

Sparks
Fly at
City Council
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Oregon
By the
Numbers
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80
62

Cottage Grove

Wednesday, September 17, 2025
Partly Cloudy

Coin toss decides South Lane School Board appointment

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

In a rare moment of procedural drama, the South Lane School Board appointed Karen Zeller to Position 3 following a deadlocked vote and a coin toss.

The vacancy was created when former board member Duane Taddei resigned, citing changes to his work schedule that limited his availability. At a special meeting on July 28, the board declared the seat vacant and invited applications. Three candidates applied: Zeller, an educator; Tony Lefler, an automotive customer service manager; and Angel Reeves, whose occupation was not disclosed.

Reeves did not attend Monday night’s meeting, leaving Zeller and Lefler to be interviewed. Zeller’s name was drawn from a hat to go first.

In her opening statement, Zeller said her lifelong commitment has been to promote the education and nurture of young people, especially those with special needs. A longtime scout leader, she has taught at the Academy of Character Education (ACE)—one of the district’s two charter schools—as well as at the University of Oregon. She has three adult children who attended Bohemia Elementary, Lincoln Middle School, and Child’s Way Charter School, and she also homeschooled them. She described herself as a critical and creative thinker.

Lefler, who ran earlier this year in an unsuccessful bid to unseat incumbent Colleen Valley, said he learned much from the campaign and was encouraged by supporters to apply for the vacancy. He noted that his entire family—from his parents to his grandchildren—have attended local schools. He described himself as a “car guy” whose work in customer service has taught him to understand the complaints of frustrated clients and find solutions. He said he’s a laid-back team player who welcomes feedback and can agree to disagree.

After the interviews, the board voted twice and remained split 3–3. Newcomer Diane Hicks, a retired SLSD teacher, joined incumbents Colleen Valley and Tammy Hodgkinson in supporting Zeller. Newcomers Chris Holloman and Board Chair Bill Parsons sided with incumbent Joe Tucker in backing Lefler.

During deliberations, Zeller’s supporters cited her extensive background in education, her experience as a homeschooling parent, and her lifelong commitment to supporting special education students and their families and leading local scout troops for many years. Lefler’s supporters emphasized his status as a lifelong resident, his strong motivation to be a team player to improve the district, and the significance of

‘Armed and dangerous’ bank robbery suspect captured

STAFF REPORT
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Following two bank robberies in one day in Cottage Grove and Creswell, law enforcement has tracked down and captured the lone suspect.

The search for the robbery suspect began Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 9 in Creswell as Lane County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) deputies responded to Banner Bank in Creswell for an armed robbery.

Deputies learned the suspect had used a note to demand money and threaten the bank teller. The suspect was later confirmed to be the same suspect from an earlier bank robbery that occurred in Cottage Grove the same day, according to a release from the LCSO.

The suspect was described as a white male adult, about 6’ tall, weighing about 175 pounds, medium build, with a full beard. He was last seen wearing a green ball cap, aviator sunglasses, a black jacket, black sweatpants, grey gloves, and black shoes with white soles. Multiple video screen photographs of the suspect were captured at the bank. Deputies were also able to identify the suspect’s vehicle, a two-door 1998-2003 gold Ford Escort ZX2 with an unknown license plate.

In issuing its first release about the bank robberies, the LCSO stated that the suspect was believed to be “armed and dangerous,” adding that anyone with information

about the suspect’s whereabouts was asked to call 911 and avoid approaching or contacting him.

Earlier, at approximately 1:30 p.m. Sept. 9, Cottage Grove Police Department (CGPD) officers were dispatched to a report of a robbery that had just occurred at Banner Bank located at 25 Gateway Boulevard in Cottage Grove.

The investigation revealed that a white male adult entered the bank, wrote a note demanding money and presented it to a teller, according to a release from the CGPD. The suspect then left the bank with an undisclosed amount of money and fled the area.

LCSO detectives determined the suspect to be 37-year-old Clarke Chaos of Eugene. Detectives determined Zyz likely had a residence in the Eugene area, and Eugene Police detectives and officers began searching.

At approximately about noon, Sept. 10, while surveilling a possible residence in the area of Green Acres Road, Eugene Police detectives located Zyz in the suspect vehicle. Detectives and police officers contacted and detained the suspect without incident. After additional investigation, Zyz was arrested and lodged at the Lane County Jail for the following charges related to the robbery in Creswell:

- Robbery in the 2nd Degree
- Menacing



- Disorderly Conduct in the 2nd Degree
- Zyz was also arrested and lodged at the Lane County Jail on the following charges related to the robbery in Cottage Grove:
- Robbery in the 2nd Degree
 - Menacing
 - Disorderly Conduct in the 2nd Degree
- “The LCSO thankd Cottage Grove Police Department for their

assistance and the many community members who provided tips during the course of this investigation that led to his identification and arrest,” LCSO stated in a release following the suspect’s arrest. “LCSO also acknowledged the Eugene Police Department, which assigned considerable resources to the search for the suspect within the city of Eugene.”

Community dedicates famed steam train mural

Bohemia Park ceremony draws nearly 100 to honor mural years in the making

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Members of the community celebrated the dedication of a colorful mural depicting Engine No. 19, a beloved attraction whose iconic steam whistle echoed throughout town from 1971 to 1988.

The large mural, located on the north end of Bohemia Park, is painted on the east wall of the bathroom building next to the new splash pad.

Cottage Grove Mural Committee Chairwoman Debra Monsive welcomed nearly 100 attendees on Aug. 29 and served as master of ceremonies for the evening event. A series of speakers shared their train memories and described their part in the two-and-a-half-year journey to make the mural a reality. She thanked volunteers and sponsors for helping bring the vision to life.

