

Hi tec devices trigger poaching investigation
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Year In Review
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5042

Cottage Grove

Wednesday, Jan. 1
Rain

SPECIAL REPORT

Cottage Grove facing sobering challenges in 2025



On Aug. 22, Cottage Grove Police assisted in closing the 12th Street and Douglas Street homeless camps. Solutions to the city homelessness is one of the key challenges facing the Cottage Grove City Council in 2025.

Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

In the City of Cottage Grove’s history book, the year 2024 will be especially memorable. Unprecedented and unexpected events made it an unforgettable year for city officials, employees and citizens. A severe ice storm crippled the city for nearly a week in January, just as City Manager Mike Sauerwein assumed his new post. In July, a historic special election recalled three of the seven members of the city council that left two of the three seats vacant for the remainder of the year. The closure of three homeless camps divided the community and attracted increased media attention. In May, Budget Committee members learned that inflationary prices were taking a significant toll on existing service levels. They balanced the 2024-25 budget with the understanding that if projected revenues were not received, reductions would have to be made as needed in the current budget. The City’s two largest general fund expenses are police and library services. On Dec. 1, Library hours were adjusted to

accommodate staffing changes, and it would no longer be open on Saturdays. The failure of two money measures to address the deterioration of local streets was a major disappointment to the members of the Council’s Ad Hoc Committee on Street Improvement and Funding. The committee members spent six months in 2023 studying the issue in detail, exploring all potential funding options, seeking community feedback on the options, and recommending the City Council place two revenue measures on the Nov. 5 ballot: an increase in the local gas tax and a property tax to improve the condition of local streets. Both were decisively rejected by voters. As major events unfolded in 2024, it generated robust community discussion during public comments at city council meetings, on social media pages, in local eateries, and on KNND Radio’s Beeper Talk Show. Anecdotal speaking, last year’s increased community interest in city affairs creates high expectations for how the new council will address the most difficult

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Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

“We strongly advise against engaging in activities such as those outlined in this letter, including collecting or sharing information about individuals based on their demographic or perceived immigration status,” a release from the Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office states.

Discrimination letter triggers statewide response

STEVE CARD
Country Media, Inc.

An anonymous letter received by a number of government leaders and law enforcement personnel along the Oregon Coast has raised concerns regarding its discriminatory language. Cottage Grove Police Chief Cory Chase said his agency had not received any reports of such letters as of Dec. 19. The Lane County Sheriff’s Office has not received any reports of a similar letter in the area, according to LCSO Sgt. Tim Wallace. “Oregon Revised Statute 181A.820 generally prohibits the inquiry or collection of an individual’s immigration or citizenship status, or country of birth, with few specific exceptions,” Wallace told The Sentinel. “Consistent with this, the Sheriff’s Office does not inquire about, document, or share

such information with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This policy applies to all our operations, including the Lane County Jail.” The mission of the Lane County Sheriff’s Office is to conserve the peace, according to Wallace. “We remain committed to serving the public with justice and integrity, protecting those who both live and visit our community, without exception. Our policies and procedures remain in line with that mission,” Wallace said. REGIONAL REACTION This letter prompted a conversation among members of the Toledo City Council during its meeting on Dec. 18, and it also resulted in a press release being issued the follow day by the Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office.

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Plaza entrance ‘95% complete’

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

It is perhaps one of the signatures of Cottage Grove and a place where anyone can find beauty and solitude. Cottage Grove’s Bohemia Park is a 14.8-acre park owned by the Bohemia Foundation and is maintained through a cooperative agreement with the City of Cottage Grove. On June 16, shovel wielding officials ceremonially broke ground for the park’s newest improvement – an entry plaza at 10th and Main Street estimated to cost of \$1.65 million.

