be borrowed online via Overdrive/Library2Go. The library also has equipment such as computers,

microfilm readers, and a copier, which are available within the library for public use. LULD anticipates laptops becoming available for checkout in the near future. Please call, visit, or email the library for more information

Alex Kuestner,
Library Director/District Manager
Lower Umpqua Library District
395 Winchester Ave
Reedsport, Oregon 97467
(541) 271-3500 www.luld.org

Oregon News Herald starts GoFundMe for Display Racks and Distribution Costs

Help improve our Visibility and Display Presence

The Oregon News Herald & North Douglas Herald is researched, formatted for newsprint, printed and published and distributed in Oregon for FREE. Advertising dollars pay for everything and as revenue increases, all funds are directed to increasing production and distribution. Our delivery route is now about 550 miles, and in total is well over 1000 miles monthly with restocking. We utilize the editors truck to facilitate the deliveries and after a year and a half, it is running on it's last legs. There are no paid positions at the Herald and all of our funds go directly to gathering news, printing it and distributing it.

The Oregon News Herald has a great need to display the newspaper in a prominent setting to assist folks in finding us more easily as that is the biggest criticism we get. "We can't find it", they say. Shelf space is limited and existing racks are often full and over used. The Herald has found that proprietary racks are preferred by businesses who will feature publications - and in the spirit of community we like 2 and 3 shelf racks to help other publications and their

exposure. Additionally, many locations are better suited for outside displays for 24 hour access. In the wet and rainy Northwest climate we will need some enclosed dispensers.

To factor in our continued growth, it is expected that we will need 125 - 150 total displays to meet the goal of elevating our displays and contributing to our coverage growth. 1/3 being outdoor enclosures and 2/3 for indoor, 2 and 3 shelf, racks. We are also looking to upgrade our delivery vehicle or purchase a dedicated one.

Please consider contributing to our cause of distributing FREE physical newspapers to as many households as we can, as the need is real for tangible news that you hold in your hands. PLEASE SHARE. For a pdf copy of current and back issues: <https://ndherald.com/issues.html> For a list of our current locations across Oregon as of January 1st: <https://ndherald.com/locations.html>



Willamette Valley Motoplex



Continued from Front Page

is the correct spelling and I got called out on that one because a few of you noticed last month that the headline was misspelled. Dang, I apologize for that confusion. But, for sure, the Willamette Valley Motoplex is a “must stop” for any rider or enthusiast. Stop on by, you might like what you see.

One thing I should have emphasized was all of the great deals on used motorcycles right now. There are some fantastic deals on ‘24s and ‘25s but if you are looking for a used or pre-owned Harley-Davidson®, Indian® or Royal Enfield®, the selection of used bikes at unbeatable prices is impressive. This should definitely be your first and last stop for used or pre-owned motorcycles. Motorcycling is great passtime and if you are a novice or an experienced rider or just think motorcycles are

cool then you should stop in for a visit. A friendlier place you wont find and the staff are honest and helpful. It’s a family friendly place and easy atmosphere with lots of Motorcycles to checkout and something for just about everybody. From Portland to Roseburg and from Bend to the Oregon coast, Willamette Valley Motoplex serves the entire area and serves it very well.



Roseburg’s Rosebud Theatre

Has a Packed December Grand Opening

Roseburg OR — A new music venue opened Friday, December 27th, at the Historic Rosebud Theater building, located in Downtown Roseburg. Originally built in 1909, the building began as a pharmacy before becoming the Sunnyside Theatre, which closed down in 2023. The theater was leased to the new business owners in the Spring of 2024.

“It’s just been a progression of getting into a couple different venue spaces and trying to create and facilitate a place for the community to come and enjoy live music in a venue atmosphere, and it kind of fell in our laps in a lot of ways,” said Kristi Rifenbark, one of the owners of the theatre. “So, we felt the need to pick it up and make sure that this space happens in the community, because we felt that it was very important and it was really unfortunate when it closed, previously.”

The bands who played on opening weekend included Polyrhythmics and That Other Band. Mick Beach, of That Other Band, expressed his excitement for playing at the theater, after performing in the area for around 45 years.

“I think it’s incredibly important. This is a big asset to the music community, entertainment community, and really the culture of Douglas county, primarily Roseburg,” he said. “It’s good to see

a venue that focuses on just music, good sound systems, staff that knows their way around a stage, and doing production and so it was nice to see that happen.”

That Other Band bass player, Jesse Haggans, agrees.

“I think it’s gonna offer a place for people to come in and relax, have fun, and listen to the type of music they want to listen to,” Haggans said. “I think that the value to the community, to the music community, will increase even more.”

The theater’s capacity sits at around 100 visitors, and the first night of the grand opening weekend was sold out. You can learn more about the Rosebud Theatre and upcoming performances at its website, here: <https://www.therosebudtheatre.com/>.



Joe Ross Statement on Pass Creek Park

Continued from Page 3
for possible litigation for misappropriation of funds.

It’s difficult to track public comment opportunities. Meetings are irregular, some canceled & agendas and minutes aren’t posted timely. I don’t think your intention is to willfully withhold information, mislead or stonewall the public. Within such a vacuum, however, people get spun up unnecessarily. Citizens are deluged with misinformation & disinformation, some leading to conspiracy theories. Be fully transparent, accessible & tell the real story. A News-Review article & Editorial Opinion from July 2016 reinforced these needs. Schedule monthly PAB meetings. Meet in the evening at least once annually in North, South, East & West regions where citizens with day jobs can weigh in about parks in their neck of the woods. Provide meeting agendas (& supplemental materials) at least 5 days prior to public meetings & 14 days prior to hearings. Upload meeting minutes as soon as prepared, marked “DRAFT” until FINAL. Allow public comment on DRAFT minutes before approving them. Drafts may not have properly encapsulated someone’s comments at a previous meeting.

Advise county leadership, staff & others to create a culture that values public input. The public is not your enemy. Most are here to help, not obstruct. Yet, some folks feel intimidated, demeaned, bullied, belittled or just not empowered to speak. Civil discourse should prevail. Don’t misinterpret a person’s passion as yelling & screaming. Everyone should follow decorum, be polite, respectful, listen & try to find common ground. Trained neutral facilitators in contentious situations help all to participate professionally & respectfully.



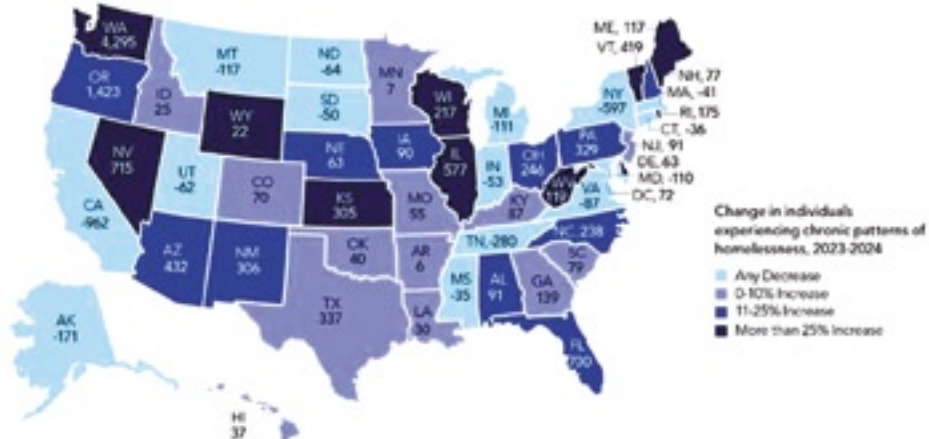
Diana Larson making a point to the Council



Bernie Woodard talks with Parks Director Mark Wall after the meeting.



Oregon sees 91% 17 Year Spike in Homelessness



A new report shows a double-digit increase in homelessness nationwide and in the Pacific Northwest. It seems like there are far fewer tents and homeless camps across Portland than in previous years, but that is a deceiving view. Annual point-in-time counts from across the country show an 18% increase in homelessness nationwide.

The report says that in Oregon there are 22,875 people experiencing homelessness in 2024. Around 62% of those are unsheltered, which is more than 13% increase from the previous year. Meanwhile, the data also said that of families with children who are homeless, about 56% are unsheltered. That is the highest in the nation. Multnomah County homeless deaths up to 456, more than half linked to fentanyl.

Oregon also has 1,315 unsheltered youth, the third highest in the country.

“They’re often more hidden away where they feel like they could be safe or perhaps living in their cars, and this is something that, as a community, we

are definitely going to need to address,” said Scott Kerman, executive director for Blanchet House.

