

# THE COTTAGE GROVE Sentinel

**Wildfire Season Preparedness**  
See page 3



**CGHS Baseball Wins**  
See page 8



**Cottage Grove**  
53  
36  
Wednesday, April 22, 2026  
Light Rain

Wednesday APRIL 22, 2026 | 137 years

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## City unveils “zero-sum” budget as library cuts, audit fixes draw packed crowd

CINDY WEELDREYER  
Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council has received its first full look at the staff recommended 2026–27 budget, a stability focused spending plan shaped by delayed audits, corrected accounting errors, rising personnel costs, and a widening gap between General Fund revenues and expenditures.

City Manager and Budget Officer Mike Sauerwein opened his presentation at the council’s Monday night, April 13, by emphasizing transparency, telling councilors, “I strongly believe in the ‘no surprises rule’ and I wanted to have everybody hear the same message at the same time.”

The proposed budget reflects a city attempting to hold the line during a period of constrained revenue growth and significant structural pressures. Sauerwein outlined seven major challenges facing the upcoming fiscal year, including the need to close the General Fund gap, address incorrect beginning fund balances caused by delayed audits, evaluate

reductions in library services, and manage limited funding for community promotions.

### CORRECTING THE RECORD: TWO YEARS OF MISSING AUDIT DATA

A substantial portion of the presentation focused on the lingering effects of delayed audits. When staff prepared the 2025–26 budget, the most recent completed audit was from FY 2021–22, leaving two years of missing actuals that would normally inform beginning fund balances. Draft versions of the 2022–23 audit arrived in September 2025, but by November, Interim Finance Director Eric Kytola discovered “substantial critical accounting errors,” including budget columns that did not balance and supplemental budget entries missing from the city’s accounting software.

According to the staff report, “The situations have been rectified, and staff has implemented policies and procedures to prevent these problems from re-occurring.” The corrections required significant

mid year adjustments to the current budget, reducing it by \$4.54 million through capital cuts, lower ending fund balances, use of contingencies, and other adjustments.

### GENERAL FUND PRESSURES AND THE ‘ZERO SUM’ REALITY

The General Fund remains the city’s most constrained financial arena. In 2025, the Budget Committee recommended reducing the 16% gap between expenditures and revenues over three years, with a target of cutting one third of the gap, about \$500,000, in 2025–26. By January 2026, Kytola reported that personnel costs were tracking at 43% and materials and services at 41%, alongside a \$125,000 increase in General Fund revenue. Staff projected these trends would close the gap by 52%, or roughly \$80,000.

Even with those improvements, Sauerwein described the proposed General Fund as “largely a zero sums game with little or no flexibility,” noting that reasonable minds may disagree on how to allocate



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

**The Cottage Grove City Council meeting was well-attended with most speakers criticizing the proposed 56% reduction in city public library funding in the next fiscal year.**

scarce resources. The proposed budget includes a \$200,000 contingency and an unappropriated ending fund balance of \$1.649 million—slightly below the \$1.7 million staff identifies as the minimum needed to cover expenses until property tax revenues arrive each fall.

### ENGAGEMENT

Councilors and Mayor Candace Solesbee thanked the citizens who spoke and represented the feelings of most of those who gathered in the near-capacity gallery. After the meeting she said she was pleased with the large citizen turnout and

### MAYOR PRAISES PUBLIC

See **BUDGET** Page 6

## Election 2026: Commission Candidates

CINDY WEELDREYER  
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Voters in East Lane County will choose their next Lane County Commissioner in the upcoming May 19 election.

To help readers compare the candidates’ priorities and approaches, the Sentinel asked all three contenders to respond to the same three questions on major issues facing the district: the Clean Lane Project, the Public Safety Task Force’s funding recommendations, and delays in the Land Management Division’s permitting process. Their answers are presented below in full.



Candidates Heather Buch, Bob Zybach, and Jake Pelroy.

### QUESTION 1 — Clean Lane Project

The Clean Lane Project has generated significant public debate, including concerns about cost, location,

long term feasibility, and community impact. If elected, how would you approach the future of the Clean Lane Project, and what criteria would guide your decision making about whether to continue, modify, or discontinue it?

### QUESTION 2 — Public Safety Task Force Funding Needs

The Public Safety Task Force Report highlights several critical

programs and services that are currently underfunded, including those related to law enforcement, emergency response, behavioral health, and community safety. What specific strategies would you support to address these

funding gaps, and how would you balance them with other county budget priorities?

### QUESTION 3 — Land Management Division Permitting Delays

Many residents and businesses have expressed frustration with the complexity and length of time it takes to obtain permits through the Land Management Division. What changes would you advocate for to improve the permitting process, and how would you ensure that reforms maintain both efficiency and necessary safeguards?

### HEATHER BUCH

Buch is seeking a third term on the Lane County Board of Commissioners. She says she is proud

See **CANDIDATES** Page 6

## Blackett’s Paper Trail: A hometown dream rooted in family, creativity, community

CINDY WEELDREYER  
Cottage Grove Sentinel

When Jared Gould-Blackett opened Blakett’s Paper Trail in Cottage Grove it felt less like the launch of a business and more like the arrival of something he’d been carrying since childhood — a creative new chapter on Main Street shaped by family, memory, and a lifelong love of tangible tools.

Gould-Blackett describes himself as someone who has always been happiest with tangible creative tools — pens, notebooks, art supplies, and anything that invites writing or drawing. That lifelong love now fills the shelves of his new downtown shop.

Jared grew up in Cottage Grove, graduating in the first class of the “new” high school in 2004. After two decades living elsewhere, including many years in California and Portland he felt the pull to

return home. Being close to family was the deciding factor, especially the chance to build relationships with his nieces and nephews. He says he sees his youngest nephew almost every day, something that wouldn’t have been possible if he hadn’t moved back.

“Some of the strongest memories I have from growing up in Cottage Grove were all the church ladies who I was so close to,” he said. “And some of the best teachers in the world work at our schools... they come into the store, which always makes me very nostalgic.”

### A STORE BUILT FROM PASSION NOT MARKET ANALYSIS

Blakett’s Paper Trail grew from that sense of belonging. Jared didn’t open the shop because he identified a market gap; he opened it because it was something he felt called to

do. He also noticed a growing interest among younger generations in tactile creativity — handwritten letters, physical journals, and analog art — a shift he attributes to kids who grew up surrounded by screens and are now seeking something more grounded.

He says writing has always been cathartic for him, and that’s part of why he’s especially excited to offer notebooks. He admits he owns more than he’ll ever use, but the joy of writing and drawing keeps him collecting them. The shop carries unique journals and notebooks that reflect his personal taste and the creative spirit he hopes to inspire in others.

“I really want people to feel 110% welcome in my store,” he said. “I went for a very cozy yet urban vibe much like a New York brownstone apartment.”

### A FAMILY POWERED DREAM

Family support has been central to the store’s creation. Jared speaks often of his grandmother, Darlene Burback, who encouraged him to pursue his dreams. Though she passed before the shop opened, he believes she would have loved it. His grandfather, Garland Burback, has also played a pivotal role, offering steady support and encouragement throughout Jared’s life. And from his paternal grandfather, Dick Gould, he inherited what he jokingly calls his “office supplies addiction.”

The shop is also a joint venture with his spouse, Frank Blakett, who brings his own background and perspective to the business. Frank previously owned a small pellet stove company in the 1990s and has spent his career as a geologist and geotechnical engineer, which



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

**Frank (left) and Jared Blakett said they are thankful for the strong family and community support they’ve received since opening their stationery and gift shop on Main Street in Cottage Grove.**

See **BLACKETT** Page 4

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We’re always interested in hearing about news in our community. Send us your news, photos, and videos and let us know what’s going on! Email us your submission!



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# Fraudsters targeting Spanish-speaking workers injured on the job

The Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) is warning Spanish-speaking workers with pending workers' compensation claims about a scam making the rounds in Oregon.

Scammers are posing as government agencies or law firms, falsely telling victims they have won their claims – and then demanding payment before delivering any benefits.

“This scam is predatory in the worst way – it targets workers who are already injured and waiting for help they are legally owed,” Attorney Dan General Rayfield said. “These families deserve protection, not exploitation. Anyone who preys on workers in that position should know that we take it seriously.”

There's at least one confirmed case of this scam in Oregon. Once victims send money, the scammers disappear – and so does the payment.