ORIGINAL DESIGN

The original design was created by Carol Mayer Reed at Mayer Reed in Portland. The design was built upon by David Dougherty at DLA Design creating the current Entry Plaza Design, according to City of Cottage Grove Public Works and Development Director Faye Stewart. “We added a splash pad, swing set, and Historic Water Tower to the original design,” Stewart said. “The stone pillars will represent the historical themes that built Cottage Grove. Rail Road, Farming, Mining, Timber/Lumber, Recreation, and Native American History. Stewart explained that fundraising is currently underway to complete the water tower and add the historical interpretive panels to the stone pillars. Next spring/summer the Cottage Grove Historical Society will begin painting the old Blue Goose Steam Engine on the bathroom wall facing 10th Street. “The Bohemia Foundation shared the items we hoped to incorporate into Bohemia Park and both Carol Mayer Reed and David Dougherty came up with how to design them into the project,” he said.



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

The new Bohemia Park Plaza entrance showcases the park’s five heritage themes of Mining, Timber, Railroad, Agriculture and Recreation.



“THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT IS THAT IT IS CREATING NEW RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH, CAPTURING THE EARLY HISTORY OF OUR CITY AND SURROUNDING AREA, AND IT WILL ENCOURAGE TOURISTS TO VISIT BOHEMIA PARK.” ~ FAYE STEWART, COTTAGE GROVE PUBLIC WORKS AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR.

The entry plaza project is about 95% complete, according to Stewart. PROJECT DETAILS Work to plant shrubs, level soil for installation of sod, install the swing set and fall protection material, set fixtures in bathrooms, complete plumbing, and complete the electrical work, was expected to be completed by the end of December.

In early November, The Sentinel reported that the project is the third phase of the park’s development. It began in 2021, with a \$70,000 challenge grant from the Woodard Family Foundation, with conceptual drawings of the park’s north end improvements. Community requests for a splash pad and swing set prompted their

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Investigation finds stolen trailers, tractors, firearms

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

A months-long law enforcement investigation that began with a traffic stop in Illinois has ended south of Springfield.

Lane County Sheriff’s detectives and deputies served a search warrant Dec. 20, at a residence in the 86000 block of Mahogany Lane, south of Springfield.

Detectives had conducted the months-long investigation after a traffic stop in Illinois turned up 242 pounds of marijuana.

The investigation led back to the address on

Mahogany Lane, which was a licensed OLCC marijuana growing location, according to LCSO Sgt. Tim Wallace.

“It was determined marijuana was illegally being diverted out of state,” Wallace said. “During the execution of the warrant, over 2,000 pounds of marijuana was found on the premises. About half of the marijuana was being illegally secreted in the residence on the property, which was not part of the licensed area where marijuana could be kept.”

Wallace added that the marijuana in the residence also was not in the OLCC

tracking system and that Lane County’s Land Management Code Compliance Program will be following up with code violations discovered on the property.

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

The Lane County Sheriff’s Office was assisted on this case by the Drug Enforcement Administration and OLCC.

“This investigation would not have been possible

without the ongoing grant funding from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission’s Illegal Marijuana Market Grant (IMMEG),” Wallace said. “This grant was created in 2018 by the Oregon Legislature to assist local law enforcement agencies and district attorneys’ offices in their efforts to address the illegal marijuana market in Oregon.”

The investigation is ongoing, according to Wallace. Anyone with additional information is asked to contact LCSO at 541-682-4141 and reference case #24-6574.



Courtesy from the LCSCO

About half of the marijuana was being illegally secreted in the residence on the property, which was not part of the licensed area where marijuana could be kept, according to the LCSO.

Thermal, infrared devices trigger poaching investigation

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Oregon State Police (OSP) investigators have concluded a months-long investigation into poaching involving thermal devices.

Troopers served several search warrants and made multiple arrests during the investigation with more expected, according to a release from OSP. Specific details about the suspects arrested had not been release as of Dec. 27.