He added that families and youth are often referred to the invisible homeless.

“The data comes from the point-in-time count that occurred in January of 2024. We were in an extremely busy period in January. In fact, the first third of the year was a lot busier than it had been at Blanchet House in the previous year,” Kerman said.

Blanchet House will end the year serving up to 40,000 meals more than last year.

Despite Portland’s camping ban and Mayor-elect Keith Wilson’s promise to end unsheltered homelessness in 2025, Kerman is preparing for what he thinks could be a difficult year.

“I think we’re likely going to see some changes in federal programs such as SNAP benefits that people rely on for food, possibly some more aggressive immigration action, which is going to displace people,” he said.

Community Pages

Continued from Front Page

Pass Creek Park Sale

a December meeting of the Douglas County Parks & Recreation (DCPR) committee to determine if the DCPR recommended that the Park be sold. The meeting was convened to discuss the pros and cons as the Committee sees them and make a recommendation. to the Douglas County Board of Commissioners (BOC) on the sale of the property or to continue evaluation.

The meeting convened with Parks Director, Mark Wall and Committee members Jerry Chartier, Chairman, and Phil Bigler, Troy Wilder, Kivonna Coccia and Jenna Beam. The public audience was quite large and were, collectively, alert and attentive during the proceedings. The Director and Chairman spoke on the specifics of the problems with the park and made some concessions to some of the residents and friends of the park and their objections. Each member, in turn, had question and made indications of, mostly, in favor of selling. Notably, Kivonna Coccia did state she had some reservations on some level and would consider a recommendation to not sell as affirmation for more time to get additional data and make a decision at a later date.

As expected, the public response brought every sort objection to the counties allegation of a neglected money pit, from lack notices to options and possibilities for saving

it or even the counties dereliction in not doing something sooner.

Impassioned remarks from Avi Zohar, M.A Hansen, Mark Shaw, Diane Larson, Bob White and Joe Ross and others did ignite some emotional responses but the heightened decorum was respectful. There was a speaker, Tony Page, who promoted the sale from a Realtor or Developers point of view.

In the end when the voting went around, it was passed to recommend the sale of Pass Creek Park with only one dissenting, Kivonna Coccia.

One of the underlying issues that seems to run through this and other actions in north Douglas county, is the feeling of neglect and abandonment residents there feel. The example of Pass Creek Park includes lack of help from the county in addressing blight and disrepair around the Park and the area. Law enforcement in the area is lacking, the dwindling maintenance by the county, are all some of the leading factors in the condition. Then there is the feeling of loss because it is an impotent palce and resource for residents, neighbors and visitors.

But the recommendation has been sent to the Board of Commissioners and the ball will be in their court. I'm told that folks around Curtain and North Douglas County have not given up and have more ammo in the chamber. We'll see...

Oregon News Herald Name Change

Continued from Front Page

our growth and distribution was enabling more readers and news items, as well as advertisers, so we pivoted and seem to have now found our groove.

Since we now serve an area of Oregon that extends from south to north from Winston and Roseburg to Albany and east to west from Oakland and Sutherlin to Reedsport with a total of over 5000 readers. Each month we are adding 1 or 2 communities to our roles, currently you can find the newspaper in over 80 pickup locations, which can be seen on page 2.

Not only have we expanded to a larger distribution but also, our coverage is more expansive. We still look for the news from the small town angle, but now across a larger region and in fact all Oregon news is a basin to gather from and we are reporting it. As we extend the reach of our reporting, I'm looking to the public for insights, news items and human interest stories to reflect the views and subjects of interest to my fellow Oregonians. The Herald is looking for and accepts unsolicited submissions on local news, events, school news, veteran news, municipal announcements, letters to the editor, obituaries and memorials from across the region.

As we appeal to more and more readers, the Herald is also looking to solicit advertisers to our cause. Expanding our area of influence also enforces our medium as a conduit for advertisers to display their commercial and enterprising services and products to a growing and attentive audience.

So, now, the official name of the newspaper is the Oregon News Herald or, as we sometimes say, the Herald. Our goals are the same as ever but for a larger audience than originally intended. Organically, the evolution has slowly picked up the pace and allows us to continue to be pertinent in both our mission and to our readers. The encouragement of our readers has been the driving factor since the very first issue of the North Douglas Herald and now the Oregon News Herald. Our masthead reflects that history and the Herald will continue under both names, at least for the time being.

A note about our distribution model, as we expand and look for new outlets, we find displaying the Herald is our major obstacle to getting it to folks. We are actively looking for new locations to place stacks of newspapers so contact us if you would like to participate. Displaying where people can see them is also a major challenge. The Oregon News Herald has started a GoFundMe to try and raise money for news racks and boxes to help in that effort. Between that and the wear and tear on our delivery vehicle, we are challenged every month to get the paper distributed in a timely manner. Check out the Go FundMe article and help with your donation or help us spread the word. The national average of newspapers that go under is currently 2.5 per week, up from 2/week in 2022. It is said that printed newspapers is a dying mode on the information highway. That supposed truth is discounted by the enthusiasm the Herald encounters from readers every day. I thank you for your support.

Reedsport Accepting Applications Board & Committee Positions

The City of Reedsport is seeking applicants to fill vacant positions on our Boards and Committees. Applications and additional information are available online at www.cityofreedsport.org. For further information please contact: Rhonda Bryan, City Recorder at (541) 271-1989

Applications will be accepted until positions are filled and applicants

appointed by City Council at their regularly scheduled meeting held on the first Monday of each month.

- Budget Committee – 2 vacancies
- City Parks and Beautification – 1 vacancy
- Dangerous Building Abatement Board of Appeals – 5 vacancies
- Traffic Safety Advisory Committee – 1 vacancy
- Student Councilor – 1 vacancy

Holiday Gas in Oregon Lowest since 2022

Story by Scooter Brown

Gas prices have been inching down for several weeks and are now at their lowest point of the year so far. This means holiday travelers may keep a little extra jingle in their pockets when they finish up at the pump.

Marie Dodds with AAA Oregon said nearly 1.7 million Oregonians will be traveling 50 miles or more over Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's. Ninety percent of them will be driving.

"This is a little bit of a gift for folks as they head out on those holiday road trips," she said. "We are paying the cheapest prices for gas in four years for the holidays. We have to go back to 2020 to find gas prices that are cheaper than what we're paying now."

Nationally, the current average for a gallon of regular gas is \$3.03. The Oregon average is now \$3.47 a gallon. Dodds said if you shop around, it's easy to find prices that are well below

those figures. She went on to say gas prices tend to bottom out for the year sometime between December and February. There are normal seasonal factors that put downward pressure on prices including the reduction in demand.

"The summer driving season comes to an end and everyone gets back into their fall and winter routines, which tend to include less travel," she said.

Also impacting gas prices is the type of gas being sold. In the fall and winter months, Oregonians can purchase "winter blend fuel" which is less refined, thus less expensive. Dodds said the winter blend fuel causes more pollution when it evaporates, so it is only available when temperatures are cooler. Summer blend fuel is burned during the hotter months and is more environmentally friendly. It also costs more to make.

USDA RD Invests over \$4.4 Million to Expand Broadband in Lane County



Residents of rural Lane County will ring in the new year with better connections and broader horizons. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD) State Director for Oregon, Margi Hoffmann, announced, on December 18, 2024, a \$4.4 million investment to expand broadband coverage and connect more Oregonian families.

"For rural Oregonians, reliable internet is no longer a luxury. It is a lifeline," said Hoffmann. "With this investment, residents of Lane County will soon have better opportunities for connection, education, business growth, and healthcare access."

The \$4.4 million ReConnect loan will go to Pioneer Telephone Company and will benefit homes, businesses, farms, and schools from the Mid-Valley to the coast. Reliable internet connections are also crucial to new telehealth services like mobile mental health units and remote neonatal care.

In addition to the \$4.4 million invested in Lane County, USDA RD also announced over \$309 million in funding to connect rural residents, farmers and business owners in 18 states to reliable high-speed internet through the ReConnect Program.

The ReConnect Program is specifically designed to fund the most difficult high-speed internet projects in the nation, which are in the most rural, remote and unserved communities, and many residents and businesses in rural areas would not have high-speed internet service without it. The program is a key part of the Administration's Internet for All initiative to connect everyone in America to high-speed internet by 2030.

Since the beginning of the Biden-Harris Administration, the Department has invested approximately \$4.4 billion for 360 ReConnect awards that will bring high-speed internet access to more than 680,000 people in the most rural and remote areas of America. More than \$2.2 billion of this funding, which will benefit an estimated 341,000 people, was made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

A full list of projects from the announcement is available online.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing, community facilities such as schools, public safety, and health care facilities; and high-speed internet access in rural areas.