Faye Stewart, Bohemia Foundation president and City of Cottage Grove Public Works director, described the process that placed the historic depiction of The Goose as it chugged along the north side of Dorena Lake. The mural was originally slated for the east wall of the nearby American Market across the railroad tracks and behind a chain link fence.



Monsive, a local historian, approached Stewart about relocating it to the park. She noted the mural would sit on the site of the Oregon Pacific and Eastern Railway train yard, where the Goose once departed to pick up passengers at the Village Green Depot. Since its

inception, one of Bohemia Park’s primary purposes has been to honor Cottage Grove’s history for future generations.

Local muralist Heather Endicott’s depiction of Engine No. 19 helped inspire the railroad theme of the park’s north side.

Stewart is fundraising now for the yet-to-be-completed water tower, which will serve as a community information reader board. It sits on the site of the original tower that

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Alleged assault, standoff, leads to arrest

Cottage Grove Police Department (CGPD) officers responded to multiple 911 calls regarding an assault that had just occurred at 502 East Madison Avenue in Cottage Grove Sept. 5.

It was reported that an adult male who was identified as 25-year-old Fernando G. Rodas Martin, of Cottage Grove, had assaulted a female victim who was known to him.

Upon arrival, officers contacted the victim of the assault however, the suspect had fled before officers arrived. A search for the suspect ensued and it was determined that he later returned to the address. CGPD officers established a perimeter

around the complex and contacted the suspect by phone, but he declined to come outside to meet with the officers, according to a release from CGPD.

It was determined by the supervisor on scene that probable cause existed to arrest Rodas Martin for assault. Due to past recent incidents involving Rodas Martin for similar criminal behavior, the Lane County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) assistance was requested by CGPD.

A search warrant for the suspect was completed by CGPD, while resources were brought into the area. CGPD officers and LCSO deputies continued to attempt to contact Rodas Martin in the apartment. There were numerous

phone calls and public address announcements in an attempt to get the suspect to exit the residence, the release states.

After several hours of unsuccessful attempts to communicate with the suspect, the search warrant was completed and signed. After securing the search warrant, the LCSO Special Response Team and the CGPD K-9 unit made entry into the apartment where they located Rodas Martin and took him into custody without further incident.

Rodas Martin was arrested at the scene and later transported to the Lane County Jail where he was lodged on the charge of Assault in the Fourth Degree.



Metro Creative Connection

The incident occurred at 502 East Madison Avenue in Cottage Grove.

“The Cottage Grove Police Department would like to thank the Lane County Sheriff’s Office for assistance in bring this incident to a peaceful conclusion,” the release states.

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

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

00:42: Business check, 900 block E. Main St.
02:37: Barking dog, 1200 block Bryant Ave.
05:20: Alarm, 100 block E. Harrison Ave.
07:34: Alarm, 1400 block Gateway Blvd.
08:03: Welfare check, 700 block S. 13th St.
08:35: Death investigation, 500 block Holly Ave.
09:12: Harassment, 900 block E. Main St.
10:35: Agency assist, 100 block E. Harrison Ave.
11:00: Disturbance, 32000 block Picknell St.
11:23: Warrant service, 200 block N. 12th St.
11:59: Agency assist, 1700 block S. 5th St.
12:56: Welfare check, 1300 block E. Main St.
13:18: Disturbance, 900 block W. Main St.
13:31: Motor vehicle crash, Main/Gateway
14:20: Illegal camping, 1600 block Clark Ave.
15:02: Juvenile trouble, 1800 block S. 1st St.
15:09: Abandoned vehicle, 600 block Harding Pl.

19:11: Motor vehicle crash, Gateway/Oswald West
19:45: Welfare check, 900 block W. Main St.
21:23: Trespass, 78000 block Thornton Ln.
21:57: Drug activity, 900 block Row River Rd.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

02:07: Suspicious condition, 1300 block Birch Ave.
06:25: Harassment, 1400 block Birch Ave.
07:38: Suspicious subject, 200 block Gateway Blvd.
07:58: Juvenile trouble, 300 block E. Madison Ave.
08:22: Alarm, 1300 block Gateway Blvd.
09:29: Suspicious vehicle, 1400 block N. Douglas St.
10:45: Motor vehicle crash, 700 block N. 16th St.
10:56: Suspicious subject, 1400 block Birch Ave.
11:04: Hit and run, 2100 block N. Douglas St.
11:35: Agency assist, 100 block Jefferson Ave.
13:17: Suspicious condition, 600 block N. 9th St.
13:31: Animal info, 900 block S. 8th St.
13:36: Criminal mischief, 1600 block Clark Ave.
13:41: Found drugs, 1500 block Hwy 99
14:14: Theft, 200 block N. 12th St.
14:43: Theft, 800 block E. Whiteaker Ave.
16:11: Theft, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.
16:32: Welfare check, Row River Rd/Snauer
16:48: Suspicious vehicle, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.