Scammers identify people who have filed pending workers' compensation claims. They then reach out by phone, email, or social media – sometimes through Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp – pretending to represent a government agency or law firm. In some cases, scammers have even staged fake video hearings to appear legitimate.

The victim is told they have “won” their case and are owed a settlement or benefits – but they must first deposit money into an account to receive the full payout. After they pay, the scammer cuts off contact. The money is gone.

### Warning Signs

- You may be dealing with a scam if someone:
- Asks you to pay money before you can

receive workers' compensation benefits or a settlement

- Contacts you through Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, or other social media apps claiming to be from a government agency or law firm
- Pressures you to act quickly or pay immediately
- Tells you that you have “won” a claim but must first deposit funds

Real government agencies do not ask workers to pay money upfront to receive benefits they are owed.

If you have received a suspicious communication about a workers' compensation claim, contact one of the following:

- Oregon DOJ Consumer Protection Hotline: 877-877-9392
- Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries: BOLI\_help@boli.oregon.gov



Metro Creative Connection

**Scammers are posing as government agencies or law firms, falsely telling victims they have won their claims – and then demanding payment before delivering any benefits.**

• Ombuds Office for Oregon Workers: 800-927-1271

You can also report suspected scams to the Oregon DOJ Consumer Protection Division online at [oregonconsumer.gov](http://oregonconsumer.gov).

### How the Scam Works

## A CLOSER LOOK

# Pulling down pants leads to arrest

The following Weekly Update is from the Cottage Grove Facebook page.

- Officers attended the annual Easter Egg Hunt at Bohemia Park hosted by a local church on April 4. Between the two scheduled hunt times, officers engaged with families, handed out department swag to children, and took photos with the Easter Bunny.

- Officers located a male subject for whom they had probable cause to arrest for Violation of a Restraining Order. He was detained without incident and admitted to going to the victim's residence and attempting to contact them multiple times. He was transported to the Lane County Jail and lodged on charges of Violation of a Police Protection Order (ORS 133.310).

- Officers responded to a local hotel regarding a disorderly subject refusing to leave after being directed to do so. The male subject had removed his shirt and pulled down his pants in the lobby. He refused to comply with officers' commands from inside his room. After multiple attempts to

gain compliance, officers used a key card provided by management to enter the room. The subject was taken into custody without further incident and transported to the Lane County Jail on charges of Criminal Trespass in the Second Degree (ORS 164.245) and Disorderly Conduct in the Second Degree (ORS 166.025). He was also issued a trespass notice from the property.

- Officers responded to a disturbance call where, upon knocking on the door, it was quickly opened and a dog ran out and bit an officer in the upper inner thigh, causing three puncture wounds. Medics treated the officer on scene before they went to CGER for further care. The dog's owners were cited for Vicious Dog (6.04.200) and issued a quarantine notice.

- Due to heavy rainfall on Saturday, officers assisted Oregon State Police and ODOT on Interstate 5 with multiple single-vehicle crashes caused by hydroplaning.

- During a traffic stop on a spray-painted black motorcycle, the operator was found to be driving while

suspended, without insurance, and displaying swapped license plates. A Magnum revolver in a chest holster was also located and seized for officer safety. The subject was cited for multiple violations, and the license plate was confiscated for return to the Washington DMV.

- Officers responded to multiple 9-1-1 calls reporting a leaning power transformer. Upon investigation, no hazard was located. The reporting party was found to have a valid warrant out of Lane County Circuit Court for Failure to Appear – Menacing. Due to officer safety alerts, initial contact was made via phone before officers made contact with her at a park near her residence. She was taken into custody without incident and lodged at the Lane County Jail.

- Officers responded to a fully engulfed trailer fire. Due to shift change, both graveyard and day shift officers responded. The occupant safely self-evacuated prior to arrival. South Lane Fire and Rescue extinguished the fire, and no injuries were reported.

- While monitoring city cameras at All American

**WEEKLY UPDATE**  
04/06/26 - 04/12/26

Accidents: 4	Hit & Run: 3
Arrests: 8	Suspicious Condition: 5
Criminal Mischief: 5	Trespass: 6
Disturbance: 15	Vehicle Stop: 17
Harassment: 1	Welfare Checks: 6
<b>Total calls --- 273</b>	

Courtesy from the CGPD

Park, officers observed a male subject loading a substance into a glass pipe. Believing it to be methamphetamine, officers contacted the subject. He admitted

possession, and officers located approximately 0.5 grams of methamphetamine, two baggies with residue, and a glass pipe. He was transported to the Lane County

Jail and lodged for Possession of Methamphetamine (ORS 475.894) and issued a 90-day park exclusion.

## POLICE BLOTTER

The police blotter relates to the public record of incidents as reported by law enforcement agencies.

All individuals arrested or charged with a crime are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Information printed is preliminary and subject to change.

For specific details about cases listed, contact the appropriate law enforcement agency.

### COTTAGE GROVE POLICE

#### APRIL 6

- 03:07: Disturbance, 200 block S. River Rd.
- 03:28: Suspicious condition, 100 block Chad Dr.
- 05:32: Criminal mischief, 1500 block S. 4th St.
- 06:13: Suspicious vehicle, 76000 block Cedar Park Rd.
- 08:27: Suspicious condition, 33000 block Row River Rd.
- 08:38: Order violation, 1500 block Hwy 99
- 09:42: Theft, 2100 block Getty Cir.
- 09:19: Trespass, 800 block Hwy 99
- 09:42: Theft, 1700 block Parks Rd.
- 10:35: Theft, 1500 block Village Dr.
- 10:44: Motor vehicle crash, Gateway/Row River Rd.
- 13:41: Animal info, 1100 block E. Main St.
- 14:08: Harassment, N. Douglas/Pennoyer

- 14:17: Disturbance, 1100 block S. 8th St.
- 15:46: Fraud, 400 block North J St.
- 15:52: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 16:24: Criminal mischief, 900 block E. Quincy Ave.
- 17:17: Suicidal subject, 1600 block Clark Ave.
- 17:55: Dog at large, W. Main/O St.
- 23:03: Disorderly subject, 800 block Gateway Blvd.
- 23:07: Wanted subject, 600 block E. Main St.
- 23:43: Disturbance, 75000 block London Rd.

#### APRIL 7

- 00:35: Alarm, 1600 block N. Pacific Hwy
- 02:51: Suspicious vehicle, 1500 block E. Main St.
- 06:02: Disturbance, 900 block W. Main St.
- 06:44: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 07:22: Suspicious condition, Hillside/Howard
- 10:14: Disturbance, 900 block W. Main St.
- 13:09: Agency assist, Cemetery/Ash
- 14:10: Abandoned vehicle, North O/Dogwood
- 16:17: Abandoned vehicle, 1800 block Harvey Rd.
- 18:11: Disturbance, 900 block W. Main St.
- 19:16: Criminal mischief, 100 block S. 10th St.

#### APRIL 8

- 00:51: Suspicious vehicle,

- 02:26: Disturbance, 31000 block CGLorane Rd.
- 02:28: Disturbance, 900 block W. Main St.
- 07:49: Juvenile trouble, 400 block E. Main St.
- 08:57: Juvenile trouble, 700 block South R St.
- 09:35: Illegal parking, 500 block N. 10th St.
- 10:27: Hit and run, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 10:34: Hit and run, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 11:38: Fire, 500 block Grant Ave.
- 12:32: Abandoned vehicle, 700 block E. Gibbs Ave.
- 13:13: Theft, 900 block Row River Rd.
- 15:18: Drug activity, 1700 blocks Parks Rd.
- 15:44: Trespass, 900 block Row River Rd.
- 16:39: Unlawful entry into a motor vehicle, 1700 block E. Washington
- 18:19: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 18:27: Dog at large, Gibbs/16th
- 19:54: Agency assist, 1400 block E. Washington
- 23:28: Fire, N. River Rd/ Ash

#### APRIL 9

- 01:32: Suspicious subject, 700 block Row River Rd.
- 01:46: Warrant service, 200 block Gateway Blvd.