“The use of infrared or thermal devices to hunt, locate, or scout wildlife provides a person with a significant unfair, unethical advantage over other unethical hunting behaviors as it completely voids the animal’s natural ability to hide or conceal itself,” OSP Captain Kyle Kennedy stated in the release.

Use of thermal and infrared devices is prohibited by law.

“Over the last two years, the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division has received an increasing number of complaints regarding the unlawful use of infrared thermal imaging devices, commonly known as Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR), to hunt or scout for big game animals with several complaints originating in the Clackamas County area,” the release states.

In the fall of 2024, Fish and Wildlife Troopers began investigating several individuals who were reportedly using infrared technology to kill deer and elk. Some of the suspects shared a connection while some were working individually, investigators state in the release.

The Oregon State Police

Fish and Wildlife Division executed search warrants Dec. 15 and Dec. 16, at nine residences in Clackamas County.

“As a result of this investigation, 14 infrared thermal imaging devices, four deer, and one rifle were seized related to the use of FLIR devices for scouting and hunting wildlife,” Kennedy said.

Criminal wildlife charges will be forwarded to the Clackamas County District Attorney’s Office on 13 individuals for the use of infrared thermal imaging while scouting or hunting big game animals.

In connection to this investigation, OSP contacted three individuals while in the field hunting or scouting for wildlife who were criminally cited and released. In those cases, two infrared thermal imaging devices

were seized.

“OSP works diligently to protect Oregon’s wildlife by pursuing leads and investigating infrared thermal device and other wildlife poaching cases,” Kennedy said, “This case highlights the Fish and Wildlife Division’s ability to adapt to modern poaching threats and effectively investigate and seek criminal prosecution of poachers.”

Infrared technology gives advantage to those using it and can result in an increase in the number of animals taken off the landscape, according to Jason Kirchner, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) District Wildlife Biologist based in Newport.

“Thermal or infrared use is illegal in Oregon, gives an unfair advantage, and is not a fair chase,” he said, “This illegal activity will increase

harvest rates, reduce our game populations and hunting opportunities, and impact the public image of law-abiding hunters.”

ODFW Wildlife Division Administrator Bernadette Graham-Hudson said he agrees.

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

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

“OHA supports the vigor-

ous enforcement of laws designed to protect wildlife, habitat, private property and hunter’s rights,” Hagan said.

Those with information regarding a wildlife and/or habitat law violations or suspicious activity can call OSP dispatch directly at *OSP (*677) or 1-800-442-0776. Callers can remain anonymous and a cash reward or preference point reward may be offered for information leading to a citation or arrest in a qualifying case.

TIP qualifying cases can include: Unlawful Take/Possession or Waste, Habitat Destruction, Illegally Obtaining Hunting/Angling License(s) or Tag(s), Lending/Borrowing Big Game Tag(s), Spotlighting (Including Thermal/IR, Night Vision Optics), and Snagging/Attempting to Snag Game Fish.

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, DECEMBER 16

00:06: Illegal camping, 400 block Kalapuya Way

01:13: Nuisance, 900 block W. Main St.

02:06: Assault, 700 block Hwy 99

02:33: Theft, 700 block Benjamin Ave.

03:47: Business check, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.

07:05: Dog at large, Jason Lee/R

10:53: Animal info, 600 block S. 5th St.

11:07: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

11:42: Theft, 800 block Row River Rd.

12:01: Minor in possession, 1300 block S. River Rd.

12:34: Abandoned vehicle, 22nd/Whiteaker

13:10: Welfare check, 1500 block Bohemia Pl.

13:21: Abandoned vehicle, 1000 block S. 4th St.

13:46: Missing person, 75000 block Wicks Rd.

14:10: Fraud, 1200 block Edgewater Ln.

14:34: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

14:51: Motor vehicle

crash, Hwy 99/Davisson

15:03: Welfare check, 200 block South M St.

15:33: Theft, 900 block E. Main St.

18:22: Juvenile, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.

18:59: Suicide, 1200 block Pennoyer Ave.