Oregon ends Year with Highest Whooping Cough Case Count in 74 Years

The Oregon Health Authority has counted 1,100 whooping cough cases in 2024 -- the highest amount of cases since 1950. According to the OHA, the record number of whooping cough cases makes vaccination more important than ever.

There were 44 outbreaks [in 2024], although the majority of cases were sporadic individual or household-related cases and not associated with outbreaks. The 2024 count represents the highest number of pertussis cases reported in Oregon in a single year since 1950, when 1,420 cases were reported.

OHA says 80% of the cases were in people 18 or younger, with 7.2% being in infants less than a year old. The median age was 12, and 50% of those with whooping cough were female. Eight Oregonians

have died from the disease since 2003, with five of those deaths being in children under four months old. One adult died in 2023 and another in 2024.

Those who are unvaccinated or too young to be vaccinated, such as infants, are at the highest risk from infection, with babies most likely to be hospitalized with pertussis. Multnomah County had the most cases at 235. Clackamas County followed with 135 cases, then Washington County at 119 and Marion County at 75.

Vaccination against pertussis is routinely recommended for infants, children, adolescents and adults. Children should receive the DTaP vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis at 2, 4, 6 and 15 to 18 months old, and again at age 4 to kindergarten age. All persons 10 years old and older should receive a single dose of Tdap.

Continued from Page 3

Oregon Public Safety Report

on Mahogany Lane, which was a licensed OLCC marijuana growing location. It was determined marijuana was illegally being diverted out of state. During the execution of the warrant, over 2,000 pounds of marijuana was found on the premises. About half of the marijuana was being illegally secreted in the residence on the property, which was not part of the licensed area where marijuana could be kept. The marijuana in the residence was also not in the OLCC tracking system. Lane County's Land Management Code Compliance Program will be following up with code violations discovered on the property.

Deputies also located several high-value stolen trailers, stolen tractors, and two stolen firearms, one of which was a suppressed AR-15. Numerous other firearms were also seized.

The Lane County Sheriff's Office was assisted on this case by the Drug Enforcement Administration and OLCC. This investigation would not have been possible without the ongoing grant funding from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission's Illegal Marijuana Market Grant (IMMEG). This grant was created in 2018 by the Oregon Legislature to assist local law enforcement agencies and district attorneys' offices in their efforts to address the illegal marijuana market in Oregon.

This is an ongoing investigation, and no further details will be provided at this time. Anyone with additional information is asked to contact LCSO at 541-682-4141 and reference LCSO case #24-6574.

Missing Person found Alive

Lane County OR -- On December 4th, the Lane County Sheriff's Office began investigating a missing person case involving Cheryl Leigh Guajardo, 76, of Bend. She was last believed to be driving in the Lowell area on December 3rd. Lane County Sheriff's Search & Rescue began a coordinated search of the area involving dozens of volunteers, deputies, and personnel from several assisting agencies. The search was hampered by poor cell service in the remote area she went missing,

preventing searchers from tracking her cell phone or vehicle. This prompted a state-wide Silver Alert due to the possibility she had left the area.

On December 7th at about 11 a.m., searchers located Guajardo's vehicle on an overgrown spur road north of Lookout Point Lake, and a short time later, found Guajardo alive and responsive. Guajardo was transported by ambulance to an area hospital. During this search, dozens of personnel drove thousands of miles, and walked or rode hundreds of miles more. Multiple drones and aircraft searched the area from the air.

The Lane County Sheriff's Office would like to thank the many agencies that assisted with this search:

- Linn County Sheriff's Office
- Deschutes County Sheriff's Office
- Bend Police Department
- Oakridge Fire Department
- Oregon State Police
- Oregon Department of Emergency Management
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- U.S. Forest Service

Thank you as well to the many residents of our state who have kept an eye out for Guajardo, and to Guajardo's friends and family who assisted with the investigation and search. LCSO Case #24-6449

South Albany HS Teacher Arrested

Albany OR -- On Wednesday, December 11, 2024 an inappropriate sexual relationship between a former high school teacher and high school student was brought to the attention of a School Resource Officer. Officers investigated the allegations and on Friday, December 13, 2024 arrested Duece Keey Loi Phaly, age 28, of Albany. He was arrested for 10 counts of Sex Abuse II and 1 count of Sex Abuse III.

The inappropriate sexual relationship began in 2022 when Phaly was working as a math teacher and wrestling coach at South Albany High School while the juvenile

victim was a student. Phaly was a teacher and coach from 2018-2022. He is currently lodged at the Linn County Jail.

Sex crimes against children are especially heinous and require an extremely thorough investigation. The Greater Albany Public School District has worked cooperatively with the Albany Police Department to ensure a complete examination into this matter is completed. We believe there may be additional victims and anyone with information regarding this incident is encouraged to contact Officer Gina Bell at 541-791-0070.

I-5 Fatal Two-Vehicle Crash

Albany, OR -- A tragic two-vehicle collision occurred on I-5 North early Tuesday morning, December 24 just north of Albany, resulting in one fatality, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation. Albany, OR -- Fatal Two-Vehicle Crash on I-5 N Claims One Life

The crash happened around 5:00 a.m. and involved a sedan and a pickup truck. Oregon State Police confirmed the fatality at the scene but withheld the victim's identity pending family notification. The driver of the second vehicle sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was treated at the scene by paramedics. Both vehicles sustained severe damage, with debris scattered across multiple lanes. Crews worked for several hours to clear the wreckage and reopen the roadway. Investigators are piecing together the events leading up to the crash and have urged anyone with information to come forward.

2 Fatalities in Crash

Linn County OR -- A single-vehicle crash that occurred just north of Albany just after midnight Sunday took the lives of two individuals, Oregon State Police reported. A Philomath resident was one of two passengers transported to a hospital with injuries.

OSP was dispatched at 12:04 a.m. Dec. 22 to the scene of the crash at the intersection of Century Drive NE and Murder Creek Drive NE. The preliminary investigation indicated that Kyle Gene

Luca, 41, of Albany, was driving north in a Toyota 4Runner and left the roadway for unknown reasons, began to roll and ejected three of the four occupants. Lucas and a passenger, Justin Shaun Bottcher, 36, of Albany, were declared deceased at the scene. Two passengers, a 41-year-old Philomath woman and a 40-year-old Albany man, were transported to an area hospital with injuries.

According to OSP, speed was considered to be the primary cause of the crash. The three occupants ejected were not wearing seatbelts.

15-year-old girl killed in head-on crash Linn County OR -- A 15-year-old passenger in a car that was involved in a head-on crash in Linn County on December 23rd died at a local hospital, Oregon State Police (OSP) said. The crash occurred shortly after 3 p.m. at the intersection of Highway 20 and Highway 22.

A Toyota Highlander that was heading westbound on Highway 20 attempted to turn left onto Highway 22 and crashed into a Hyundai Accent driving east, police said. OSP stated that the Toyota Highlander made an unsafe turn, causing the deadly crash. It closed down traffic on both roads for about two hours as OSP investigated.

The driver of the Hyundai, Maryssa E. Swiderski, 35, of Willamina, and her 15-year-old passenger were both airlifted to an area hospital, police said. The 15-year-old girl was later pronounced dead at the hospital. Swiderski was in critical condition. Two other passengers in the Hyundai, a 17-year-old boy and a 15-year-old boy, both of Willamina, were seriously injured and taken by ambulance to a local hospital.

The Toyota driver, Victor Hernandez Triana, of Springfield, and two passengers reported minor injuries and were treated at a local hospital. A 51-year-old passenger in the Toyota, Maria Triana De Hernandez, of Springfield, suffered serious injuries and was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital. The fatal crash remains under investigation.

These new Oregon Laws start Jan. 1

Styrofoam container ban, Right to repair, School bus cameras & More

Story by Milo Banks

January 1st was the start of not only 2025, but also for some new laws in the state of Oregon. Bills passed during the 2024 legislative session included measures to allow Oregonians easier access to repair their own electronic devices, improving access to prescription drugs and lowering their costs, school bus safety and school board transparency. The 2023 legislature passed the styrofoam container ban that went into effect January 1st 2025.

This means the end of Styrofoam to-go containers in Oregon. As of Jan. 1, the new state law takes effect, banning restaurants and food carts from using polystyrene foam, commonly known by the trademarked product name Styrofoam.