- 04:18: Suspicious condition, 1300 block Gateway Blvd.
- 08:09: Motor vehicle crash, S. River Rd./Harrison
- 09:04: Trespass, 80000 block Davison Rd.
- 12:47: Disturbance, 16th/Adams
- 12:55: Juvenile trouble, 1500 block S. 4th St.
- 18:49: Theft, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 19:57: Fire, 72000 block Shoestring Rd.
- 22:04: Disturbance, 100 block N. 6th St.
- 22:35: Fire, 1900 block W. Harrison Ave.
- 23:24: Trespass, 600 block S. 8th St.

#### APRIL 10

- 00:32: Suspicious vehicle, 3200 block Row River Rd.
- 02:19: Illegal camping, 200 block N. 12th St.
- 02:22: Suspicious subject, 1000 block E. Main St.
- 02:33: Suspicious vehicle, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 04:50: Suspicious vehicle, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 06:48: Agency assist, 1000 block S. 4th St.
- 07:21: Fire, 80000 block Hwy 99
- 09:14: Theft, 77000 block Layng Rd.



Jeremy C. Ruarik / Cottage Grove Police

- 10:35: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 12:54: Hit and run, 1200 block Hwy 99
- 13:26: Abandoned vehicle, Harvey/19th
- 13:41: Disturbance, Harvey/19th
- 13:49: Suspicious condition, 300 block E. Washington Ave.
- 14:30: Wanted subject, 200 block S. River Rd.
- 16:51: Fire, Row River/Cedar Park
- 17:17: Explosive device, 1700 block Parks Rd.
- 18:24: Theft, 100 block N. 9th St.
- 21:27: Suspicious vehicle, 75000 block Booth Kelly Camp Rd.
- 11:43: Alarm, 100 block Village Dr.
- 13:12: Juvenile trouble, 900 block N. 9th St.
- 13:52: Disturbance, 1100 block Geer Ave.
- 14:14: Trespass, 4th/Hayes
- 14:33: Theft, 900 block Row River Rd.
- 14:43: Abandoned vehicle, Pennoyer/9th
- 17:37: Criminal mischief, 1000 block Tyler Ave.
- 17:46: Disturbance, 1500 block E. Main St.
- 21:15: Alarm, 1900 block W. Harrison Ave.
- 21:23: Suspicious vehicle, 1300 block S. River Rd.

#### APRIL 12

- 04:27: Alarm, 1700 block E. Main St.
- 05:26: Fire, 700 block Row River Rd.
- 10:18: Welfare check, 100 block Tyson Dr.
- 10:33: Found dog, Main/R
- 11:48: Juvenile trouble, 7th/Grover
- 13:22: Trespass, 200 block N. 16th St.

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# Fire district prepares for summer, fall wildfire season

JEREMY C. RUARK  
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Local fire agencies are preparing for the summer and fall wildfire season now and issuing public safety advisories.

South Lane County Fire & Rescue (SLCFR) Deputy Chief Justin Baird said the mild winter will have a direct impact on the summer and fall wildfire season.

"We had very little snow-pack with some rain, but it has been a very mild winter, so depending on the heat we get, that is going to definitely dry out the conditions quicker," he said.

Baird said SLCFR is encouraging property owners to take fire prevention steps now to be prepared for the wildfire season ahead.

"Make sure you have a defensible space around your home by getting rid of plants and materials that will burn, get grass and vegetation cleared, remove branches that may be piled up, and limb up trees about 6 to 8 feet off the ground to get rid of ladder fuels," he said. "Use rocks and concrete around your house as a better defensible space. Clear needles and debris from roofs and cutters because that's where we find that embers typically land from any wildfires in the area and those embers can create an ignition source."

Baird emphasized that having and practicing a family escape plan is critical especially for rural area residents.

"Try to have two separate ways of escaping," he said. "Make sure you have your valuables, important papers, and medications, arranged so that you can grab them quickly if there is an order to evacuate."

Both SLCFR and the Oregon State Fire Marshal's



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

**South Lane County Fire & Rescue District crews are preparing for the summer fall wildfire season.**

Office occasionally offer property fire safety audits to help determine and clear any fire hazards.

"Currently, we are focusing on response because we don't have the people to conduct such safety audits," Baird said.

The SLCFR District currently operates with 19 career staff, three administrators, five or six resident students, and two volunteers.

"We are definitely always concerned about our staff, just due to demand, and the capacity to respond to fires" he said. "Eighty percent of our calls last year overlapped with another call. The maximum staffing that we have on is seven. The minimum is five."

Baird said the SLCFR District has a working agreement with neighboring fire agencies, such as Row River, North Douglas, Goshen-Pleasant Hill, and the Oregon Department of Forestry, but all the agencies call volume has been increasing, making it challenging for immediate responses.

"A helicopter that that provided mutual aid by the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office and the Oregon Department of Forestry was located at the Cottage Grove Airport this past summer," he said. "That was to be a resource that we can use

for quick access for aerial support. I am hopeful we'll have that resource again this summer."

Baird said the specific outlook for this summer and fall wildfire season will depend on the weather, where wildfires break out, and staffing.

"That's the unknown," he said. "Having the low snow-pack and the mild winter has created a lot of concerns throughout the state. So, the best thing people can do now is to have an escape route, have your personal belongings somewhere so that you can grab them quickly, and hardening your home and clearing your property."

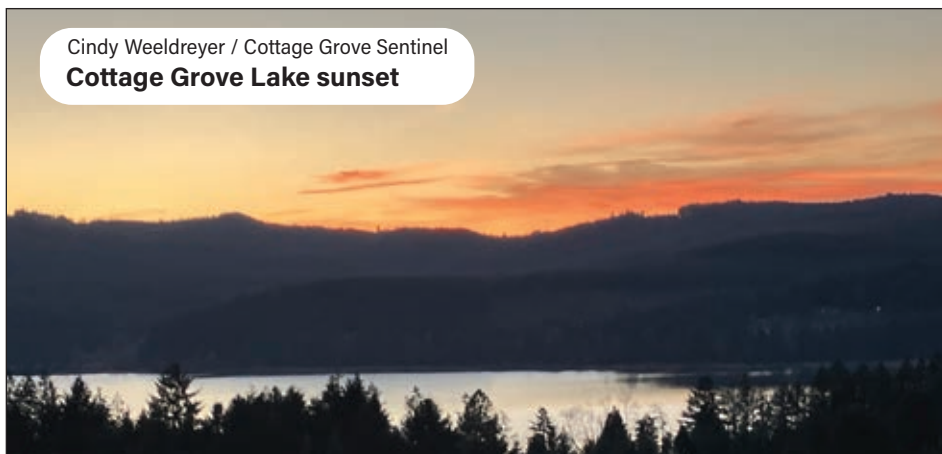
Baird also points out that a high percentage of fires are human caused.

"We see some people not following the fire regulations, mowing when they shouldn't be mowing, using some kind of equipment during a hot, dry spell that can start a grass fire. Many times, people aren't paying attention to when they are towing trailers and dragging chains on the ground that can spark fires," he said. "We also see fires started from unattended campfires."

*For more information about wildfire safety prevention, visit the SLCFR District's website and the Oregon Fire Marshal's Office website.*

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel  
**Cottage Grove Lake sunset**



### APRIL 22

- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 3-5:30 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Senior Center Pinochle Games. 1 p.m. Senior Center. 700 E. Gibbs Ave.
- CG Genealogical Society Military Open House. 1-6. Community Center
- Acoustic Jam with Gregg Biller. 6-7:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- Jackson's Pub Games with live music by Bradley Shepherd. 6-8 p.m. Cottage Grove Public Market.
- Game Night with Ayla. 6:30-9:30 p.m. Axe & Fiddle.
- Elks Lodge Bingo. Early Bird 6:30 p.m. Regular Games 7 p.m. Elks Lodge, 775 N. River Rd.