19:12: Theft, 1100 block E. Harrison Ave.

19:16: Found property, 1500 block E. Main St.

20:15: Juvenile, 1400 block E. Madison Ave.

22:06: Suspicious subject, 1600 block E. Grover Ave.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17

02:37: Suspicious vehicle, 700 block Row River Rd.

08:25: Fire, 200 block N. 12th St.

08:59: Abandoned vehicle, Birch/M

09:20: Hit and run, 400 block S. 10th St.

11:15: Suspicious condition, 1000 block Hillside Dr.

11:26: Incomplete 911, 1500 block S. 4th St.

12:04: Trespass, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.

12:22: Welfare check, 14th/Pennoyer

12:27: Illegal camping, 1400 block N. Douglas St.

13:43: Theft, 1700 block E. Main St.

14:30: Trespass, 100 block North H St.

14:56: Suspicious condition, 1000 block Hillside Dr.

15:28: Agency assist, 1200 block Birch Ave.

15:47: Suspicious subject, 1000 block Taylor Ave.

15:50: Theft, 1500 block S. 4th St.

16:08: Welfare check, 500 block Grant Ave.

16:32: Welfare check, 1100 block Hwy 99

16:54: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

17:19: Disturbance, 200 block North 1st St.

17:29: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

17:36: Info, 900 block Johnson Ave.

17:50: Assault, 100 block N. 14th St.

21:00: Welfare check, 200 block N. 12th St.

21:17: Welfare check, 1400 block Hwy 99

23:19: Disturbance, 500 block E. Madison Ave.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

00:43: Suspicious subject, 1400 block E. Main St.

00:47: Juvenile, 77000 block Mosby Creek Rd.

01:12: Juvenile, 78000 block Hwy 99

07:22: Illegal camping, 500 block S. River Rd.

08:30: Incomplete 911, 1000 block Taylor Ave.

09:33: Business check, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

09:53: Business check, 900 block Row River Rd.

10:52: Trespass, 200 block N. 10th St.

11:21: Stolen vehicle, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.

11:32: Welfare check, Hwy 99/N. 9th St.

12:06: Theft, 1200 block Hwy 99

12:24: Illegal parking, 8th/Cooper

14:30: Theft, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.

14:58: Theft, 700 block N. River Rd.

15:13: Order violation, River Rd/Hwy 99

15:27: Criminal mischief, 100 block S. 5th St.

16:02: Welfare check, 9th/Grover

16:51: Trespass, 900 block Row River Rd.

17:07: Disorderly subject, 1300 block E. Main St.

17:13: Trespass, 1500 block E. Main St.

17:37: Warrant service,

400 block E. Main St.

19:50: Agency assist, 400 block Fillmore Ave.

20:38: Juvenile, 1500 block Bryant Ave.

22:31: Fire, 800 block N. 16th St.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19

03:18: Wanted subject, 800 block Gateway Blvd.

07:10: Welfare check, 1000 block E. Main St.

10:35: Theft, 900 block S. 8th St.

10:42: Abandoned vehicle, Gibbs/16th

10:46: Abandoned vehicle, Chamberlain/16th

10:52: Abandoned vehicle, N. Douglas/Ostrander

11:02: Abandoned vehicle, Hwy 99/N. Douglas St.

11:18: Theft, 16th/Ostrander

11:51: Criminal mischief, 100 block S. 5th St.

12:03: Suspicious condition, 1400 block E. Main St.

14:01: Trespass, 1500 block E. Main St.

14:17: Welfare check, 900 block Row River Rd.

14:25: Illegal camping, 300 block Gateway Blvd.

15:52: Illegal parking, 100 block S. 6th St.

15:55: Fire, Row River Rd/Sears

16:48: Abandoned vehicle, Hwy 99/Pennoyer

16:53: Hit and run, Gateway Blvd/Main

17:59: Mental, 1600 block Ash Ave.