Polystyrene is a non-biodegradable petroleum-based plastic. Maine was the first state to pass a ban on polystyrene foam containers in 2019, with the ban beginning in 2021. Eleven states, including California and Washington, have banned polystyrene foam food containers.

Several Oregon cities have already had bans in place, including Ashland, Eugene, Florence, Lincoln City, Medford, Milwaukie, Newport and Silverton. And this will be nothing new for Portland residents,

where the city has banned polystyrene foam food containers since 1990.

In an effort to encourage alternatives to Styrofoam, a separate bill was passed by the Oregon legislature in 2023 to allow restaurant customers to bring their own reusable containers for takeout or leftovers. Restaurants are not required to allow customers to do this, but the rules for those who do went into place in 2024.

Here are some of the key laws that take effect on Jan. 1, as announced by Oregon House and Senate and signed into law by Governor Kotek.

Senate Bill 543 Styrofoam container ban passed 20-9 in 2023, with bipartisan support, but it didn't take effect until now.

Right to repair

The law requires equipment manufacturers to provide consumers and repair businesses the tools and information necessary to fix electronic devices, rather than be forced to have the manufacturer make the repair. It's aimed at giving consumers a lower-cost alternative for repair work.

School bus cameras

Although drivers are supposed to stop for school buses when the stop arm is deployed and red lights are flashing, bus drivers report

instances every day of drivers blowing right past it. The new law allows school districts to install cameras on buses to record drivers who don't stop for the bus when its safety lights are on. That will allow police to possibly cite those drivers.

Drugs on public transit

The new law makes drug use on public transit a Class-A misdemeanor. That would open access to state-funded treatment for those convicted of the crime. Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, was one of the chief sponsors.

Prescription drug access and pricing

Two new laws are tackling the issue of making prescription drugs more accessible and affordable.

HB 4012 prevents health benefit plans from requiring that prescription drugs be dispensed at a specialty pharmacies. The aim of the law is to make it easier for physicians to adjust dosages if necessary. It also opens up options in case a specialty pharmacy has supply issues with filling a prescription.

HB 4113 requires that insurers accept that all amounts paid for prescription drugs go toward calculating the enrollee's out-of-pocket maximums. One of the chief sponsors of the bill was Rep. Emerson Levy, D-Bend.

Worker quota reporting

HB 4127 requires companies to be transparent with warehouse workers about productivity quotas. It also protects workers from being punished or fired for not meeting a quota if that quota was not made clear by the employer.

School board transparency

Public school boards and boards for community colleges and universities will be required to video record their meetings and upload them for the public. However, the new law does not apply to meetings that are not already public, including executive sessions.

School districts with fewer than 50 students are exempt. Those districts with no internet access would be required to upload an audio version of the meeting.

Divesting from coal

The state treasurer and Oregon Investment Council are required to remove the state from investments in coal companies and eliminate funds containing coal companies. This must be done without monetary loss to the investment funds.

HB 4083 allows some wiggle room to keep investment in a company if "it is transitioning to clean energy on a reasonable timeline."

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Troopers Foiling Thermal Imaging Poachers

Clackamas County OR – High-tech poaching emerged in Oregon when officials served search warrants on nine Clackamas County residences on Dec. 15 and 16.

Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife (OSPF&W) Troopers arrested 13 individuals and seized 14 infrared thermal imaging devices, one rifle and four deer in an operation that followed months of investigation into the subjects’ use of Forward-Looking Infrared, or FLIR, to illegally kill deer, elk and other big game animals.

Laws prohibit the use of thermal and infrared devices to hunt, locate, or scout for wildlife because the heat-sensing technology undermines an animal’s natural ability to hide or conceal itself. FLIR users can spot an animal’s heat signature in complete darkness or heavy cover. Without camouflage or cover, animals are unable to forage or move around after dark.

Over the last two years, OSP F&W Division has received an increasing number of complaints regarding the unlawful use of FLIR technology to hunt or scout for big game animals. Several complaints originated in the Clackamas County area.

This fall, F&W Troopers began investigating several individuals who were reportedly using infrared technology to kill deer and elk in a specific area. Troopers were successful and the result underscores officials’ ability to navigate evolving technology, according to OSP Captain Kyle Kennedy.

“This case highlights the Fish and Wildlife Division’s ability to adapt to modern poaching threats and effectively investigate

and seek criminal prosecution of poachers,” he said.

Infrared technology gives advantage to those using it, and can result in an increase in the number of animals taken off the landscape, according to Jason Kirchner, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) District Wildlife Biologist based in Newport. “Thermal or infrared use is illegal in Oregon, gives an unfair advantage, and is not a fair chase,” he said, “This illegal activity will increase harvest rates, reduce our game populations and hunting opportunities, and impact the public image of law-abiding hunters.”

Bernadette Graham-Hudson, ODFW Wildlife Division Administrator, agrees.

“Hunting regulations are in place to level the playing field for all hunters, and to maintain fair chase standards,” she said, “People who bypass the rules steal from legitimate hunters, and all Oregonians who wish to experience our wildlife as they recreate in the outdoors.”

The Oregon Hunters Association, a statewide organization invested in protecting Oregon’s natural resources, backs the effort to curb unethical practices, according to state President, Steve Hagan.

“OHA supports the vigorous enforcement of laws designed to protect wildlife, habitat, private property and hunter’s rights,” Hagan said.

Officials will file criminal wildlife charges with the Clackamas County District Attorney’s Office for all 13 individuals suspected of using infrared thermal imaging while scouting or hunting big game animals.

Elk Creek Watershed

Continued from Front Page

and others, who managed a great deal of work over a long period, ending last year.

When Paula Estill contacted me recently to let me know the Elk Creek Watershed Coalition was forming to continue the good work, I was really encouraged. Oregon has a system of watershed management procedures that are major source of land improvements and management that provides resourceful help for landowners and wildlife and environmental concerns. The ECWC has done over 2 million dollars in land improvements since 2005. There is a lot work that can still be done. Elk Creek has some of the best Coho in the region and the low gradient waterways are primed to be first rate habitat.

Along with Paula and Avi Zohar, Lee has committed to help in his very capable way and Susan Applegate returns with her enthusiasm along with RuthAnn Duncan filling the chairperson role. The meeting will help determine the momentum and direction the watershed takes for environmental and habitat improvement and helping property owners steward their resources for sustainability as well as administratively setting up an effective organization.

The meeting is on Tuesday January 14th in the Drain Civic Center, 205 West “A” St, in the Conference room at 7pm. The Coalition is actively looking for new members. Open to all interested parties, the coalition is seeking diverse individuals, interested in fisheries, habitat restoration and responsible property management. Welcome all who are interested in the Elk Creek Watershed area.

Kidnapping Reported

Firearm involved in Cottage Grove Abduction

Cottage Grove, OR -- On 01/01/2025 at about 12:07 AM South Lane 9-1-1 received a report of a suspected kidnapping that had just occurred at El Tapatio Restaurant located at 725 E. Gibbs Ave. in Cottage Grove. Cottage Grove Police Officers were nearby and responded immediately to the location where they contacted witnesses to the incident.

During the subsequent investigation it was reported to officers that Austin K. Waskiewicz was observed confronting his girlfriend at the south entrance to the restaurant while brandishing a firearm and demanded that she come with him. After a brief argument the two left the restaurant together in their vehicle and returned to their residence at 40 Sweet Ln. in Cottage Grove. Officers were able to confirm the location of the residence and the presence of the vehicle described by witnesses parked in front of the house.

Due to the volatile nature of the incident and the involvement of a firearm, the Eugene Police Department was contacted to request mutual aid. The Eugene Police Department SWAT team responded to assist in the resolution of the incident.

At about 8:30 AM, Waszkiewicz was taken into custody by SWAT team members at the residence without incident. The SWAT team transferred

Continued on Page 15

Bird Flu a Growing concern in Oregon and World Wide

Continued from Front Page

hospitalized with serious respiratory symptoms, is believed to have contracted bird flu from exposure to sick and dead birds in a backyard flock. The patient has not been identified but is reportedly over 65 with underlying health problems and is the second person in the United States who has been hospitalized with the virus. The Louisiana patient was infected with a strain of the virus different from the one affecting dairy cows and causing sporadic cases in farmworkers in the U.S.

Genetic analysis of two samples collected from the Louisiana patient suggest that the virus may have the ability to attach to cells in the human upper airway. That’s worrisome, experts say, because bird flu viruses like H5N1 typically attach to cell receptors found in birds and other animals, but not commonly in humans. This is why bird flu typically doesn’t infect humans or spread person to person. One of the mutations was also seen in a sample from a British Columbia teenager who was hospitalized with bird flu, the CDC said.