### APRIL 23

- T.O.P.S. Club. 9:30-11 a.m. Delight Valley Church of Christ, Saginaw.
- Baby Laptime. 11:30 a.m. CG Public Library.
- Teen Gaming. 4 p.m. CG Public Library.
- Community Center Table Tennis. 4-6 p.m. Community Center, 700 E. Gibbs Ave.
- Celebrate Recovery. 5:15 p.m. Calvary Chapel, 1447 Hwy 99N.
- Tappin' Talent Search. 6-8 p.m. Axe and Fiddle
- Bradley Shepherd (Americana). 5:30-8 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery

### APRIL 24

- Australian Shepherd Club Show. 9 a.m. Western Oregon Exposition Grounds

- Storytime. 11:30 a.m. CG Public Library.
- Elks Lodge Steak Feed. 5:30-7 p.m.
- American Legion Bingo. 5-7 p.m. American Legion Post 32, 826 W. Main St.
- Last Friday Art Walk. 6-9 p.m. Historic Downtown and South Sixth Street business
- The Huckleberrys (Americana). 6-9 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery
- Saginaw Vineyard Friday Night Live. 6-9 p.m. 80247 Delight Valley School Rd.
- Weekly Pool Tournament. 7 p.m. Bohemian Tavern. \$5 entry; BCA rules.
- Axe & Fiddle Open Mic Night with Bradley Shepherd and Urban. 7-9pm
- JuJu Eyeball (Beatles Tribute Band) 8-10 p.m. Axe and Fiddle (\$15/\$25 cover)

### APRIL 25

- Share Fair USA. 9 a.m. 1133 E. Main St. (free stuff giveaway behind Dirt Cheap Copies)
- Arbor Day Free Tree Giveaway. CG Residents 10-12 p.m. All Residents 12-2 p.m. Coiner Park
- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 4-10 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Rock 'n' Rewind. 6-9 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery
- AlAnon "Courage to Change." 7 p.m. Sinclair Room, City Hall.
- Superball (60s-mid 80s music). 8-10 p.m. Axe and Fiddle

### APRIL 26

- Bim Jeam and Sadness (folk/country/blues) 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.
- VFW Bingo. 2-4 p.m. VFW Post 3473. 3160 Hillside Dr.
- South Valley Athletics Bingo Fundraiser. 3:30-5:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.
- Sometimes Blind (indie rock/alt rock). 6-8 p.m. Axe and Fiddle
- The Regulars (Americana) 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.

### APRIL 27

- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 1-5:30 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Senior Center Bingo. 12:30 p.m. Cottage Grove Community Center.
- Monday Movie Night: "Night of the Living Dead". 8-10 p.m. Axe & Fiddle.

### APRIL 28

- Ukulele Club (for adults) 9am, CG Public Library
- Bilingual Story Time, 5pm, CG Public Library
- Trivia & Games with Gerald. 6-8 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing. "Science on Tap" Hosted by Watershed Council. 5-7 p.m. Axe and Fiddle Trinity Lutheran Free Take-Out Dinner. 5:15-6:15 p.m. 675 S. 7th St.
- Long A (classis indie rock/power pop). 8-10 p.m. Axe & Fiddle.

## County launches annual roadside mowing

It's that time of year again: as spring rains fuel rapid roadside growth, Lane County's mowing crews are preparing to tackle tall grass and brush along rural county-maintained roads.

But before the blades start spinning, crews need a clear path—free of signs, fencing, and other obstacles in the public right-of-way.

"Mowing helps reduce wildfire risk and ensures drivers can see clearly around curves and intersections," Lane County Vegetation Supervisor Chad McBride said. "When signs, fencing, or landscaping show up in the right-of-way, it slows down our work, damages equipment, and creates avoidable safety hazards."

County staff will be removing obstructions from road rights-of-way before mowing.

"Election season often brings a surge in illegally placed signs," McBride said. "We'll be conducting a cleanup sweep ahead of mowing operations to make sure signs don't become entangled in our equipment."

### Here's how you can help:

- Remove signs – Political signs, business signs, or any other type of sign don't belong in the road right-of-way. Signs placed near rural roads should be on private property and behind any utility poles, sidewalks, or other public infrastructure. Removed signs will be stored at Lane County Public Works for 30 days before disposal.

- Clear rocks and objects – Rocks over 3 inches in diameter and fixed objects, such as decorative lights or posts, need to be cleared from the mowing area.

- Fix or remove old fencing – Fencing that has fallen into the right-of-way can become entangled in mowing equipment or block access completely.

- Trim or relocate plantings – Ornamental plants in the right-of-way will be mown low to keep vegetation in check.

By keeping roadsides clear, property owners can help reduce public costs, protect county equipment, and keep

roads safer for everyone—including the crews doing the work.

In rural areas, the road right-of-way typically extends from the edge of the pavement to the property line (usually where fences are placed). In unincorporated parts of Eugene or Springfield, it's the area between the sidewalk and the curb.

And a quick reminder for drivers: Crews may begin mowing as early as 5 a.m. Be on the lookout for them in the early morning hours. You may pass a mower on the left when it's safe to do so, but always yield to oncoming traffic.

For more information about right-of-way maintenance, contact Lane County Public Works at 541-682-6900.



Metro Creative Connection

**For more information about right-of-way maintenance, contact Lane County Public Works at 541-682-6900.**



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# State education officials propose new accountability targets for districts, students' success

ALEX BAUMHARDT  
Oregon Capital Chronicle

State education officials are considering a number of new ways to measure success in Oregon schools following a 2024 law meant to boost student performance and establish better accountability standards for districts.

Oregon Education Department leaders shared new Statewide Performance Growth Targets on Monday in a news conference in advance of consideration by the State Board of Education. The board will meet on Thursday to consider the proposal and decide on adopting the new targets at a later date, said Charlene Williams, director of the state's education agency.

The new targets are required under the Education Accountability Law passed by the state Legislature two years ago, which directs school districts to set goals with the Oregon Department of Education for improving attendance, graduation rates, reading proficiency and math performance. That will begin in the upcoming 2026-27 school year under the law.

Williams and Cassie Medina, assistant superintendent of education innovation and improvement at the state education agency, presented to the press the targets and a 12-year vision for improvement in Oregon schools, which are struggling to bounce back from declines in regular attendance since the COVID pandemic and pre-pandemic proficiency slumps in key subjects.

Oregon schools have among the highest absenteeism rates in the country, the state's latest data shows, and

*"We know that too many students are not yet experiencing the outcomes they deserve, full stop. There's real urgency in this moment and a shared responsibility to do better."*

**Charlene Williams,  
Oregon Department of  
Education Director**

the state's fourth and eighth graders scored in the bottom half of all states for reading proficiency in the 2025 National Assessment for Educational Progress, often referred to as the nation's report card. They scored at the bottom in the nation when data was adjusted for student demographics and poverty levels.

"We know that too many students are not yet experiencing the outcomes they deserve, full stop. There's real urgency in this moment and a shared responsibility to do better," Williams said.

Since 1999, the state's singular educational target has been reaching a 90% graduation rate among Oregon high schoolers. New measures of success being proposed are more specific.

### The state's 12-year targets include:

- A nearly 25% increase in students regularly attending kindergarten through second grade, going from a 70% regular attendance rate for those students to-day, to at least 95% by the 2037-38 school year.



Courtesy photo from the Salem-Keizer School District

### A High school graduation ceremony in the Salem Keizer School District.

- Improving overall K-12 attendance by about 30%, going from a 66.5% regular attendance rate today, to just over 97%.
- Improving third grade literacy rates so more than two-thirds of third graders are considered proficient in English language arts, reading and writing.
- Improving eighth grade math proficiency so more than two-thirds of eighth graders do math at grade-level.
- Getting at least 95% of ninth graders on track to graduate within four years.
- Graduating at least 95% of Oregon high schoolers within four years.

The new targets both, "set a clear expectation that outcomes must improve in meaningful and measurable ways over time," said Medina. But they also aren't numbers that schools themselves have to reach, she explained, just the state as a whole somehow.

"These are not the targets for individual districts or charter schools, and districts and charter schools will not be directly held accountable to these numbers," she explained.

Each district will work with the department of education to set four-year targets to make incremental growth, and will be offered support as needed, such as teacher coaching and,

when necessary, "more prescriptive use of state school funds," Medina said, alluding to the state's new authorities under the Education Accountability Law.

If districts do not show improvement, the Oregon Department of Education can make decisions about where to direct a portion of the money it gets from the state, something the department has historically had little hand in.

"If we meet these targets, we will see attendance return to pre-pandemic levels. We will see significant gains in academic achievement and graduation rates, surpassing where we were before COVID," Medina said. "At

that point, Oregon would be performing at or near the top nationally across several key measures."

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/04/14/state-education-officials-propose-new-accountability-targets-for-districts-students-success/>  
*Oregon Capital Chronicle is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501(c)(3) public charity. Oregon Capital Chronicle maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Lynne Terry for questions: info@oregoncapitalchronicle.com.*

# Here's how Oregonians can update their voter registration info ahead of May primary

MIA MALDONADO  
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregonians have until April 28 to register to vote or change their party affiliation for the upcoming primary election.