17:07: Disturbance, 3200 block Row River Rd.
17:17: Warrant service, 2700 block Row River Rd.
18:00: Motor vehicle crash, Hwy 99/Lynx Hollow Rd.
18:13: Welfare check, 1300 block Birch Ave.
18:23: Alarm, 1500 block S. 4th St.
18:56: Abandoned vehicle, 100 block N. 16th St.
21:45: Disturbance, 1200 block E. Madison Ave.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

00:32: Disturbance, 1700 block Belmont ave.
02:08: Drug activity, 100 block S. 10th St.
07:34: Agency assist, 100 block E. Harrison Ave.
07:48: Suspicious vehicle, 600 block S. 5th St.
07:55: Theft, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
08:55: Abandoned vehicle, 1700 block Carnegie Way
09:32: Fraud, 1300 block Elm Ave.
10:28: Trespass, 100 block N. 14th St.
10:42: Order violation, 900 block W. Main St.
11:27: Found dog, 1300 block Birch Ave.
12:10: Juvenile trouble, E. Harrison/99
12:21: Disorderly subject, 78000 block Wicks Rd.
12:25: Theft, 1500 block E. Main St.
13:01: Fraud, 1100 block Ash Ave.
13:09: Animal info, 1500 block E. Main St.
13:48: Unlawful entry into a motor vehicle, 1000 block Tyler Ave.
14:09: Agency assist, 500 block S. 3rd St.
14:13: Suspicious vehicle, 200 block Gateway Blvd.
15:46: Abandoned vehicle, 7th/Fillmore
15:50: Animal info, 1400 block E. Main St.
16:35: Animal info, 1700 block S. 6th St.

16:50: Found property, 800 block S. 3rd St.
17:07: Criminal mischief, Harvey/19th
18:07: Animal info, 900 block Row River Rd.
18:34: Trespass, 1500 block E. Main St.
19:39: Juvenile trouble, 1000 block Adams St.
19:52: Harassment, 900 block W. Main St.
20:04: Harassment, 1700 block Curry Ave.
21:57: Business check, 2700 block Row River Rd.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

01:28: Suspicious condition, 900 block W. Main St.
03:06: Trespass, 200 block N. 10th St.
05:43: Alarm, 3300 block Row River Rd.
06:49: Dog at large, 200 block Gateway Blvd.
07:49: Found dog, 200 block Gateway Blvd.
07:49: Motor vehicle crash, Taylor/6th
08:09: Assault, 200 block N. 12th St.
08:48: Trespass, 300 block Hwy 99
08:52: Animal info, 100 block N. 14th St.
11:00: Alarm, 500 block Grant Ave.
11:03: Animal info, 900 block Row River Rd.
11:15: Illegal camping, 1300 block E. Main St.
11:52: Agency assist, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.
12:04: Assault, 1300 block E. Main St.
12:08: Theft, 700 block Hwy 99
12:15: Drug activity, N. River Rd/Main
13:46: Assault, 1700 block Clark Ave.
14:07: Suspicious condition, 900 block W. Main St.
14:31: Order violation, 500 block Landess Rd.
15:53: Agency assist, 1000 block S. 10th St.
18:27: Illegal camping, 500 block S. River Rd.

18:46: Theft, 200 block Gateway Blvd.
18:56: Disorderly subject, 2500 block E. Main St.
19:13: Found dog, Nikki Place/13th St.
19:25: Illegal parking, 1500 block E. Main St.
22:56: Alarm, 200 block Gateway Blvd

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

00:17: Assault, 500 block E. Madison Ave.
02:40: Criminal mischief, 1400 block E. Washington Ave.
03:18: Suspicious subject, 200 block E. Jefferson Ave.
03:57: Suspicious subject, 700 block Row River Rd.
04:04: Suspicious condition, 1300 block Birch Ave.
08:27: Welfare check, 900 block W. Main St.
10:07: Trespass, 800 block E. Main St.
10:14: Repo, 900 block Arthur Ave.
12:18: Warrant service, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.
12:51: Fire, 200 block Gateway Blvd.
14:26: Overdose, 1500 block S. 4th St.
16:04: Found property, 5th/Adams
16:42: Suspicious condition, 300 block Quincy Ave.
17:20: Mental subject, 900 block E. Main St.
22:12: Unlawful entry into a motor vehicle, 900 block Row River Rd.
22:36: Welfare check, 200 block N. 12th St.
22:54: Criminal mischief, 1400 block E. Washington Ave.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

07:07: Trespass, 1800 block S. 11th St.
08:32: Welfare check, 600 block S. 5th St.
08:45: Warrant service, 5th/Washington
08:58: Dog at large, 1200 block S. 6th St.
09:21: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
09:23: Warrant service, 1500 block E. Main St.
10:52: Abandoned vehicle, 400 block N. 10th St.

11:35: Missing person, 800 block N. 16th St.
12:01: Trespass, 1300 block E. Jefferson Ave.
12:25: Welfare check, 1300 block Pennoyer Ave.
13:27: Assault, 1100 block E. Chamberlain Ave.
14:18: Found property, 900 block W. Main St.
14:30: Animal info, 1000 block S. 4th St.
15:17: Assault, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.
16:46: Theft, 1500 block Village Dr.
19:49: Welfare check, 1600 block Samuel Dr.
20:02: Harassment, 700 block South 1st St.
20:19: Suspicious subject, W. Harrison/ S. River Rd.
20:46: Welfare check, 900 block E. Main St.
20:53: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
22:22: Suspicious subject, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.
22:30: Hit and run, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
23:43: Disturbance, 1300 block E. Quincy Ave.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

00:27: Welfare check, Gateway/Taylor
00:56: Disorderly subject, 900 block W. Main St.
01:46: Disturbance, 200 block N. 12th St.
04:34: Disturbance, 1200 block S. 8th St.
05:09: Welfare check, 6th/Madison
09:28: Assault, 900 block W. Main St.
12:40: Suspicious condition, 2100 block Cemetery Rd.
13:44: Agency assist, Elm/Dogwood
15:13: Disturbance, 1300 block E. Main St.
17:35: Trespass, 78000 block Dowens Rd.
17:41: Agency assist, 78000 block Dowens Rd.
18:38: Juvenile trouble, 900 block Row River Rd.
19:08: Illegal parking, 1300 block S. River Rd.
19:41: Theft, 200 block N. 12th St.
22:17: Disturbance, 77000 block Mosby Creek Rd.