19:15: Stolen vehicle, 1900 block W. Main St.

19:27: Child abuse, 900 block Arthur Ave.

19:52: Alarm, 200 block Palmer Ave.

20:23: Burglary, 100 block S. 21st St.

22:08: Disturbance, 100 block S. 21st St.

23:19: Suspicious condition, 200 block N. 16th St.

23:22: Suspicious condition, 100 block North I St.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

00:17: Suspicious vehicle, N. River Rd./Bennett Crk. Rd.

00:59: Criminal mischief, 1400 block E. Main St.

01:03: Theft, 700 block N. River Rd.

01:06: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

01:18: Business check, 900 block E. Main St.

01:24: Mental, 400 block E. Main St.

07:04: Dog at large, Row River Rd/Gateway Blvd.

08:37: Welfare check, 1200 block Ostrander Ln.

09:23: Business check, 1200 block Hwy 99

10:28: Business check, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

11:12: Illegal camping, 1400 block N. Douglas St.

11:24: Trespass, 200 block N. 10th St.

11:40: Citizen assist, 1300 block Birch Ave.

13:31: Abandoned vehicle, North M/Dogwood

13:32: Found property, Main/8th

14:38: Illegal camping, River Rd/Hwy 99

15:18: Motor vehicle crash, 16th/Adams

16:03: Welfare check, 600 block E. Main St.

17:26: Citizen assist, 400 block E. Main St.

17:48: Juvenile, 100 block S. 10th St.

18:26: Reckless driving, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

19:39: Disorderly subject, 1700 block E. Main St.

20:34: Dog at large, Wilson/6th

20:36: Theft, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.

21:20: Agency assist, 77000 block London Rd.

21:36: Disorderly subject, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

22:14: Agency assist, 200 block S. 17th St.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21

01:10: Wanted subject, 100 block W. 5th St.

01:38: Business check, 900 block E. Main St.

02:59: Hit and run, 1500 block Harvey Rd.

04:12: Welfare check, 100 block S. 16th St.

05:11: Overdose, 200 block N. 12th St.

06:46: Disturbance, 1000 block S. 10th St.

09:33: Welfare check, 1600 block Samuel Dr.

09:57: Warrant service,

200 block N. 12th St.

11:37: Welfare check, 600 block E. Main St.

11:52: Info, 300 block 12th St.

12:05: Citizen assist, 1000 block Cooper Ave.

12:32: Illegal parking, 1300 block Gateway Blvd.

12:33: Trespass, 500 block E. Madison Ave.

12:54: Disorderly subject, 200 block S. 13th St.

13:03: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

14:13: Abandoned vehicle, N. River Rd/Bennett Crk Rd.

14:35: Trespass, 700 block Row River Rd.

14:38: Trespass, 100 block North H St.

15:05: Suspicious condition, 6th/Whiteaker

16:19: Welfare check, 1100 block S. 4th St.

17:33: Welfare check, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

19:07: Suspicious condition, 1500 block E. Main St.

19:45: Welfare check, 1100 block E. Chamberlain Ave.

20:17: Business check, 900 block E. Main St.

21:21: Fire, 1200 block S. 7th St.

21:38: Suspicious condition, 400 block N. 14th St.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

01:23: Abandoned vehicle, 100 block S. 10th St.

04:10: Suspicious condition, 3300 block Row River Rd.

07:59: Welfare check, 200 block N. 16th St.

09:12: Abandoned vehicle, M/Birch

09:50: Order violation, 2000 block S. 8th St.

10:30: Theft, 1500 block E. Main St.

11:56: Found property, Main/8th

12:08: Info, Row River/Gateway

13:27: Citizen assist, 700 block N. 16th St.

14:42: Motor vehicle crash, 10th/Main

15:05: Welfare check, 1300 block Birch Ave.

17:23: Warrant service, 900 block Row River Rd.