That's because Oregon law requires voters to be registered 21 days before an election. Most Oregonians are automatically registered as nonaffiliated voters when they obtain a driver's license or state-issued ID card, and they can update their party affiliation online, by mail or at their county election office.

Oregon has closed primaries, which means voters may only vote for candidates in their same party in primary elections. That means the nearly 1.4 million registered voters in Oregon that aren't affiliated with the Republican or Democratic parties can't vote for candidates in major party primaries. However, they can still vote in non-partisan races, including the

statewide race for labor commissioner, and on measures.

Election officials will begin mailing ballots on April 29. Ballots must be postmarked by May 19 or dropped off by 8 p.m. that day at one of Oregon's official ballot drop sites. Because of U.S. Postal Service changes that may prevent ballots from receiving postmarks the same day they're mailed, election officials are urging Oregonians to use drop boxes instead of relying on mail if they return their ballot less than a week before the May 19 election.

How to update your voter information

To update your voter registration status, visit the Oregon Secretary of State's My Vote webpage and click the "Go to My Vote Now" button. From there, submit your name and date of birth to see your status.

Next, click "update registration" at the bottom left of

the page. You must have a valid driver's license or other Oregon-issued identification card on hand and answer two eligibility questions to update your party affiliation or address. Click submit when you're done.

Oregonians can also update their voter information by hard copy using the Oregon Voter Registration Card and submitting it to a county elections office. Voter registration cards can be found at post offices, libraries or county elections offices. You may also request that a local county elections office or the Oregon Elections Division mail the registration card to you.

To register to vote, Oregonians must follow a similar process by either submitting a hard copy of the Oregon Voter Registration Card to a county elections office or using the My Vote webpage.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/04/14/heres-how-oregonians-can-update->



Ron Cooper / Oregon Capital Chronicle

### Oregonians have until 8 p.m. May 19 to drop off their ballots at one of Oregon's official ballot drop sites.

[their-voter-registration-info-ahead-of-may-primary/](https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/04/14/heres-how-oregonians-can-update-their-voter-registration-info-ahead-of-may-primary/)  
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## BLACKETT

From Page 1

explains his enthusiasm for the store's Rite in the Rain products. He handles the books, helps in the shop

when he's off from his full time job, and supports Jared's vision wholeheartedly.

"Jared has driven me crazy over the years with his obsession for all the things that make this store his dream... so it actually has worked out for the better," Frank said.

Frank, who grew up in a small Nevada town, understands the culture of supporting local businesses and has been moved by the community's response.

"We have definitely seen that support here and cannot express our gratitude enough."

### A CREATIVE HUB FOR A CREATIVE TOWN

For Jared, the moment the dream became real wasn't tied to a grand opening or a business milestone. It was the moment his family rallied

behind him and believed in what he was building. That support, combined with the enthusiastic welcome from the community, has made the experience deeply meaningful.

"The feedback and the excitement and the joy of having a store like this in Cottage Grove... has been very surreal and so unbelievably appreciated."

Blackett's Paper Trail is more than a shop. It's a homecoming, a family story, a creative refuge, and a new chapter in Cottage Grove's small business landscape. It reflects the town that raised Jared, the people who shaped him, and the belief that creativity matters — especially when it's shared.

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COMMENTARY

EDITORIAL CARTOON

# Calls growing to remove Trump

ROB OKUN

Cottage Grove Sentinel  
Guest Column

Come senators, congressmen  
Please heed the call  
Don't stand in the doorway  
Don't block up the hall...  
~Bob Dylan  
A two-week truce. We've temporarily slipped from the hangman's noose. Still, there's a madman president on the loose.

We are living in an Upside Down moment, and the danger is no longer metaphorical. You don't need to have watched Stranger Things to recognize that the threat is real, not lurking in another dimension. It's prowling in the White House, and no blinking lights are spelling out SOS.

This is what an Upside Down world looks like: Donald Trump, an accidental president, openly threatening catastrophic violence against another nation's civilian infrastructure, while those with the constitutional authority to stop him hesitate, equivocate, or remain silent.

No matter what happens next, history will remember: On Easter Sunday 2026, Donald Trump posted a message so reckless, so unhinged, that it would be disqualifying in any functioning democracy. Threatening the destruction of Iran's power

plants and bridges, invoking apocalyptic language, and wrapping it all in bravado, he revealed not just poor judgment but a fundamental disregard for human life and the rule of law. Two days later, he added this warning: "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will."

The response was immediate—but not where it matters most.

Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut spoke out about the Easter threat: if he were in Trump's Cabinet, he said, he would be calling constitutional lawyers to discuss invoking the 25th Amendment. Others echoed the alarm. Even some of Trump's most reliable allies on the far right voiced scathing criticism.

For a brief moment, it seemed possible that outrage might translate into action. It has not...yet.

Unfortunately, there is little credible evidence that the vice president and a majority of the Cabinet are engaged in serious discussions to removing Trump under the 25th Amendment. Vice President JD Vance, a critic of the war, nevertheless has shown no sign of breaking ranks. How is it possible that loyalty—political, ideological,

or personal—continues to outweigh constitutional responsibility?

And Congress? Missing in action. Despite clear authority under the War Powers Resolution, a Republican-controlled Congress has done nothing to rein in Trump—and is showing no signs of changing direction.

So it is falling to the American people to do what elected officials are failing to do: unseat a president unfit to serve.

Activists in organizations like CODEPINK mobilized emergency protests in Washington and across the country, integrating opposition to the Iran war into the broader pro-democracy resistance.

Protests against the war need to be as ubiquitous as daffodils in spring—visible, sustained, impossible to ignore. The anti-Vietnam War movement did not stop the war overnight, but it changed the political calculus until continuing it became untenable.

What about the military? Senior officers and military lawyers understand what's at stake. Orders to deliberately target civilian infrastructure—power grids, bridges, population centers are war crimes (an absurd notion since war itself is a crime.)



There are laws limiting actions in armed conflict, and they are not optional. It applies to those who carry out orders, not just those who give them, creating a tension within the chain of command. Last fall, six members of Congress posted a video reminding service members, "you can refuse to carry out illegal orders."

Meanwhile, the judiciary, often imagined as a final safeguard, has—for now—remained largely silent. Courts do not move at the speed of crisis. They require time. And time is an enemy of this moment.

So where does that leave us? With a reality both

sobering and clarifying. The formal mechanisms of restraint—Congress, the Cabinet, the courts—are stalled, reactive, or unwilling. The most immediate pressure is coming from two places: people in the streets, and professionals inside the system trying to hold the line. Neither is sufficient on its own.

The millions at No Kings rallies have been doing their part. Now, perhaps, they'll take a new tack. Imagine citizens moving from street protests into the halls of Congress, confronting their representatives in their Washington offices and home districts. Asking, insisting,

refusing to leave without an answer to a simple question: What are you doing—right now—to stop him? To stop the madness?

We know this Congress can't be counted on to act on its own. Apparently, it will only act when the cost of inaction becomes too high—politically, publicly, unmistakably.

The people have begun doing their part. Congress must now do theirs.

Rob Okun (robokun50@gmail.com), syndicated by PeaceVoice, is editor emeritus of Voice Male, which has long chronicled the profeminist men's movement.

# Lawmakers took a step to fix Oregon's looming budget crisis

DANIEL HAUSER

Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregon recently wrapped up its short legislative session, and let's be honest about what happened: Lawmakers modestly trimmed tax breaks for rich investors and corporations to stave off cuts to services families depend on. That was the easy part.

Oregon is facing a genuine budget crisis over the next five years because of cuts to Medicaid and food assistance in H.R. 1, the federal budget package enacted by congressional Republicans last July. Oregon will need to spend billions more to keep families insured by the Oregon Health Plan and prevent them from going hungry. That's a structural problem that won't fix itself. The sooner lawmakers confront it, the better off Oregonians will be.

The just-concluded legislative session sent Senate Bill 1507 to the governor's desk for her signature, a good step in the right direction — but only a step. The bill helped

to address the immediate budget hole created by H.R. 1 by stopping Oregon from doubling down on a few wasteful federal tax breaks that mainly benefited the rich and corporations.