While the findings show that the virus has the capacity to mutate in ways that could make it more transmissible to humans, experts stopped short of suggesting it’s on the verge of a pandemic.

“There’s no evidence that there’s been spread from this person to others, and that’s a good thing,” said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious diseases expert at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. “It clearly means that we have to keep our attention on this, and if anything, ratchet it up even more.”

Dr. Paul Offit, a vaccine and infectious disease expert at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, said there’s no evidence the mutations were “functional,” meaning the virus could actually attach to the upper airway and replicate and spread to others.

“I think if there were clear and definitive evidence that the virus has mutated to the point that it can bind to the binding receptors in the upper respiratory tract, meaning the lining of the nose, the lining of the throat, the lining of the windpipe and therefore reproduce itself

in the upper respiratory tract, that would be worrisome,” Offit said. “But that’s not what the report said.”

In the report, the CDC said the detection “underscores the importance of ongoing genomic surveillance in people and animals, containment of avian influenza A(H5) outbreaks in dairy cattle and poultry, and prevention measures among people with exposure to infected animals or environments.”

The agency said that the risk to the general public hasn’t changed and remains low. As of the end of 2024, 66 confirmed human cases of H5N1 have been reported in the U.S., with the majority linked to exposure to infected poultry or dairy cows, according to the CDC. That number is likely an underestimate, however, as a CDC report published in November found evidence of asymptomatic bird flu infections in farmworkers. There is no evidence of person-to-person spread associated with any of the cases.

The Louisiana patient was infected with a strain called D1.1, which is closely related to other viruses recently detected in wild birds and poultry in the U.S. and in recent human cases in British Columbia, Canada and Washington state.

The CDC said its analysis found no changes associated with markers that would mean antivirals, such as Tamflu, wouldn’t work against the virus. That’s one of the agency’s criteria for deploying a bird flu vaccine.

Angela Rasmussen, a virologist who specializes in emerging infectious diseases, noted on the social media platform X that the mutations identified in the patient weren’t present in samples from birds, indicating the changes developed within the patient after infection and aren’t circulating in wildlife.

She said that’s “good news” because “it reduces risk of transmission to another person and suggests ‘human-adapted’ viruses aren’t emerging in birds.” But, “the H5N1 situation remains grim” as human cases continue to rise, Rasmussen posted.

“We don’t know what combination of mutations would lead to a pandemic H5N1

virus and there’s only so much we can predict from these sequence data,” she said. “But the more humans are infected, the more chances a pandemic virus will emerge.”

Oregon state veterinarian Dr. Ryan Scholz says health officials are still trying to connect the dots after an indoor house cat in Washington County contracted bird flu after eating cat food with raw turkey, and later died.

Since bird flu was first found in the U.S. in dairy cattle in March, dozens of cats have contracted the virus, primarily through poultry or wild bird exposure. The Oregon Department of Agriculture says Oregon’s first cat to catch the illness died after eating a frozen feline turkey meal from pet food company, Northwest Naturals.

“Anytime you have a raw food product, if there is a pathogen, there isn’t a chance to kill that pathogen and so it does pass through,” said Scholz.

Cat owners who may have bought the product are being asked to throw out meals with “Best by” sell dates of May 21 and June 23, 2026.

“We have not connected any other products from that company to the source meat that we believe was infected in this product, and so there really is not a widespread recall,” said Scholz. “It really is targeted to just those two lots of this product.”

Scholz says when the virus is contracted through food products, it’s usually through raw dairy products.

“We don’t have this virus in dairy cattle in Oregon, but we do know that several neighboring states do have it or have had it and particularly in California, we’re seeing this in raw milk dairies, so raw, unpasteurized dairy products are another big risk factor right now,” Scholz said.

Scholz says symptoms of bird flu in cats are mostly neurological. They can include lethargy, depression, and refusing to eat.

“We have seen blindness reported a number of times where the cats become either temporarily or permanently blind and then just kind of generally go downhill very quickly,”

he said.

Scholz says bird flu spreading through different species is rare. The first human in Oregon tested positive in November. He says there are other things you can do to limit exposure.

“If you do have birds that unexpectedly die, make sure you’re taking some basic precautions like wearing gloves, wearing an N95 mask, wearing goggles when you handle that bird, and if you have concerns, call us.”

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has a hotline you can call to report a dead bird. You can reach them at 503-986-4711 or through email at AHHotline@oda.oregon.gov. If your pet is displaying any symptoms of the virus, you’re asked to contact your veterinarian.

A second brand of raw pet food sold in farmers markets in California has been found to contain bird flu, according to Los Angeles County health officials. One house cats was has been confirmed positive with the virus, and the four cats living in the same house are presumed to be sick, as well.

Last week health officials alerted consumers about a separate brand of raw pet food linked to the death of a cat in Oregon.

The most recent cases involve a brand called Monarch Raw Pet Food, LA County officials said in a press release in late December. A list of locations where the raw pet food was sold was listed on the product website.

Health officials in L.A. warned against feeding pets raw food following the detection of bird flu in a raw pet food brand last week. Earlier this month, officials confirmed bird flu in four house cats in another household. They consumed raw milk, became sick and died, officials said.

Cats infected with H5N1 bird flu can develop severe illness that can include neurologic signs, respiratory signs or liver disease that can rapidly lead to death. There have been no human cases of bird flu associated with house cats, L.A. officials said. Health officials say the overall risk of H5N1 bird flu to the public remains low.

Continued on Page 12

The Oregon Rural Report

Oregon’s Rural Road Fatality Rate Among the Highest in the U.S.

Backlog of Needed Repairs & Improvements to U.S. Rural Roads & Bridges totals \$198 Billion

Story by Milo Banks

Washington, D.C. – America’s rural transportation system is in need of repairs and modernization to support economic growth and improve traffic safety, but the US faces a \$198 billion backlog in funding for needed repairs and improvements to its rural transportation system. This is according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national transportation research nonprofit. The report, Rural Connections: Examining the Safety, Connectivity, Condition and Funding Needs of America’s Rural Roads & Bridges, evaluates the safety and condition of the nation’s rural roads and bridges and finds that the nation’s rural transportation system is in need of immediate improvements to address deficient roads and bridges, high crash rates, and inadequate connectivity and capacity.

Roads, highways, rails and bridges in the nation’s rural areas face significant challenges: they lack adequate capacity, they fail to provide needed levels of connectivity to many communities, and they cannot adequately support growing freight travel in many corridors. Rural roads and bridges have significant deficiencies and deterioration, they lack many desirable safety features, and rural non-Interstate roads experience fatal traffic crashes at a rate far higher than all other roads and highways. The chart below ranks states with the highest share of rural pavements in poor condition, rural bridges rated poor/structurally deficient, and fatality rates on non-Interstate, rural roads. Data for all 50 states is included in the report Appendices.

The rate of traffic fatalities on Oregon’s non-Interstate, rural roads in 2022 was nearly two and a half times the fatality rate on all other roads in the state – 2.82 fatalities per 100

million vehicle miles of travel vs. 1.17 – and is the fourth highest in the nation. There were 297 fatalities on Oregon’s non-Interstate, rural roads in 2022. Rural roads are more likely to have narrow lanes, limited shoulders, sharp curves, exposed hazards, pavement drop-offs, steep slopes and limited clear zones along roadsides.

Seven percent of Oregon’s rural roads are rated in poor condition and 21 percent are in mediocre condition. Five percent of Oregon’s rural bridges are rated in poor/structurally deficient condition. Bridges rated poor/structurally deficient have significant deterioration to the major components of the bridge and are often posted for lower weight or closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large vehicles, including agricultural equipment, commercial trucks, school buses and emergency services vehicles.

America’s rural transportation system provides the first and last link in the supply chain from farm to market, connects manufacturers to their customers, supports the tourism industry, and enables the production of energy, food and fiber. Rural Americans are more reliant on the quality of their transportation system than their urban counterparts, with vehicle travel in rural communities averaging approximately 50 percent higher than in urban communities.

“This report underscores the need for infrastructure investment in rural America to ensure the roads, bridges, and highways our nation’s equipment manufacturers rely on are efficient, safe, and reliable,” said Todd Stucke, president of Kubota Tractor Corporation and chair of the Association of Equipment Manufacturers. “Our freight transportation network—which largely consists of rural communities where our food, fiber, and fuel

is produced—remains a vital part of our economy’s supply chain. Allowing it to fall into a state of disrepair will not only cost us more money down the road to modernize, but it will also disrupt our industry’s ability to remain competitive globally.”