18:39: Warrant service, 100 block Hwy 99

19:46: Motor vehicle crash, Gateway/Row River Rd.

23:45: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

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Year in Review

www.cgsentinel.com

YEAR IN REVIEW

School district faces challenges

SENTINEL STAFF REPORT

Editor's Note: On this page, The Sentinel takes a look back at some of the stories that made the front-page during 2024.

Significant changes occurred in 2024 in the South Lane School District administration.

In September, the South Lane School District announced that Cottage Grove High School Principal Kevin Herington was placed on administrative leave following misdemeanor charges.

According to court records, Herington plead not guilty Sept. 3 to Assault 4th Degree and Menacing charges in Lane County Court. His next court appearance is scheduled for Oct. 10 for a review of the case by attorneys.

Specific details about what led to the charges were not immediately available.

South Lane School District Interim Superintendent Brian McCasline released the following statement to the community Sept. 12.

Dear CGHS Community, As we start this new school year, I want to inform you that Principal Kevin Herington has been placed on paid administrative leave due to personal circumstances.

During his absence, Assistant Principal Chris Wells will be serving as acting principal to ensure a smooth continuation of our



Courtesy photo

Cottage Grove High School Principal Kevin Herington was placed on administrative leave following misdemeanor charges. In June, the SLSD appointed Brian McCasline as interim school superintendent to replace Dr. Yvonne Curtis.

school's operations. Our focus remains on maintaining a calm, safe, and supportive environment for all students.

We do not have additional information to share at this time.

Should any further updates become available, we will communicate them promptly. We appreciate your understanding and patience.

Sincerely,
Brian McCasline

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT
Superintendent resigns
The South Lane School District Board named Brian McCasline as interim school superintendent in June.

McCasline will serve for the 2024-25 school year. His salary for the year will be \$160,249.

Current Superintendent Dr. Yvonne Curtis has been on leave for most of this

year due to a family health crisis that continues and led to her decision to resign as of June 30 and not serve the remaining two years of her contract.

In a press release the South Lane School District Board announced the hiring of Brian McCasline as its Interim Superintendent.

"Brian has been in South Lane School District for over 25 years, and has been a teacher, a school principal, and most recently, the assistant superintendent," the release states. "He is poised to continue our focus on student learning, and to fulfill our mission to empower learning, ensure belonging, and prepare every student to graduate college or career ready. Based on testimony at board meetings, his lengthy tenure has earned him the trust and respect of his colleagues and demonstrated his commitment to increasing student success." After working in the



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

CGHS sophomore Minerva Corley, left, and CGHS freshman Oliver Cortez work together to prepare a meal in the school's culinary class.

district in various positions for the past quarter of a century, McCasline said he is honored to be selected to lead the district for the next school year.

"I am really looking forward to this next year," McCasline said. "I love South Lane School District. I started as a teacher at Cottage Grove High school over 25 years ago, and I have chosen to stay because of the students, staff and community. I'm excited to continue our focus on student learning and preparing students for college and careers."

The board, in a previous meeting, agreed to conduct a search this fall for the next superintendent, interview candidates in early 2025, and make a new hire before the end of next school year.

LIFE LESSONS IN THE KITCHEN

In the South Lane School District classrooms, educa-

tion continued with more than just reading, writing, and arithmetic at Cottage Grove High School.

Students have the opportunity to take a variety of electives, such as cooking.

"We have about 140 students over all with four basic cooking classes focusing on cooking at home but working forward to restaurant skills and two classes that are Culinary 1 and 2 combined focus those kitchen skills for a possible career path," said former actor and New York chef, Tony Rust, who has been the Cottage Grove High School Cooking/Culinary instructor for two years.

Rust said the students can learn a variety of important life skills as well as cooking skills and to share their creations.

"One of our ongoing projects with Culinary is a lunch project serving lunches to our staff and teachers every couple of weeks teaching them new

menu items, menu creating, shopping skills and basic restaurant business," he said. "All classes are prepping their own ingredients and generally cook at least once a week, getting to eat and share their creations throughout the year."