This will save Oregon more than \$300 million in the current budget period and hundreds of millions more in the years to come, helping to protect the services Oregonians depend on. The bill also expanded Oregon's strongest tax benefit for working families, the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Those are real accomplishments. As a result of SB 1507, Oregonians who would have lost health coverage or food assistance from the budget shortfall still receive benefits. And because of the EITC increase, about 230,000 Oregon families working hard but living on the brink will have more money in their pockets to afford rent or groceries.

And yet, we came into this session having identified more than \$700 million in tax changes Oregon lawmakers could



Laura Tesler / Oregon Capital Chronicle

Lawmakers have more to do to address taxes, commentator Daniel Hauser argues

have acted on, but didn't. Under pressure from business interests, the Legislature acted on less than half of that amount. The gap between what the Legislature did and what it could have done isn't hypothetical. It's families who may still lose access to the Oregon Health Plan, parents who may still lose child care support and families on the edge who needed the Legislature to do more to tackle the affordability crisis.

While some argue that the better approach is to woo businesses with

direct subsidies and tax incentives and trust that the jobs and revenue will follow, experience shows otherwise. Research finds that 75% or more of these kinds of incentives subsidize projects that would have happened anyway. This means that, more often than not, business tax subsidies hand corporations public money to make the same business decisions they would have made without it. In other words, they're usually a waste of public resources.

Here in Oregon, we've seen this approach play

out. Not long ago, Oregon layered direct funding and tax credits to help Intel win billions in federal funding, and yet Intel announced layoffs of nearly 4,500 workers here anyway. Big corporations make decisions based on global forces that no state tax break can overcome. Meanwhile, every dollar we give away is a dollar that can't keep a neighbor insured or fed.

What actually builds a strong economy is investing in people. Healthy, educated Oregonians who can afford housing and child care create a cycle of widespread prosperity. Children raised in a stable home with quality care and access to nutritious food will be more prosperous and productive as adults. The presence of a skilled workforce is a more crucial factor in attracting businesses than tax incentives. Oregon should prioritize investing in our people.

The 2027 legislative session is the next opportunity to confront the structural problem created by H.R. 1, and lawmakers

need to be more ambitious than they've been thus far. The budget hole caused by federal cuts will demand leadership and courage. Prioritizing the needs of Oregonians over the demands of big corporations is in Oregon's interest, both morally and economically.

SB 1507 was a meaningful step. Now, Oregon needs to leap.

Daniel Hauser is the deputy director of the Oregon Center for Public Policy and leads the center's tax policy work.

<https://oregon-capitalchronicle.com/2026/03/25/lawmakers-took-a-step-to-fix-oregons-looming-budget-crisis-now-we-need-a-leap/>  
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Weekly Online Poll

Do you agree with the city's approach in balancing the City of Cottage Grove's budget with funding reductions at the library and an increase in water rates?

Yes  No

Previous Poll Results

Are you concerned about losing your voting freedom under the Trump administrations executive order and proposed voting regulations?

14.3% - Yes 85.7% - No

Quote of the Week

"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."  
Maya Angelou



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PUBLISHED WEEKLY AT:

1498 E. Main Street, STE 104, Cottage Grove, OR 97424  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel website [www.cgsentinel.com](http://www.cgsentinel.com).  
All subscriptions must be paid prior to beginning the subscription and are non-refundable.

Periodicals postage paid at Cottage Grove, Oregon.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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Electronic edition monthly.....\$9

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# CANDIDATES

From Page 1

of how she has listened to rural communities and stood up for Lane County's small towns. Before her election to the Commission in 2019, she spent her professional career running a small real estate business for 15 years, specializing in affordable housing. She is a military spouse and mother to an energetic young daughter. (Her last name is pronounced "buck")

## Clean Lane Project

The county is responsible for waste management overall. Our system serves all four corners of the county that includes 15 transfer stations, convenient and robust recycling programs for everything from tires and mattresses to everyday household waste. The system also ensures safe disposal of hazardous materials. This is an essential, cost-effective public service and helps reduce illegal dumping, especially in our rural areas and waterways.

The stability of the waste management system is being jeopardized by the exporting of waste collected in Lane County by Sanipac Waste Connections; a national, multibillion-dollar corporation based in Texas. It is also important to note that they were one of the original bidders on the CleanLane recycling facility, a state-of-the-art project that would modernize the way in which we manage our waste. After not being selected during an open bid process, Sanipac Waste Connections is now actively undermining our waste management system by exporting waste several counties away. This jeopardizes our transfer stations.

By contrast, we know that other haulers can and do pay into the system and still make a decent profit. Instead,

Sanipac Waste Connections pockets the difference, leaving taxpayers holding the bag. My competitors seem to think this is OK and even advocate for it. I think it is wrong and will work hard to ensure we have

the most efficient and productive waste management system in Oregon.

## Public Safety Task Force Funding Needs

I am the only candidate that lives outside of a city and understands what it means to rely on the Sheriff's office for response. I am also the only candidate that has voted for and allocated funding towards additional patrol, rural mobile crisis care, victim services, and a deflection program to help support our public safety system.

It is a top priority and that is why we currently allocate 74% of the general fund, our only discretionary dollars, to public safety services. Yet, we need more patrol in rural areas to shorten response times. That is why we asked the task force to put together some possibilities of shoring up the system.

We will be going out to the public this summer to have community conversations about which solutions resonate the best. Please look out for a meeting in your area soon, your input is valuable.

My competitors may argue that increasing timber output would bring in big dollars to the general fund to help pay for more patrol. However, this federal administration has already shown us that they are also interested in those dollars and will sweep them if they choose, making this an unreliable source of potential income at best. We can't cut our way out of this problem. That is why we must come together as a community to solve this issue.

## Land Management Division Permitting Delays

Many residents and businesses are right to feel frustrated by the time and effort required to navigate our permitting system. Oregon's statewide land use rules are extraordinarily complex, and much of the delay applicants experience stems from these legally mandated processes. That said, we must acknowledge that local

procedures also play a role, and the County must take responsibility for improving the parts of the system that are within our control.

Even under a complicated statewide framework, the permitting experience should feel more predictable and more responsive than it often does. While we've made meaningful progress in the last few years—reducing average building permit timelines from 55 days in 2022 to 33 days in 2025, with this year averaging around 20 days—there is still significant room for improvement. Sanitation permits have dropped from 22 days to about 10, and complex land use permits have improved from 120 days to 93, but these gains must be paired with stronger customer service, clearer communication, and a more consistent internal process. I will continue pushing hard for state and local policy changes that simplify the land use system and support more affordable housing opportunities.

Locally, I will work closely with staff leadership to set benchmarks, address performance issues directly, and ensure that efficiency improvements do not come at the expense of public safety or environmental protections.

## JAKE PELROY

Pelroy grew up in Lane County. After high school, he joined the United States Marine Corps as an intelligence analyst. During his service, he completed three combat deployments to Iraq. After his honorable discharge, Jake attended the University of Oregon, became a small business owner, and is now married with two boys.

## Clean Lane Project

Even though the Commissioner voted to advance CleanLane 2.5 years ago, Lane County has made little progress. From a construction perspective, Lane County has purchased land and paid for professional services (attorneys, consultants, engineering) and I estimate the total cost is around

\$7,000,000. Bulk Handling Systems has built some of the sorting machines, and the county committed to buy them with a 25-year contract, but the county has yet to pay for them. The Waste Management Division has already suffered substantial harm, despite the project not yet being constructed. A significant deficit has been created in the county budget due to this initiative, which is expected to lead to the closure of 3 to 5 transfer stations.

The CleanLane initiative represents an extravagant and unnecessary cost; once operational, it is projected to impose a \$11,000,000 annual burden on Lane County ratepayers. Despite Lane County already leading the state in landfill diversion efforts, three commissioners chose to move forward with this project. Meanwhile, our sheriff notes that we remain among the least patrolled counties in the country. It is imperative that we stop this pet project, rectify the resulting financial damage, and prioritize essential government services.

## Public Safety Task Force Funding Needs

Lane County's law enforcement staffing is inadequate. We are one of the least patrolled counties in the nation with as few as only three deputies on patrol at any given time. In 2025, a diverse task force of community representatives dedicated hundreds of hours to understanding the state of Lane County Public Safety. That group thoughtfully delivered a message to the Board that the solution first is in prioritization, not new taxes.