Signed into law in November 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is providing a significant boost in federal investment in roads, bridges and transit and offers an opportunity for the nation to make progress in improving the safety, reliability and condition of America’s transportation system. The IIJA will provide \$454 billion over the five-year period from 2022 to 2026 for investment in highways and transit, resulting in a 31 percent increase in federal investment over the previous federal surface transportation program. The IIJA includes a \$2 billion Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program that will support projects to improve and expand the surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas to increase connectivity, improve the safety and reliability of the movement of people and freight, and generate regional economic growth and improve quality of life.

“Rural roads, highways and bridges connect farms to the pantries of every family in America,” said American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall. “Transportation delays and poorly maintained roads put the safety of rural Americans at risk and undermine farmers’ ability to contribute to a stable food supply. While the IIJA offers an opportunity to improve the reliability and condition of America’s transportation system, we must increase funding in the National Highway Trust Fund to ensure our roads continue to bring agriculture products to market.”

An analysis of the Status of the Nation’s Highways, Bridges and Transit Conditions and Performance Report, 25th Edition report, submitted by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) to Congress in 2024, indicates that the U.S. faces a \$198 billion backlog in needed repairs and improvements to the nation’s rural roads, highways and bridges. This includes a \$97 billion backlog for rural road and highway rehabilitation, a \$53 billion backlog for needed rural bridge rehabilitation, and a \$48 billion backlog for needed rural roadway expansions and enhancements.

“Transportation infrastructure provides critical connections for our rural communities nationwide, supporting their health and driving commerce. Addressing the significant deficiencies outlined in this report is essential not only for safety but also for ensuring that our rural communities continue to succeed,” said John Drake, vice president for transportation, infrastructure, and supply chain policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “With the support provided by the IIJA, we have an unprecedented opportunity to modernize these vital connections and strengthen the foundation of rural America’s economic future.”

“The health of the nation’s economy and the safety and quality of life in America’s small communities and rural areas ride on our rural transportation system,” said Dave Kearby, executive director of TRIP. “Providing the nation with a rural transportation network that supports rural America’s economy and will support its future development will require that the U.S. invest in a rural transportation system that is safe, efficient, and well-maintained, and that provides adequate mobility and connectivity to the nation’s rural communities.”

Farm and Forest Modernization Rules Passed at Land Conservation and Development Commission

Oregon’s farm and forestland rules were made easier for local governments to apply and use by the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC or commission) when they passed amended administrative rules Thursday, December 5, 2024. The rule updates align existing rules with Oregon legislation and caselaw, clarify terms, and standardize evidentiary standards.

Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) staff convened a work group to develop recommendations on needed updates to administrative rule to improve the clarity and consistency of farm and forest protections across the state. Based on the workgroup recommendation, the commission directed staff to propose rule changes to codify areas of law that were not yet represented in administrative rules, increase consistent implementation of case law standards, and provide additional clarity to counties and permit applicants with the intent of reducing unnecessary appeals.

According to the commission’s direction in January and April, members of a rulemaking advisory committee considered standards related to the following regulations:

- The “farm impacts test” (ORS 215.296)
- Agri-tourism and other commercial events “incidental and subordinate” and “necessary to support” standards
- Transportation facilities on rural lands
- The definitions of a “private park”, “preparation” and “processing”
- The evidentiary standard for the verification of income for certain uses
- Multi-path permitting uses

“I was impressed throughout the process with the quality of the staff work, and the contributions of rules advisory committee members,” said Barbara Boyer, commission liaison to the rulemaking advisory committee. “County planners are asking for this – these rules will make their jobs easier. This work was essential to continue the legacy of farm and forestland across our state.”

A summary of the adopted rules that outlines those adopted by the commission may be found on the Department’s website.

Story by Scooter Brown

It is a disturbing fact that 1,400 Oregon vets experience homelessness on any given night and more than half of them are unsheltered. This is data from US Department of Veterans Affairs and point to point counts.

Current Governor Kotek and predecessor Governor Brown, brought forth initiatives to end veteran homelessness. The VA and Oregon Housing and Community Services combine federal and state resources with non-profits and faith-based organizations to provide homeless services. Dedicated veteran housing has been built, including a new 34-unit apartment complex called Courtney Place in Salem.

A 2022 report by the Department of Housing and Urban Development found over the last 15 years, the number of homeless vets has increased in only three states: Maine, Vermont and Oregon. It is a persistent and ongoing challenge to fully address this dilemma. Tyler Francke, Community Coordinator for the Oregon VA, said veterans who are unhoused or at risk of homelessness are often hesitant to seek help and still need to be informed that assistance is due. There are Veteran’s Service offices in every Oregon county and on four tribal lands.

“The US Department of Veteran’s Affairs estimates their budget based on

Veterans Corner

Homelessness Persists for Oregon Veterans

every veteran that they know exists. There are resources that are allocated to you,” Francke said. “So, you’re not taking dollars from someone else, you’re just taking advantage of the resources that you earned through your service.”

According to Francke, it’s difficult to put an exact number on how many vets are unhoused each year, veterans are often included with civilians in the overall counts of homeless people served statewide. He added homeless vet cases tend to require additional wrap-around services in order to keep them housed. He says that getting vets off the streets is a top priority, because a majority of them are highly vulnerable.

“Women veterans we know experience homelessness or housing insecurity at a higher percentage than the general population of veterans,” Francke said. “LGBTQ veterans are more at risk for homelessness. Older veterans too.”

ODVA utilizes Homeless Veterans Coordinators who work directly with former armed service members who are in a housing crisis. Francke said there are actually many positive stories of how veterans have been housed or stayed housed with direct support from the office. Over the last several years, the City of Eugene and Lane County have been recognized for innovative work done to ensure “a home for

every veteran.” In Douglas County the Veterans Service Office and United Community Action Network work to provide resources to at risk Veterans. All across Oregon, county, public and private organizations are active and involved. Advocates insist that work continues.

Last month, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced in a press release it housed 47,925 Veterans experiencing homelessness in FY 2024, surpassing its goal to house 41,000 Veterans by 16.9%, and marking the largest number of Veterans housed in a single year since 2019.

The work is not done by any stretch of imagination, in fact still only a drop in the bucket. Support all Veterans.

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Invasive Species Reported on McKenzie

Story by Scooter Brown

Eugene, OR – ODFW staff responded to a report made to the Oregon Invasive Species Hotline on Wednesday, Dec. 18, that a koi (fish) was spotted near the Armitage Boat Landing on the McKenzie River near Eugene. District fish biologists removed the large koi which was most likely intentionally released into the McKenzie River. Koi can live up to 25 years, reproduce rapidly, and



can survive very cold winters. Mature koi can produce 5,000 to 10,000 eggs and the largest koi can lay 500,000 eggs. “Introduced, non-native fish can spread deadly diseases to wild fish populations,” said Jeff Ziller, ODFW District Fish Biologist. “There are plenty of examples in other states and countries where koi have damaged or changed aquatic ecosystems so extensively that vast amounts of public resources have been allocated to eradicate them, largely unsuccessfully,” added Ziller. Koi are omnivores with a voracious appetite, consuming fish and amphibian eggs, aquatic insects, and competing with native fish for food. They also stir up

sediments while uprooting and consuming aquatic plants which can reduce forage and cover for waterfowl and other animals. Once non-native species are introduced to a waterbody, they are nearly impossible to remove. Help spread the word to never dump unwanted fish or aquarium contents in or near waterways, streams, ponds, lakes, or stormwater drains. It can have serious ecological consequences and can ruin recreational opportunities for future generations of Oregonians. ODFW staff appreciate the report to the Invasive Species Hotline. Non-native, invasive species, such as koi, can be reported to the hotline at 1-866-INVADER.

Continued from Page 10

Bird Flu - Developments and Concerns

Most human cases of bird flu in the U.S. involve people who had direct contact with infected cattle or livestock. Overall, there have been 66 confirmed cases of bird flu involving humans across 10 states, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data. California has the highest number of cases with 37. Most bird flu cases affecting humans in the U.S. have been mild, and patients have typically recovered after receiving antiviral medication. Federal health officials have begun testing raw cow’s milk cheese and raw milk nationwide to test for bird flu. It’s not likely that we can do much about the developments around the country, whether it’s figuring out how to protect our house pets, our small farm animals as well as commercial farms and now even zoo’s and protected animal habitats. But, ultimately we need to monitor the data, where ever it is, correlate that data across all of the data streams and construct some real time mechanisms to control against outbreaks and create effective prevention and treatment. The Government has a public indictment to inform and disseminate all of the burgeoning scientific and anecdotal information, discoveries and developments, regarding H5N1, to the public at large.