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‘Peace Through Unity’ in Coiner Park

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Organizers of Cottage Grove’s third annual World Peace Day observance say it’s “the most important day of the year.”

The event takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 21, in Coiner Park. The day features live music, guest speakers, children’s activities, and information booths hosted by peace-minded organizations. At noon, participants will join others around the globe in observing one minute of silence.

The local theme, “Peace Through Unity,” reflects the broader spirit of the United Nations’ International Day of Peace, which was unanimously declared by the UN General Assembly in 1981. The global observance encourages humanity to commit to peace above all differences and promotes nonviolence, ceasefire, and the building of a Culture of Peace. It is recognized annually by UN member states, schools, communities, and civic groups worldwide.

Event Coordinator Ananda Reeves said this year’s focus on unity is intentional and deeply needed.

“This day is designed to bring our local citizens together to experience unity, community building, wellness, interfaith spirituality, and music,” Reeves said. “The gathering uses fun and play to unite, heal, and inspire. It’s a day to take our attention away from the polarization of our country and put intention on regenerating our special home for peace in Cottage Grove, starting right now.”



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Peace Day 2024 at Coiner Park in Cottage Grove.

Reeves said the event is meant to be inclusive and uplifting, offering a space for reflection, connection, and hope. She emphasized that peace begins with small acts of unity—neighbors listening to one another, families spending time together, and communities coming together

“The gathering uses fun and play to unite, heal, and inspire.”

Ananda Reeves,
Event Coordinator

across differences.

A Peace Day Art Contest invites youth and adults to create posters with messages about peace. The winning adult entry will receive a \$100 cash prize, and the youth winner will receive a gift certificate. All entries will be displayed throughout the park during the event

and later placed strategically around town.

Reeves said she hopes the signs will inspire reflection and restore hope.

“Maybe we’re not ready for ‘world’ peace,” she said, “but we sure are ready for it in our town.”

Jim Gilroy, a former mayor and economic development leader for decades in Cottage Grove is a strong supporter of the event.

“Who can be against Peace? Instead of a Department of War, I’d like to see the emphasis change to a Department of Peace. This requires a strong economic, military and justice system,” Gilroy said. “Our commitment would be to work toward a collaborative solution to any challenge.”

According to Gilroy, one imperfect but still operating example is the Northern Ireland peace accord.

“This process was led by former Maine Senator, George Mitchell, who was appointed Special Envoy for Northern Ireland during the Clinton Administration,”

Gilroy said. “A generation has now grown up with this success and many now believe that there will be a chance for a unified Republic of Ireland in the not-too-distant future. So, as John Lennon and Yoko Ono once sang, “All we are saying is give peace a chance.””

Organizers encourage local groups to participate by hosting booths that promote peace, unity, and community wellness. Interested organizations can contact Reeves at 541-285-7329.

The event is free and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, musical instruments, and an open heart. Volunteers will be on hand to help guide activities and welcome guests.

As Cottage Grove joins communities around the world in honoring World Peace Day, organizers hope the message of unity will ripple outward—starting with one small park, one shared moment, and one collective breath.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

COTTAGE GROVE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Businesses are open during the Main Street Revitalization construction. Keep shopping in Historic Downtown Cottage Grove and get stamps. Turn the stamps in at the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce at 836 E Main Street for a chance to win \$500 in local gift cards each week until construction is finished. Details at <https://www.cgchamber.com/shoplocal/> or call 541-942-2411.

SEPTEMBER 17
Oregon Aviation Museum. Open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at 2475 Jim Wright Way in Cottage Grove.

Senior Center Pinochle Games. Begins at 1 p.m. Senior Center, 700 E. Gibbs Avenue in Cottage Grove.

SEPTEMBER 18
T.O.P.S. Club. From 9:30-11 a.m. Delight Valley



Courtesy photo from Heidi Anderson

Church of Christ at 33087 E Saginaw Road in Cottage Grove.

Baby Lap Time (birth to 2 yrs). Beginning at 11:30 a.m. Cottage Grove Public Library at 700 E Gibbs Avenue. Great socializing opportunity for parents and babies.

Bohemia Gold Mining Museum. Open from 1-4 p.m.

308 S. 10th Street in Cottage Grove.

Oregon Aviation Museum. Open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 2475 Jim Wright Way in Cottage Grove.

Teen Gaming. Begins at 4 p.m. Cottage Grove Public Library at 700 E. Gibbs Avenue. Youth 11-18 are

See **CALENDAR**, Page 6

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OBITUARIES & NEWS

James (Jim) Henry Bridges

December 13, 1935 - August 28, 2025

James (Jim) Henry Bridges passed away August 28th, 2025, at the age of 89 in Eugene Oregon. He was born on December 13th, 1935, in Glasgow, Montana to James and Alta Bridges. A few months after he was born, his family moved to Oregon where he resided for the remainder of his life.

In 1956 he was drafted into the army and spent basic training near San Antonio Texas where he met Geneva (Jean) Snyder. They later married on September 2nd, 1960, in Cottage Grove, Oregon.

Jim made a career of working in the sawmill. At the age of 63 he retired and volunteered along with his wife at a food bank and later a thrift store. Together Jim and Jean traveled to Australia and Europe after they both retired.



Jim was an avid reader and had a love for trees which he planted 100s of on their property near Drain, Oregon.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife Jean. He leaves behind a brother Thomas and his wife, Nelda of Cottage Grove, Oregon, three children, Marie Willoughby and her husband Kevin of Salmo, BC, Alan Bridges and his wife Julia of Mesa, AZ and John Bridges of Springfield, OR.

On Friday September 19th, 2025, there will be a viewing at 10:00am with a funeral following at 11:00am at Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel in Cottage Grove, Oregon. There will be a small luncheon at the funeral home then burial will be at Rest-Haven Memorial Park in Eugene, Oregon.