The committee implored the Board to find efficiencies within the current budget structure, in some cases choosing public safety over other department programs, before implementing new taxes or fees. They also emphasized unanimously the importance of trust and engagement with voters.

I believe our roadmap to Public Safety exists in those multi-step recommendations

but before that a lot of work needs to be done to ensure that our tax dollars are being spent wisely and that we have exhausted all avenues for positive economic impact that brings in tax dollars.

## Land Management Division Permitting Delays

The State of Oregon sets the laws around land use, while counties are responsible for implementing them. If that is the case, why is Lane County known as one of the worst places in the entire state to develop or use private land? It seems like every day brings new stories about the challenges that residents, nonprofits, and small businesses face when trying to do anything with the land they own.

These endless delays, obstacles, and denials drive up home prices, eliminate opportunities, suppress land values, and ultimately result in lower tax revenue for the county. Specifically, an audit commissioned by the board in 2024 called Barriers to Affordable Housing - Analyses and Recommendations was performed by a couple of land use consultants, with the specific task of making the permitting process more accessible and affordable. The report listed several recommendations for actions that the commissioners can enact yet they haven't. We must implement meaningful reforms and create an atmosphere where citizens and businesses view the county as a partner rather than an adversary.

## BOB ZYBACH

Zybach has been a Lane County resident for \_\_\_ years. He is a forest scientist whose research has focused on western Oregon wildfire and forest history. He has been a published writer on these topics for more than 40 years, beginning when he was Vice President of the Associated Reforestation Contractors and edited their quarterly magazine in the early 1980s. He currently works full-time "for his two favorite

great-grandkids, Kendal and Tyler".

## Clean Lane Project

The Clean Lane project seems more of a Eugene-Springfield issue than District 5 — most of the folks I asked about it in Oakridge, Dexter, Blue River, or Disston had never even heard about it, or had no real opinion. Jake Pelroy is the expert on this topic and I would follow his lead for advice or insight. Greater problems to East Lane County are wildfire, unemployment, schools, roads, and toxic smoke. Clean Lane is more of an urban issue for a certain population.

## Public Safety Task Force Funding Needs

This is a huge priority and would be easily resolved by returning to legally-mandated sales and harvest levels on East Lane's O&C Lands and National Forests. These levels were readily maintained from the 1950s to 1990 and subsequent spotted owl litigation, but produced 10,000 good-paying local jobs and hundreds of millions to our schools, roads, police, and other county services. Restoring those legal agreements — as BLM is currently trying to do — would resolve these problems. It would also eliminate the need to secure SRS [Secure Rural Schools] and PILT [Payment in Lieu of Taxes] welfare funding from other US taxpayers.

## Land Management Division Permitting Delays

There are no details here. Change what, exactly? I am guessing that there are several reasons for individual delays, and they likely vary from one situation to another. I am against all unnecessary government regulations, costs, and delays and would address each circumstance from that perspective.

Follow election results at the lane county Elections website.

# BUDGET

From Page 1

praised those who spoke about the challenges the city faces in crafting next year's budget. She said the council must "listen to each one of those citizens and carry their testimony to the Budget Committee."

"It is incredibly frustrating we are in a position that we have to make these

significant budget cuts," Solesbee said. "While it is something every community across America is dealing with, that is not an excuse. We have to work within the tax dollars that come in to our General Fund."

## LIBRARY MODEL SPARKS CONCERNS

One of the most sensitive proposals involves a shift in the library's operating model. The draft budget outlines a

move from a fully staffed facility to a single full time Head Librarian supported by volunteers, though Sauerwein emphasized this is only one option under consideration.

Councilor Randell Lammerman framed the decision starkly: "We have a hard choice to make, reduce library staffing with a new model or close the library."

Public comment reflected deep concern. Fred Colgan called the proposal "a death blow to our beloved library,"

arguing that the institution is "a community treasure that exists because of 127 years of passionate citizen engagement." Lise Colgan questioned whether the proposed cuts comply with Oregon law governing public libraries and urged the city to open the process to community brainstorming. Christine Shu noted that reducing library funding from roughly \$500,000 to \$244,000 represents a 56% cut, calling it "a severe cut to a core public service."

Others supported the city's approach. Bill Christenson said, "Cutting a budget is healthy... This budget situation is temporary 2-3 years according to the city manager."

## COMMUNITY PROMOTIONS AND STAFFING CHANGES

Community Promotions funding will be limited to approximately \$103,000 in Transient Room Tax revenue this year, without the General Fund augmentation used in prior years. The proposed allocations include 25% of actual TRT revenue—about \$30,000—to the Chamber of Commerce, \$18,000 for the Visitor Center, and roughly \$50,000 for other programs to

be determined by the Budget Committee and Council.

Staffing adjustments continue a multi year trend of holding positions vacant or restructuring roles. Several positions across the City Manager's Office, Community Development, Public Works, and Police are not included in the budget, while a few roles—such as a part time commercial building inspector and an associate planner and police sergeant—are added

## UTILITY RATE IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

The proposed budget includes water, wastewater, and storm drain rate increases. A typical single family household using 5,000 gallons per month would see a \$10.76 monthly increase in 2026-27, followed by smaller increases in subsequent years. Businesses would see varying impacts, from \$9.41 per month for a normal Main Street water user to \$781.71 per month for a large business outside city limits.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS AND DEPARTMENT

## PRIORITIES

Major Public Works projects in the coming year include Phase 1 of the Lincoln Middle School River Walk Path, Phase 1 of the water mainline replacement from the reservoirs to 21st Street, completion of the Storm Drain Master Plan, and installation of a new ADA lift at the Armory Drill Hall.

Community Development priorities include long range planning, housing support, resilience initiatives, and maintaining an efficient building program. Police priorities focus on maintaining emergency response capacity, accreditation standards, proactive traffic enforcement, and community partnerships. Sauerwein also clarified that no city funds are budgeted for the Walldogs MuralFest or the Animal House 50th Anniversary Celebration, noting the city is providing in kind support "as we do with all special community events."

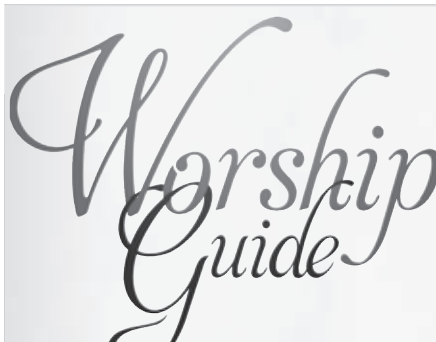
## UPCOMING BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND TOWN HALL

The Budget Committee will meet on Tuesday, April 21, Thursday, April 30, and Tuesday, May 19 at 6 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber. The City Council will host a community Town Hall on Thursday, April 30 at 6 p.m. in the Cottage Grove Armory.

## IN OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS

South Lane County Fire & Rescue Chief John Wooten, Deputy Chief Justin Baird, and Fire Board Director Ron Hood briefed the council on the consequences if the district's May 19 levy fails for a second time, warning of significant impacts to emergency response capacity.

Follow developments online at [cgsentinel.com](http://cgsentinel.com) and in the Wednesday print editions of *The Sentinel*.



# Worship Guide

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Sunday - 8:00 am-10:30 am  
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Mid-week Service: Wednesday, 1:00

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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541-942-2373  
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Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Comm. Kitchen Free Meal  
Tuesday 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.  
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OR 97402, or they may be barred. Any person whose rights may be affected by these proceedings may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or

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from the Personal Representative's attorney. DATED and first Published: 04/22/2026. /s/ Michelle McLaughlin and Amy Lindseth, Personal Representatives 4/22/26

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SPORTS

# Lions baseball bounce back for win at Newport

WILL LOHRE  
Cottage Grove Sentinel

There were plenty of adverse conditions facing the Lions, but that didn't stop them from earning their third win of the season.

On Apr. 10, the Cottage Grove baseball team hit the road for a doubleheader at Frank Wade Memorial Park, home of the Newport Cubs. The first game was a trying 11-1 defeat. The Lions only managed one hit and a bevy of errors. The Lions could have gotten discouraged.

Instead, they rallied, jumping out to a quick lead and then digging deep to fend off the hosts in a thrilling conclusion.

The game started with a bright spark, especially in comparison to the one-hit effort the Lions managed in the previous game. This time, Cottage Grove started with a hit, provided by Taylor Klarr. Following up on Klarr's single, Nolan Spear upped the ante, sending the second pitch of his at-bat deep to left field, a home run to score two for the Lions early on.