NIH-funded study finds risk of human infection continues to remain low, but mutation in H5N1 influenza surface protein could enable easier human infection . A single modification in the protein found on the surface of the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 influenza virus currently circulating in U.S. dairy cows could allow for easier transmission among humans, according to new research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and published today in the journal Science. The study results reinforce the need for continued, vigilant surveillance and monitoring of HPAI H5N1 for potential genetic changes that could make the virus more transmissible in humans. Current strains of the bovine (cow) H5N1 virus are not known to be transmissible among people; however, infections have occurred in people exposed to infected wild birds, poultry, dairy cows and other mammals. As part of pandemic preparedness efforts, researchers have monitored the H5N1 virus for years to understand viral genetic mutations that occur in nature

and what impact they may have on transmissibility. Influenza viruses attach to cells with a surface viral protein called hemagglutinin (HA). The HA latches on to sugar (glycan) molecule receptors on cells to cause infection. Avian (bird) influenza viruses—like H5N1—have not infected people often because the human upper respiratory tract lacks the avian-type cell receptors found in birds. Scientists are concerned that viruses could evolve to recognize human-type cell receptors in the upper airways and acquire the ability to infect people and spread between them. Scientists at Scripps Research used the H5N1 strain isolated from the first U.S. human infection with the bovine strain 2.3.4.4b (A/Texas/37/2024) to test how mutations in the HA gene sequence affected the binding of that protein with avian versus human-type cell receptors. The researchers introduced several mutations into the viral HA protein that had been observed to occur naturally in the past and found that one mutation, called Q226L, improved the ability of the protein to attach to receptors typically found on human cells, especially when an additional mutation was present. Importantly, the researchers introduced the genetic mutations only into the HA surface protein and did not create or conduct experiments with a whole, infectious virus.

The experimental finding with the Q226L mutation alone does not mean HPAI H5N1 is on the verge of causing a widespread pandemic, the authors note. Other genetic mutations would likely be required for the virus to transmit among people. In the setting of a growing number of H5N1 human cases resulting from direct contact with infected animals, the findings stress the importance of continued efforts at outbreak control and continued genomic surveillance to monitor for the emergence of HPAI H5N1 genetic changes and maintain public health preparedness. The research was funded in part by NIH’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), through its Centers of Excellence for Influenza Research and Response program.



Image of three orange rod shaped H5N1/bird flu particles against a purple background. H5N1 avian influenza particles (rod-shaped; orange)NIAID and CDC

OFWC Adopts 2025 Groundfish Regulations

Story by Scooter Brown

Salem OR — The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted 2025 recreational and commercial groundfish regulations at their meeting on December 13th 2024, in Salem that continue a five-fish recreational bag limit during the popular summer months. Nearshore groundfish species (approximately a dozen species of rockfish, cabezon, greenlings, and lingcod) are subject to joint state and federal management. The recent (2023) stock assessment for both black rockfish and canary rockfish resulted in a reduced quota for Oregon’s fisheries.

While the year will start with a four-fish daily marine bag limit, the bag limit increases to five fish starting July 1 (with a one-fish sub-bag limit of canary rockfish all year). ODFW heard support for this approach during meetings earlier in the year when it asked for public feedback on how to accommodate the reduced quotas. This approach is expected to provide a stable fishery throughout the year, with a low risk that the bag limit will need to be further reduced in-season. The increased bag limit during the popular summer months will provide the most opportunity as many visitors come to the Oregon coast to vacation and fish during summer and ocean conditions are also much better. The commercial nearshore fishery’s bi-monthly trip limits are also reduced for 2025.

ODFW is seeking to collect more data on black rockfish to increase confidence in survey data and hopefully increase the quota; the 2025 reduction in quota would have been larger but for ODFW assessment data. The Commission also took the following actions: Fish Restoration and Enhancement Program: Appointed Winter Rhodes as the Public at Large Representative to the R&E Board effective Jan. 1, 2025. They also heard updates on the R&E program, which distributes grants for fishery restoration and enhancement projects throughout the state, and on the STEP (Salmon Trout Enhancement) program, which runs hatcheries, the Egg to Fry program in Oregon’s classrooms, educational fishing events and other programs thru a network of dedicated volunteers. Access and Habitat Project Funding: Approved funding to match NRCS funds and help continue the Open Fields program, which provides hunting access to more than half a million acres on private land. The grant will also help fund an expedited approval process for other landowners who want to join the program. Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program: Approved ODFW’s acquisition of three properties adjacent to Fern Ridge Wildlife Area’s South Coyote Unit that build upon local and regional conservation efforts to protect Willamette Valley native wet prairie and riparian habitats. Funding for the acquisition comes from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) as part of an agreement to settle BPA wildlife habitat mitigation obligations in the Willamette Valley. Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission: Approved recommending sheep and hay farmer Mark Vargas of Medford for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board’s appointment to the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission as a fish and wildlife habitat

Continued on Page 15

Business Matters *Sponsored By Zolezzi Insurance Agency* *A Better Brand of Insurance Service*

USDC Invests \$700,375 for Improvements in Sweet Home Infrastructure Improvements to Promote Business

Story by Milo Banks

Washington DC – The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$700,375 grant to the city of Sweet Home, Oregon, for utility infrastructure improvements to serve businesses in the region.

This grant will provide for three power generators, providing uninterrupted service and water to businesses in a region recently impacted by winter storms. This EDA investment will be matched with \$175,094 in local funds.

"EDA plays an important role in supporting locally driven disaster recovery and resiliency plans," said Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Cristina Killingsworth. "This EDA investment will help to ensure that the local economy continues to thrive in the event of future storms."

"Oregon's rural communities often face many of the same challenges as more populated areas but with less resources to address them," said Governor Tina Kotek. "This timely investment from the Biden-Harris Administration will support businesses in the city of Sweet Home through another winter season."

"Ensuring that small businesses in rural communities have the resources they need to thrive and expand is essential to towns like Sweet Home," said Senator Ron Wyden. "This federal investment helps support small businesses here in Oregon and will help communities be more resilient to natural disasters caused by the climate crisis. I will continue to push for more resources like this for Oregon's small businesses and rural communities."

"When extreme weather strikes, we need to make sure our local businesses have the tools they need to keep their doors open and serving Oregon's communities," said Senator Jeff

Merkley. "EDA plays a critical role in disaster recovery and this federal funding to bring new, reliable power generators to Sweet Home will help businesses in the region weather the worst impacts of the storms and keep their local economy going. I will continue to do all that I can to ensure that every available resource is allocated to protect Oregonians' lives and livelihoods from the worst impacts of catastrophic weather."

This project was made possible by the regional planning efforts led by the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG). EDA funds OCWCOG to bring together the public and private sectors to create an economic development roadmap to strengthen the regional economy, support private capital investment and create jobs. This project is funded under the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023, which provided EDA with \$483 million in additional Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) Program funds for disaster relief and recovery for areas that received a major disaster declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Act as a result of Hurricanes Ian and Fiona, wildfires, flooding, and other natural disasters occurring in calendar years 2021 and 2022. Please visit EDA's Disaster Supplemental webpage for more information.

The mission of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA www.eda.gov) is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation's regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA invests in communities and supports regional collaboration in order to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.

Holiday Gas Oregon Lowest since 2022

Story by Scooter Brown

Gas prices have been inching down for several weeks and are now at their lowest point of the year so far. This means holiday travelers may keep a little extra jingle in their pockets when they finish up at the pump.

Marie Dodds with AAA Oregon said nearly 1.7 million Oregonians will be traveling 50 miles or more over Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's. Ninety percent of them will be driving.

"This is a little bit of a gift for folks as they head out on those holiday road trips," she said. "We are paying the cheapest prices for gas in four years for the holidays. We have to go back to 2020 to find gas prices that are cheaper than what we're paying now."

Nationally, the current average for a gallon of regular gas is \$3.03. The Oregon average is now \$3.47 a gallon. Dodds said if you shop around, it's easy

to find prices that are well below those figures. She went on to say gas prices tend to bottom out for the year sometime between December and February. There are normal seasonal factors that put downward pressure on prices including the reduction in demand.

"The summer driving season comes to an end and everyone gets back into their fall and winter routines, which tend to include less travel," she said.

Also impacting gas prices is the type of gas being sold. In the fall and winter months, Oregonians can purchase "winter blend fuel" which is less refined, thus less expensive. Dodds said the winter blend fuel causes more pollution when it evaporates, so it is only available when temperatures are cooler. Summer blend fuel is burned during the hotter months and is more environmentally friendly. It also costs more to make.