Jerrie Lee Perini

February 17, 1936 - August 21, 2025

Jerrie Lee Perini, (age 89) also known as “Gran” or “Gee”, a beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother passed in the loving hands of her family on August 21, 2025, in Cottage Grove, Oregon.

She was born February 17, 1936, in Harrah, Oklahoma to Clarence and Georgia (Curry) Culvey. Jerrie married Kenneth Perini on June 17, 1956, in Cottage Grove, OR. Together they shared a life built on mutual respect and love, celebrating 61 years together before his passing in 2017.

She began her career as a retail clerk at Peterson’s Department Store, then the 88 Cent Store. Later in life, she and Kenneth owned Perini’s Feed and Seed Store in Cottage Grove. Jerrie’s days were filled with family, gardening, flowers, golfing, bowling, hosting card parties and playing with her grandchildren. Both her



cooking and her baking left family and friends with fond memories of cocktails, snacks and shared meals.

The memory of Jerrie Perini will be honored by the love continuing through her children Scot (Pam) Perini and Julie (Keith) Giarrusso; 8 Grandchildren Raesha, Mandy, Mikayla, Logan, Abby, Brandy, Dorothy and Jordon; and 16 Great Grandchildren

Ezekiel, Harley, Davina, Cora, Lilly, Skyler, Kyle, Lynlee, Piper, Jade, Trexton, Raegan, Noah, Rylee and Khylyr. She is preceded in death by her siblings Dan, Dot, Ethel, Billy, Grace, Lois, and Lue.

Donations may be made in her memory to the Shriners Children’s Hospital. At Jerrie’s request a Celebration of Life will be held in the future. Arrangements are in the care of Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel.

Death Notices

David Brian Steele, 66 of Cottage Grove, Oregon passed away August 26, 2025. Arrangements are in the care of Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel and Crematorium.

Kristie Carleen Swain, 70, of Dorena, Oregon passed away on September 5, 2025. Arrangements are in the care of Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel and Crematorium.

Sparks fly over public power proposal

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Friction emerged during the Cottage Grove City Council meeting Sept. 8, as councilors considered a presentation from Emerald People’s Utility District (EPUD), inviting the city to explore replacing Pacific Power—the current investor-owned utility—with locally controlled public power.

During public comment, Pacific Power Regional Business Manager Scott Salazar said EPUD’s presentation blindsided him and strongly rejected any sale of the company’s infrastructure.

EPUD General Manager Kyle Roadman said the presentation was prompted by growing interest from both EPUD customers and non-customers about the possibility of EPUD serving the city.

“We’re here in response to this interest and because we believe both sides can benefit,” Roadman said. “We want to be clear that we are not pushing this effort. This is 100 percent the choice of your citizens and city leaders. We can be a resource if this is something you’d like to pursue.”

Roadman noted that EPUD already serves approximately 841 addresses within Cottage Grove’s 4,983 total, as its district entirely surrounds the city limits. He added that as the city expands, growth typically occurs in EPUD’s territory.



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council is exploring a proposal to replace Pacific Power as the main electric power provider for the city.

Both utilities use the same distribution voltage.

EPUD PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

In his Sept. 8 presentation, Roadman gave a brief overview of EPUD’s grassroots origins in the 1970s, its formal establishment in 1978, and the start of operations in 1983. He listed key accomplishments over the past 42 years and noted that EPUD currently employs 87 people at its Goshen headquarters.

He said a formal “statement of interest” from the city could lead to a third-party feasibility study to assess the costs and benefits of a transition. If the study proves favorable, the council could consider a non-binding advisory vote of city residents.

PACIFIC POWER PUSHES BACK

Public comment following the presentation revealed sharp divisions. Bill Spencer,

owner of Creswell’s Union 76 Station, testified that Pacific Power’s reliability during the January 2024 ice storm outperformed EPUD’s and urged the council to “select the one that is able to keep businesses open in times of emergencies.”

Salazar emphasized Pacific Power’s successful 75-year history in Cottage Grove and its commitment to continued service.

“This push by EPUD is unwelcome from our perspective,” Salazar said. “No one reached out to have a conversation about this before coming forward with the idea. While joining a public utility district may sound attractive, the reality is it’s a complicated and difficult process. Most of the equipment that serves Cottage Grove belongs to Pacific Power. EPUD would have to purchase it—and frankly, it’s not for sale.”

Councilor Randall Lammerman said he’s been a satisfied Pacific Power customer for 19 years and supports gathering more information, including a public advisory vote. However, he expressed concern about EPUD’s mention of legal remedies to compel a sale.

“You like my car. I don’t want to sell it, but you’re going to go to court and take it from me. I think that’s a little shady in my opinion,” Lammerman said.

Mayor Candace Solesbee summarized the discussion, noting that exploring the public power option would be a long process with the goal of choosing what’s best for Cottage Grove residents. In a 4-1 vote, with Lammerman dissenting, the council directed City Manager Mike Sauerwein to prepare a statement of interest for EPUD to initiate a feasibility study.

IN OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS

Gold Panning Guinness Record Attempt: The council unanimously approved a

\$19,000 expenditure from the Rural Tourism Projects budget for event promotion to pay the fee required for have a Guinness adjudicator at the Sept. 13 gold panning event.

Urban Renewal Agency Reactivation: The council received a tutorial on reactivating the city’s long-dormant urban renewal agency, citing a zone within city limits where assessed property values fall below average.