Evan Emmick stepped up to the plate next and registered the Lions' third hit in a row, this time singling on a line drive to right field. He advanced to second on an attempted bunt, and then Colton Cogburn connected for the fourth hit of the inning, driving Emmick home and giving the Lions a 3-0 lead.

Cogburn also started the game on the mound for Cottage Grove, and he kept the Cubs runless in the first, striking out the final two batters to end the inning.

In the second, the Lions bagged two more runs. Felix Garza crossed the plate on a groundout, and Spear managed to steal home in an inning that didn't have any hits. The baserunners got on through a walk and an errant pitch that struck Spear.

Again, Newport was kept quiet in the bottom of the second. Though one player was hit by a pitch and made it on base, three straight outs put Newport down 5-0 going into the third.

After three quick outs for the Lions in the third, Newport struck back, scoring four runs in quick succession. A cascade of walks, accompanied by a couple of singles and a hit batter, allowed Newport to pile on a few runs, getting four across home plate before Cottage Grove would stop the bleeding.

In the fourth, the Lions again couldn't get anything going, and Newport ended up tying the game in the latter part of the frame. Spear took over on the mound, and after getting two outs, Newport drove in the tying run with a double. No more damage was done in the inning, though, and the game stayed at 5-5 heading into the final two frames.

In the fifth, Cottage Grove got back on base and back on the scoreboard. After being hit by a pitch, Emmick continued his progress on the basepaths, stealing second with Kellen Hurst at the plate. Hurst's single would allow Emmick to score, giving the lead back to Cottage Grove. In the bottom of the inning, Spear worked out of a tight jam. With the bases loaded and two outs, Spear struck out Newport's Ryder Hockema to keep the narrow lead heading into the decisive sixth inning.

The Lions truly saved their best for last, and again it was Spear making the big-time play in the big-time moment. With two Lions on base following back-to-back walks, Spear stepped up to the plate. For the second time on the day, Spear sent the ball cracking off the bat and over the fence. It was a huge three-run homer to give the Lions much-needed breathing room, and pushed the score to 9-5. Spear ended the game with two hits (both home runs) and five RBI.

As the home team, it would come down to Newport to try to answer back. Spear walked a batter before striking out the second. Another reached base on four straight balls, and a hit loaded the bases. With pressure mounting, Spear delivered a massive strikeout to get a second out. Newport would score two more runs on their next two at-bats, with a walk



Courtesy photo

Follow game results at [osaa.org](http://osaa.org) and see CGHS sports features online at [cgsentinel.com](http://cgsentinel.com) and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

and a single, making it 9-7, but a crucial groundout had the Lions returning to Cottage Grove with a hard-fought victory. Spear ended the game with five strikeouts in three innings, and Cogburn added two during his three-inning stint.

The win brought Cottage Grove's record to 3-8, though an 8-1 loss to Hidden Valley on Apr. 14 means the Lions now sit at 3-9. Cottage Grove has three more non-league games to prepare for the Sky Em League, which will

commence on Apr. 21, when the Lions host Marshfield. Follow game results at [osaa.org](http://osaa.org) and see CGHS sports features online at [cgsentinel.com](http://cgsentinel.com) and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

# State's unemployment rate holding steady

In February, Oregon's seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll employment declined by 5,400 jobs, following a gain of 1,600 jobs, as revised, in January. February's gains were largest in financial activities (+800 jobs). Losses were largest in transportation, warehousing, and utilities (-1,600 jobs); leisure and hospitality (-1,500); and professional and business services (-1,300).

Financial activities added 800 jobs in February, which

was a rare monthly gain for the industry after persistent declines over the past three years. It employed 99,800 in February, which was down 1,100 jobs, or -1.1%, since February 2025.

Transportation, warehousing, and utilities employment was choppy in recent months, cutting 1,600 jobs in February following a gain of 1,500 in January. It employed 78,400 in February, which was 400 jobs, or 0.5%, above its year-ago level and close

to its average employment throughout much of the past five years.

Leisure and hospitality cut 1,500 jobs in February following a gain of 1,200 in January. During the prior three years, it was remarkably steady, averaging just over 207,000 jobs.

Professional and business services continued its downturn of the past three years, cutting 1,300 jobs in February and another 2,000 jobs in January. In the most

recent 12 months, it cut 8,700 jobs, or 3.4%. Since February 2025, each of its three component industries contracted by more than 2%: administrative and waste services (-4,200 jobs, or -4.3%); professional and technical services (-3,200 jobs, or -2.9%); and management of companies and enterprises (-1,300 jobs, or -2.7%).

The U.S. unemployment rate was 4.4% in February and 4.3% in January.



Metro Creative Connection

There were 2,070,680 employed and 124,619 unemployed in February in Oregon, according to the Oregon Employment Department.

# Warmer winters, snow drought may threaten western U.S. water by speeding flows, study finds



Zach Butler / Oregon State University

Naches River in Washington.



Zach Butler / Oregon State University

Sophia McKeever conducting water sampling on the Naches River in Washington.

SEAN NEALON  
Cottage Grove Sentinel  
Guest Article

As future shifts in climate lead to more rain and less snow in the western United States, new research finds that water will move faster through a landscape, likely leading to negative impacts on summer water levels and water quality.

The study is especially relevant at this moment because the western United States experienced similar snow drought conditions this past winter, with generally typical precipitation amounts, but less snow because of warmer temperatures.

"This winter has been exactly like what our paper had said the future will be like," said Zach Butler, a postdoctoral scholar at Oregon State University and lead study author, who has a part-time job forecasting winter weather in Oregon for the site OpenSnow.

The research can help inform future water management decisions. While the timing of water release relative to snowpack has long informed water planning, understanding how long it takes for water to travel through a landscape is not well understood and is important, especially at a time of increasing weather disturbances and extreme conditions.

In the new study, recently published in Scientific Reports, Butler and a team of researchers from Oregon State, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado estimated "water transit times" – the time between rain or snow falling on the landscape and leaving as streamflow – will be 18% faster on average in the late century.

Faster water transit times have been shown to negatively influence water quality

because during high-water events there are often spikes of contaminants that have been stored for a shorter period in shallow subsurface layers. Additionally, during low-water conditions, contaminants can be stored for a longer period of time.

The seasonal shift to faster water transit times in the winter will also likely lead to less water in streams, rivers, lakes and reservoirs in the summer, which could have negative implications for aquatic species such as salmon and trout and less water for drinking and agriculture.

The study focused on the Naches River, the main tributary of the Yakima River in Washington. The river basin is one of the most climate-sensitive basins within the Columbia River basin due to projected warming and snowpack declines, the researchers note.

Snowpack declines in the Naches River basin from 1991-2020 have already

resulted in discharge peaking earlier in the spring. Other research has projected a 16% decrease in snow and a 25% increase in rain by 2036-2050.

While the researchers focused on that one basin, the framework they developed can be used to predict historical and future water transit times in other parts of the western United States and the world. Their work builds and aligns with studies conducted by other scientists in the Rocky Mountains and Europe.

The research is important because one-sixth of the world's population relies on snowmelt water for drinking or agriculture, the researchers note. In the United States west of Colorado, 53% of water runoff originates as snowmelt.

Variability of water transit times is traditionally calculated by analyzing natural chemical tracers, such as stable water isotopes, found

in precipitation and streamflow. This is costly and logistically challenging because it requires collecting water samples in the field.

Butler and scientists from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory collected samples from the Naches River and coupled those in a novel way with an advanced hydrologic model to estimate water transit times both in the past and future.

"This study provides a crucial step in improving projections of water resource responses to climate change and underscores the value of integrating water transit time dynamics into future hydrologic assessments," Butler said.

Co-authors of the paper are Stephen Good, Mark Raleigh and Catalina Segura,

of Oregon State; Huancui Hu and Xingyuan Chen of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory; and Aubrey Dugger of the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

Good is an associate professor in the College of Agricultural Sciences and director of the interdisciplinary Water Graduate Resources Program. Raleigh is an assistant professor in the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences. Segura is a professor in the College of Forestry.

Sean Nealon is a news editor at Oregon State University's University Relations and Marketing Department. He may be reached at [sean.nealon@oregonstate.edu](mailto:sean.nealon@oregonstate.edu).

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