CGHS sophomore Minerva Corley said she wants to attend a culinary school to become a chef after graduating.

"I like cooking," she said. "It makes you feel good to cook for a lot of people. I just love cooking at home for my family and for my grandmother."

BACKGROUND

The CGHC Culinary Hospitality 1 class introduces safety and sanitation, kitchen basics, soups, stocks and sauces, fruits and vegetables, potatoes and grains. This class is asked to cater various events throughout the year. Students will learn real skills, real-world knowledge, management essentials and career connections. Students are assisted in placement into paid internships with qualified foodservice/hospitality professionals.

The CGHS Culinary Hospitality 2 class provides additional training in the food service industry as well as an understanding of the lodging industry, events' management and tourism.

Read the original stories on this page at cgsentinel.com.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Village Green property redevelopment

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Sentinel reported in late September that despite appearances, a redevelopment project that began in 2023 at the former Village Green Resort had not been paused.

Pine Springs, LLC owner and the property applicant, Colin Kelley told The Sentinel that the project on Row River Road in Cottage Grove is moving forward.

"Everything is moving according to our plan. It may be slow for other people that want to see everything open up," he said. "We are doing everything

that we can to keep the project moving forward. We are super excited about it. There should be no concern by any members of the community. We are still moving 100% with the project."

Our goal was to get the majority of the undergrounding in, so that way when we move in, it won't be in the way of the big equipment trying to dig trenches. It's going according to plan. Now we just need permits. It's going really well. The city has been incredible to work with."

Kelley said nothing has changed in the master plan that was submitted to the

city in 2023.

"It hasn't gone vertical probably as fast as everyone had wanted it to, but it is going according to our plan and how we structured the whole deal," he said, adding that the development is on time and on budget.

Kelley said he is still working to find a buyer for the hotel and RV Park. The development also includes an apartment complex with 121 units, all but one would be a two-bedroom, two bath units. The apartments would likely rent for between \$1,450 and \$1,500 a month, depending on the current market rate, according to Kelley.

Two, one-acre commercial pads are planned that Kelley said will have two retail tenants. He declined to provide specifics about

what type of retail, due to ongoing negotiations, but said it could be a mix of restaurant and merchandise.

The Village Green had been a long standing, five-star destination resort in Cottage Grove that slowly aged and degraded over the years," according to Cottage Grove City Councilor Dana Merryday.

Portions of the hotel wings were already in disrepair to the point that they were no longer being used and those were all demolished. Portions of the more modern wings and the central core of the resort had been preserved. Merryday said he was hopeful the planned housing at the site would become reality.

"I know when people come here, they have a hard time finding a place to stay here, so we are trying to at-



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

The redevelopment of the former Village Green Resort property on Row River Road in Cottage Grove.

tract tourists and that (new hotel) would be an excellent thing," he said.

Cottage Grove City Manager Mike Sauerwein also expressed interest in the property development.

"This is absolutely an important site, and the city is very supportive of the project going forward," he said.

Cottage Grove Mayor Candice Solesbee also

stated her support for the redevelopment and new housing at the site.

"We are all waiting with great anticipation for the new additional, much needed housing in Cottage Grove."

Read original coverage and follow development at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Main Street Reconstruction Project draws a crowd

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Main Street business and property owners viewed schematic drawings and asked questions of the design team and Cottage Grove Public Works Director Faye Stewart during an Oct. 23 meeting at city hall addressing the multi-million-dollar Main Street Improvement Project scheduled for early 2025.

The council chamber was filled with people who have a personal and financial stake in the disruptive nature of this major reconstruction project that is set to begin in February.

Before and after the staff presentation individuals hovered over the schematic drawing studying the many aspects of the new street design.