City officials outlined a compressed timeline to elect officers and adopt bylaws by Sept. 22, potentially unlocking revitalization funding by fiscal year 2026–27. If reactivated, the agency could direct targeted investments toward infrastructure upgrades—including street resurfacing, sidewalk repairs, and stormwater improvements—in areas most in need. It was noted urban renewal funds can help modernize aging roadways, enhance pedestrian safety, and support economic development in underperforming neighborhoods.

Audit Committee Appointments: Local accountant Brandon Parsons and Charlene Sayles, a city budget committee member, were unanimously appointed to three-year terms expiring in 2027.

Industrial Park Lot Sold: The council approved a purchase and sale agreement with SafePark Storage LLC for \$728,440 for a parcel in the city’s industrial park.

Administrative Vacancies Update: Sauerwein reported no qualified applicants applied for the vacant finance director position. He is working with the Lane Council of Governments to recruit a new human resources director. Interim staff are currently filling both roles.

Follow city issues online at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

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OREGON BY THE NUMBERS

Latest county data indicate progress for rural Oregon

FORD FAMILY FOUNDATION

Oregon by the Numbers 2025 has been released by the Ford Family Foundation.

Each year, The Ford Family Foundation and Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service compile and translate the most current state and federal data for all 36 counties in ways that community decision makers can easily use.

Oregon by the Numbers (OBTN) contains county-level profiles and in-depth reports on a variety of measures, including graduation rates, median income, crime and more. Each measure includes rankings that allow readers to see how their county compares with the rest of the state and is primed to support community action. OBTN is one of the only data tools available for free to all Oregonians that reports on county-level data for every county, regardless of size.

“Oregon by the Numbers relies on a committed public investment in data. While changes to how our country will collect information are still unclear, we know that without reliable data our ability to see the diversity of Oregonians’ experiences, and in turn take care of each other, will change,” Ford Family Foundation President and CEO Kara Inae Carlisle said. “These data give leaders across the state the ability to take informed action. They show us opportunity. They bolster the efforts of community leaders and advocates. They direct our attention to the kids who need us most.”

This year, notable data trends across Oregon’s 36 counties include:

- An increase in ninth grade students on track for on-time graduation in rural Oregon, from 80.8 to 83.4 percent.
- An increase in net migration rates to rural Oregon between 2020-2023 nearly four times that of urban counties (40 versus 10.6 per 1,000 residents, respectively).
- A decrease in index crime – from 33.1 crime offenses per 1,000 residents to 29.4 statewide.
- An increase from \$76,632 to \$80,426 in median income statewide.
- A decrease from 48.2 to 45.6 percent in households experiencing financial hardship in rural Oregon.

- A statewide increase of almost 1,000 new publicly available electric vehicle charging stations.

This year, the data highlight focuses on Oregon’s Student Health Survey, a school-based survey of 6th, 8th and 11th graders that plays a key role in statewide efforts to ensure Oregon’s schools and communities create environments that help youth become healthy humans and successful learners.

The highlight features two survey items that readers of the report could take action on: The extent to which Oregon students feel the people in their lives and in their schools care about and motivate them. Overall, 60 percent of students surveyed in 2024 agree there are people in their lives who encourage them to do their best.

“Viewing the results across Oregon, rural counties stand out for how adults support their students,” Ford Family Foundation Vice President of Learning and Impact Dr. Kasi Alklen said. “It gives us hope to build on when we see counties like Douglas, Baker, Wheeler, Wallowa, Union and Lake scoring in the top third of the state.”

This promising news comes despite a challenging context, as seen in this year’s data for child poverty. The updated data source for the measure now reports rates for all 36 counties, revealing disparities across the state. In rural Oregon, 18.6 percent of children under the age of 18 are living in families whose income falls below the Federal Poverty Level for their family size. In urban counties, that rate is 12.2 percent.

Access the Lane County profile at:

https://www.tfff.org/wp-content/uploads/Lane_OBTN-2025_EN.pdf

About The Ford Family Foundation

The Ford Family Foundation believes in the power of rural communities. It is a private, nonprofit foundation proudly headquartered in Roseburg, Oregon, serving rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. Its investments through grants, scholarships and community building create the conditions so that children have the family, educational and community supports they need to succeed in life. www.tfff.org

EDITORIAL CARTOON



NEVER FORGET

COMMENTARY

Oregon’s environmental battleground

RANDY STAPILUS
Oregon Capital Chronicle

If Oregon has a “brand,” protection of its environment has to be integral to it.

Probably no political figure in the state’s history more represents it to the rest of the world than former Republican Gov. Tom McCall, the champion of pioneering Oregon laws that kept beaches publicly owned, charged deposits on bottles and cans to reduce litter and blocked cities from sprawling.

More than for anything else, McCall is known for his crusades — not always perfect but often effective — to protect the natural condition of the state. While other western states, including Idaho and Wyoming, have been the scene of hard-fought contests over preservation against development and use, Oregon for generations has weighed in clearly on the environmental preservation side.

The Trump administration has begun weighing in on the other side, and Oregon likely will be putting a lot of civic effort into maintaining its course. While some efforts from the national capital — such as Utah Sen. Mike Lee’s call for mass selloff of federal lands — have hit speed bumps, others are underway.

The argument in favor of that new direction, implicit or explicit, will involve expansion of resource industries and the jobs that have been attached to them. Forest industries were for generations the bedrock of the

Oregon economy, supplying much of its wealth and many of its jobs.

It is a smaller component today. The state’s forest sector today takes in about 62,000 direct jobs, a large number but just about 3% of jobs overall. The economic impact of wood products now is less than that: By one recent estimate, the subcategory of “logging” — as opposed to manufacturing wood products, work in nurseries and associated work — accounts for 5,736 jobs.