Oregon State Parks fees Increase for 2025

Oregon State Parks users will find that a visit costs a little more since the first of the year. Day-use parking fees have been raised from \$5 to \$10 to starting in 2025. Oregon State Parks said the day-use fees helps pay for operations and maintenance. It's the first increase for our State Parks in 15 years.

The 12-month and 24-month permits will remain the same price in 2025 -- \$30 for 12 months and \$50 for 24 months. About 35% of funding for

Oregon Parks and Recreation comes from park fees from visitors, the department said.



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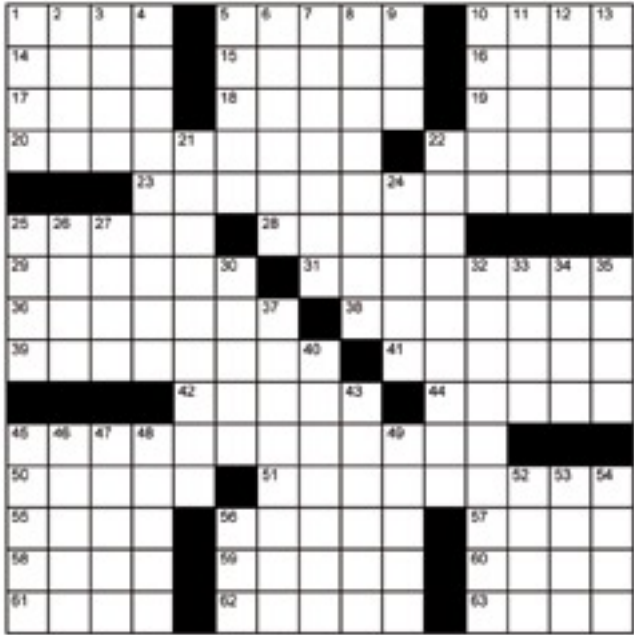
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January Crossword Puzzle Sponsored by Studio Tattoo

December Crossword Solution

Across

1. Conn. neighbor
5. Herringlike fishes
10. Leave in, to an editor
14. Ancient Andean
15. "Water Lilies" painter
16. Fiesta fare
17. Go to great heights
18. Itsy-bitsy bits
19. How one might run
20. Spanish gentleman
22. Mac maker
23. Wife, jokingly
25. Hindu soul
28. Aspen aficionado
29. Word after pocket or loose
31. Deliberate destruction
36. They may be pulled
38. Dilbert's workspace
39. Erotic
41. Early English comedy, "Gurton's Needle"
42. "Get lost!"
44. Minuscule
45. Accept responsibility
50. Unaccompanied
51. Weatherman offerings
55. Lose steam
56. Parlor piece
57. Beat badly
58. Clothing line



59. Certain exams
60. Frank Herbert sci-fi series
61. Nothing but
62. To the point
63. A whole bunch
- Down
1. Catchall abbr.
2. Forest ox
3. Wound covering
4. Minuet-like dances
5. Clothing size
6. Monopoly purchases
7. Polar parkas
8. Possessed one
9. Ave. crossers
10. Kind of infection
11. Buccaneers' home
12. Reason for a food recall
13. Representative
21. Spiny lobster
22. Like Cirque du Soleil performers
24. Fix, in a way
25. Plays a part
26. Quaker's "you"
27. "Death in Venice" author
30. Son of Cain
32. They're punched at work
33. Top of the heap
34. Secluded valley
35. Mysterious: Var.
37. Guaranteed
40. Russian urn
43. Diego Rivera creations
45. Weighty put-down
46. 1979 sci-fi classic
47. Snorkeling sight
48. Hostile force
49. Have a hunch
52. Music category
53. Spotify selection
54. Hearty dish
56. URL punctuator

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January 2025 Weather Forecast Sponsored by Travis Williams

Great Food Live Music

Event Calendar on Page 15



413 Umpqua HWY38, Drain Oregon

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
					54° 42°	57° 40°
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
55° 41°	57° 39°	58° 37°	55° 38°	59° 41°	60° 43°	56° 44°
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
55° 37°	50° 37°	50° 35°	51° 41°	53° 43°	57° 42°	56° 42°
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
55° 43°	53° 38°	49° 34°	50° 35°	49° 39°	48° 34°	47° 34°
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
50° 33°	52° 33°	48° 34°	46° 31°	45° 31°	45° 32°	48° 34°

ODFW 2025 Fishing Regulations

Continued from Page 12

member for a four-year term.

Private Forest Accord Grant Approval: Approved additional funding to the Rogue Basin Partnership to complete a project along the Bear Creek corridor in Phoenix.

Update mailing/reprinting fees: Amended rules to eliminate the standard \$2 shipping fee for most documents, provide flexibility to charge fees to cover the true cost of shipping larger documents or special orders, and maintain fees for specific documents such as landowner preference and reprinted hunting and angling tags.

Preference point reinstatement appeal: Denied an appeal from an elk bow hunter who did not receive a preference point reinstatement after being injured because he had already hunted during the season. ODFW rules allow for the Director to reinstate points when a hunter cannot use their tag due to circumstances beyond their control or tragic personal circumstances, but not when they have

already hunted. The rules allow for appeal to the Commission when reinstatement is denied by the Director. The ODFW Director did reinstate preference points to the hunter for 100 series buck deer as the hunter did not participate in that hunt and the situation met the definition of tragic personal circumstances.

New Commissioner Dallas Hall DeFrees of Baker City, Ore. joined the meeting remotely. She began her four-year term in October 2024 after being appointed as the East Region Representative by Governor Kotek and confirmed by the Senate.

The agenda item about purple sea urchin regulations was postponed until the February commission meeting in Portland. The Commission's next meeting is Jan. 10, 2025 in Salem. A recording of the meeting and workshop on resiliency of working lands for people, fish and wildlife is available on ODFW's YouTube channel.

Kidnapping

Continued from Page 10

custody of Waszkiewicz to Cottage Grove Police Department Officers at the scene. He was then transported to the Cottage Grove Police Department while the investigation continued and later transported to the Lane County Jail where he was booked and lodged on the following listed charges.

ORS 163.190 – Menacing - Domestic Violence

ORS 166.220 – Unlawful use of a Weapon -Firearm

ORS 163.270 – Felon in Possession of a Firearm

ORS 163.275 – Coercion

Case #: 2025-0001

There were no injuries during the operation and there is no ongoing threat to the community related to this incident. The Cottage Grove Police Department was assisted by the Eugene Police Department, Lane County Sheriff's Office, and Oregon State Police to bring this incident to a safe resolution.

The investigation into this incident is ongoing and no further details are available at this time.



Event Calendar

Rick Miller Band Jan 10 8-11

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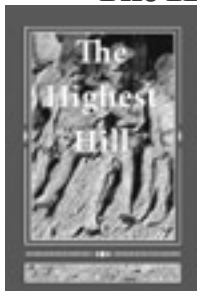


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Sunday Service 10:30am

Gateway Family Fellowship
Church of the Nazarene
337 C Avenue
Sunday Sch 9:30am Worship 10:45am

Drain Church of Christ
2nd and D street
541-836-2315
SS 9:30am/Svc 10:30am/W&T 6pm

YONCALLA
Assembly of God
1008 Hayhurst Rd
541-849-2800
Sunday 10:30am Wednesday. 5:30pm

Church of Christ
225 Birch St
Sunday School 9:55am
Sunday Worship 10:45am

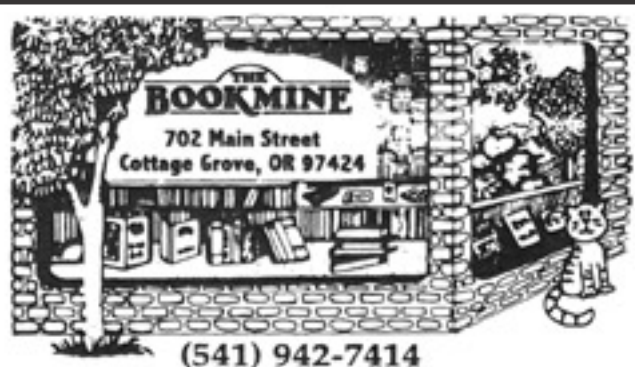
Seventh-day Adventist Church
278 Douglas St
Saturday Worship 10am-12pm

ELKTON
Elkton Bible Baptist Church
(541) 584-2808
420 2nd St
Sunday Worship 10am

Elkton Christian Church
344 3rd St.
elktonchristian@gmail.com
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