The number of Oregon mill jobs fell by about 500 over the last year, and one reason given for that was a lack of timber supply. But specific types of timber would be needed to supply the more specialized mills of today: Not just any stock would do. Even if more forests were opened to cutting, the number couldn’t increase dramatically soon, because a large economic infrastructure would have to be built up to support it. And even if those problems could be solved, the weak demand for timber and in recent years difficulties finding an adequate work force would remain as major obstacles.

Whatever the rationale, the pressure against preservation from the nation’s capital is clear and accelerating.

The most dramatic recent instance is the Trump administration’s published intent to scale back — exactly how much is unclear — the roadless rule from 2001 affecting vast stretches of forested land in backcountry areas nationwide, including in

Oregon. The Sierra Club said the change “threatens nearly 58 million acres of undeveloped backcountry forestland, jeopardizing crucial drinking water sources for communities across the nation”

That includes 2 million acres of land now protected from development in Oregon — a big chunk of the 14.5 million acres in the 11 national forests in the state, and some of the most prized recreational areas.

That follows up on a pair of presidential executive orders earlier this year aimed at increasing timber production on national lands and bypassing rules that protect critical wildlife habitat.

There’s much more from the White House affecting the Northwest specifically, such as the abrupt reversal of a long-negotiated deal — the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement — to restore salmon runs along the Snake River.

More narrowly, the Friends of the Columbia Gorge said last month that “The Trump administration’s FY26 budget proposes redirecting roughly \$387 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund’s (LWCF) federal land acquisition budget to fund “deferred maintenance” — that is, repairs to trails, visitor centers, and infrastructure, in addition to logging — directly contradicting the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) that President Trump himself signed into law in 2020.”

Taken together, this along with still more examples

amounts to a massive reversal of national policy developed over decades and in some cases even in the first Trump Administration. It’s easy to lose track of the larger developing picture amid the wash of daily news.

Resistance to it in the Northwest is just beginning to develop. But it will emerge visibly soon.

In addition to a supportive political environment, Oregon has an especially large number of environmental action groups (owing in part to the large and often influential Friends network) but much of their activity — the Oregon Environmental Council is a good example — has been focused on state government activity, where reception to their efforts has been relatively (albeit not always) positive.

Expect the focus to change to the national level, alliances to shift, and legal and political conflict to ramp upward, in the next few months if not weeks. The environment is about to become a flashpoint in Oregon in a way it hasn’t been in decades.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/09/04/oregons-environmental-battleground/>
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Americanisms



“Sometimes you have to explore the darkness to get to the light and get back to who you are.”
— Jennifer Lopez

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Weekly Online Poll

How often do you take a walk around your neighborhood?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Not often

Previous Poll Results

How often do you and your family share dinner at home together?

- ☐ Every evening 40%
- ☐ Frequently, when everyone is home 40%
- ☐ Not often 20%

THE COTTAGE GROVE
Sentinel

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

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CALENDAR

From Page 3

welcome to socialize and play games.
Table Tennis. From 4-6 p.m. Cottage Grove Community Center Reception Hall at 700 E. Gibbs Avenue. Tables, paddles, and balls provided.
SEPTEMBER 19
Oregon Aviation Museum. Open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 2475 Jim Wright Way in Cottage Grove.
Northwest Community Credit Union Rebranding Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. 9

a.m. 600 E. Jefferson Avenue in Cottage Grove.
Storytime, Begins at 11:30 a.m. Cottage Grove Public Library at 700 E. Gibbs Avenue in Cottage Grove. All ages welcome.
Bohemia Gold Mining Museum. Open from 1-4 p.m. at 308 S. 10th Street in Cottage Grove.
American Legion Post 32 Bingo. From 5-7 p.m. at 826 W. Main Street in Cottage Grove.
Elks Lodge Friday Night Community Dinner. From 5-6:30 p.m. 775 N. River Road in Cottage Grove.
Menu: Steak Dinner Cost: \$12
Bohemian Tavern Weekly Pool Tournament. 7 p.m.

48 N. 9th Street in Cottage Grove. Entry Fee: \$5 and BCA Rules.
SEPTEMBER 20
South Valley Farmers Market. Open from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. in the Cottage Grove Downtown Historic District at 7th and Main Streets. Buy goods directly from local farmers, food producers and artisans.
Cottage Grove Historical Society Presentation. 10 a.m. Community Center Shepherd Room, 700 E. Gibbs Avenue. Topic: Cottage Grove Schools. All are welcome to come and learn more about local history.
Bohemia Gold Mining Museum. Open from 1-4

p.m. at 308 S. 10th Street in Cottage Grove.
SEPTEMBER 21
International Day of Peace Celebration. From 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Cottage Grove’s Coiner Park. Features guest speakers, live music, information booths and activities for kids. At Noon participants will join the rest of the world in one minute of silence.
Cottage Grove Museum. Open from 1-4 p.m. Corner Birch Avenue and H Street in Cottage Grove.
VFW Post 3473 Bingo. From 2-4 p.m. at 3160 Hillside Drive in Cottage Grove.
SEPTEMBER 22
Cottage Grove Senior Center Bingo. Begins at

12:30 p.m. Community Center, 700 E. Gibbs Avenue. Senior center members only.
SEPTEMBER 23
Ukulele Club. Begins at 9 a.m. Cottage Grove Public Library, 700 E. Gibbs Avenue in Cottage Grove. Free for adults of all skill levels.
Oregon Aviation Museum. Open from 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. at 2475 Jim Wright Way in Cottage Grove.
Science on Tap. 5-7 p.m. at Axe and Fiddle, 657 E. Main Street in Cottage Grove. 5-6 p.m. Project Updates. 6-7 p.m. Presentation: The Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council free monthly community gathering. Suggested \$5 donation. Topic: Chinook Salmon: There and Back

Again—A Spawning Salmon’s Journey.
Trinity Lutheran Church Free Community Dinner. From 5:15-6:15 p.m. Seventh and Quincy Avenue in Cottage Grove. Take-Out Only.
Coast Fork Brewing Trivia Night, From 6-8 p.m. 106 S. 6th Street in Cottage Grove. Up to 7 players on a team.
SEPTEMBER 24
Elks Bingo. Starts at 5 p.m. Elks Lodge, 775 N. River Road in Cottage Grove. Doors and Lounge open at 5 p.m. Early Bird Bingo begins at 6:30 p.m. Regular games begin at 7 p.m.

MURAL

From Page 1

powered the 1915 steam engine for its twice-daily weekend runs.
In his remarks, Stewart explained the Foundation

had not initially planned to build a restroom in that location. But with plans for a splash pad and the need for a large canvas, a restroom building made a lot of sense.
“I got the dimensions from Debra and instructed the architect to design a building specifically for the mural and include any special lighting

to illuminate it at night,” Stewart said.
Endicott initially questioned her ability to paint on such a large scale, but felt deeply honored when the committee members selected her. Their encouragement and persistence inspired her to take on the challenge and create her first mural. She

later described the difficulties of working through this year’s scorching summer heat
“I want to thank Debra for being so stubborn and not taking no for an answer the first several times she asked me,” Endicott said. “I would not be here, and this

mural would not be here, if it wasn’t for her.”
Community archivist Casey Woodard created several displays featuring a wide variety of Goose memorabilia, adding depth and context to the celebration.
The mural now stands on the corner of 10th and Main Street as a vibrant tribute to

Cottage Grove’s railroading past and the community’s commitment to preserving its stories.
As the splash pad fills with laughter and the mural glows under evening lights, Engine No. 19 continues its journey—this time through memory, art, and shared legacy.

BOARD

From Page 1

his narrow loss—just 12 votes—in his recent campaign for a board seat.
Originally, the board planned to table the decision if a tie occurred. But after confirming no member

would change their vote, Parsons proposed a coin toss. Superintendent Todd Miller assured the board that other districts have used this method to break stalemates. The board voted to accept the outcome, and Zeller won the toss.
Parsons said following the meeting he was criticized for suggesting the coin toss and not waiting to explore other options. In a post

meeting interview with The Sentinel, Parsons explained his rationale.
“The school year started last week, and it didn’t make sense to me that we wait a month to decide this matter. With board members indicating they were unlikely to change their vote at that time, I felt a coin toss was the most fair and equitable way to fill the vacancy and

get on with the district orientation process.”
Zeller’s appointment fills the final seat on a board that saw significant turnover in May’s special district election, where two of four contested races were so close it took weeks to determine

the winners. Some school district observers characterized the appointment as politically critical and would tip the balance of board between conservative (Lefler) and progressive (Zeller) philosophies.

With four newcomers now seated, the board is expected to begin a comprehensive orientation for its members in the coming weeks.
Follow developments at cghsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of *The Sentinel*.

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ALTHOUGH THE SELF-APPOINTED GODDESS-QUEEN OF THE SIRENS' FEROCITY AND STRENGTH ARE FORMIDABLE, VAL TEARS HER FROM ZULFA AS EASILY AS THOUGH SHE WERE A CHILD...

...BUT, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO HER ORDERS. "PERHAPS - PERHAPS ASYLUM ON THE MISTY ISLES IS WORTH DISCUSSING..." SPEAKS ONE.

AND WITH THAT, CALYPSO SCREAMS A CURSE AND FLEES HER CHAMBERS!

...SENDING THE CRAZED WOMAN FURTHER INTO MADNESS! "KILL THEM! KILL THEM ALL NOW!" SHE SPUTTERS TO HER FOLLOWERS...

YEATES 7/13/14

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Harvest Concert draws a crowd

Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

The second annual Harvest Concert drew close to 250 people to the Bohemia Park Amphitheater on Wednesday, Sept. 3. South Lane Worship organizers were pleased with the turnout and said they received many positive comments from concertgoers. Volunteers from churches across Lane County unite three times a year to promote greater unity among Christ-followers through worship, prayer, and fellowship. The nonprofit's events are designed to be welcoming to both long-time believers and spiritual seekers.



Working on the railroad



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

A contracting crew with Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad (CORP) has been installing new rail along sections of the line that run through Lane County. The upgrades are part of CORP's broader infrastructure improvements to ensure safer and more efficient freight movement, according to a release. As a result, three railroad crossings in Cottage Grove were scheduled to be affected by the improvements, including: S. 6th St / E. Quincy Avenue, Villard Avenue, and E. Chamberlain Avenue.



Cottage Grove High School Sports Roundup


STAFF REPORT
Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove varsity football team travels to Creswell Sept. 19. The team was scheduled to play at Coquille Sept. 12. The Lions won their first non-league game of the season Sept. 5, beating North Marion 34-14. Follow game results at osaa.org.

The Lions boys soccer team was scheduled to host Molalla Sept. 16 and Marist Catholic Sept. 24. The CGHS girls soccer team had assembled a 2-win 1-loss record as of Sept. 9. The Lady Loins were scheduled to travel to Sweet Home Sept. 11, to Molalla Sept. 16, and to host Marist Catholic Sept. 24.

The Lion's volleyball team had a 3-game win record as of Sept. 9. The team was scheduled to host Molalla Sept. 11, travel to Newport Sept. 16 and host Sweet Home Sept. 18. See game results at osaa.org.


The CGHS boys cross country squad is scheduled for competition at the Cottage Grove Bramble Scramble Oct. 18. The Lady Loins squad is scheduled to compete at the Paul Martin Invitational at Philomath High School Oct. 11.



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