The topics included sidewalk widths, trees, parking, lighting, furniture, public access to businesses during construction, electrical and drainage infrastructure and safety

improvements, especially for mobility-challenged individuals.

Intersections: Will be raised to meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for ramps. It was discovered that buildings on one side of Main Street are almost a foot higher than the other side. Meeting all the required grades was especially challenging. The turning radius for delivery trucks will be the same or better.

Sidewalks: Will be flattened and widened to four feet to improve accessibility and allow merchants use of outdoor space with tables and chairs, sale racks and sandwich board signs. As a special treatment, the new sidewalks will feature a sparkling mineral in the concrete.

Lighting: There will be three streetlights in each block. Each corner will have the historically

inspired acorn style with a metal pole in the middle of the block. Light posts will have hardware to hang banners and flower baskets that will be maintained with drip irrigation.

Trees and Floral: There will only be four trees planted in each block. The trees will be in 4'x8' tree grates to ensure long-term healthy growth. There will be large planters with drip irrigation to maintain the flowers.

Pedestrian safety: The project's highest priority and the team's biggest challenge. The project features numerous bulb-outs to enhance intersection safety for drivers and pedestrians.

Electrical: Outlets will be strategically placed to support outdoor events.

Flexibility in Final Project Design: The basic design has been approved and is not changeable.

There is some flexibility in where the handicapped parking space and benches will be located.

Parking: Most of the existing parking spaces will be retained. Main Street parking will be limited in front of businesses during construction and city-owned lots will be used. "Bulb outs" will keep parking out of the intersections.

Traffic Signals: The two current signals at 5th and 6th Streets would be replaced with four-way stop intersections.

Furniture: There are a limited number of benches with arms to discourage loitering or sleeping on them.

Drainage: Unable to change the grade and elevation of the historic buildings, new storm drains will connect to the existing stormwater infrastructure system.

Special Event Space Design: The "plaza-style" design of 7th Street next to All America City Park will better facilitate celebratory events. The Main Street banner location will move one block west from its current location to hang in front of City Hall.

Liability concerns: A new flat sidewalk design and having all aspects of the project comply with current regulations will significantly lower the liability risk to business and property owners.

CONSTRUCTION MITIGATION

To ease the disruptions for businesses during the construction, city crews are now paving the alleys behind the Main Street buildings and city officials said they hope designing one-way loops around each block with angled parking on the side streets will retain customer access to businesses. There will be a contract provision and

required specifications that temporary access is always maintained to businesses.

"The goal is to do this work in a manner that facilitates downtown businesses' operations and create minimum impacts as much as possible," Cottage Grove Public Works Faye Stewart said. "It is my intent to work with business owners to make necessary improvements to better utilize their alley access."

"We wanted to let the folks who will be the most directly impacted, the ones who work and live on Main Street, be the first ones we talked to," Cottage Grove City Manager Mike Sauerwein said. "I think the turnout was great. It was nice to look around and put faces with business names. It was encouraging to have so many of them come."

Read the original story and follow developments online at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Spirit of BMD celebration fun unites community



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Spirit of BMD Parade was a family affair.



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Despite the hot weather, these folks were all smiles during the parade.

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Editor's Note: In July, The Sentinel presented coverage of the Spirit of Bohemia Mining Days.

Cottage Grove is known for its special events celebrating the city's rich history and the community came together once again during the Spirit of BMD. Community members

and visitors attended the hastily organized Spirit of BMD, a two-day celebration held Friday and Saturday, July 19-20.

The tribute event had the look and feel of Bohemia Mining Days (BMD), minus the trademark Old West façade walls and familiar people-moving train. It was planned in only six weeks by BMD alumni and volunteers to properly honor the festival's 65th anniversary

on its traditional third weekend in July.

Planning for the Spirit of BMD began shortly after the announcement May 20, by the Bohemia Mining Days, Inc. (BMD) board of directors that it would cancel this year's festival.

Spirit of BMD 2024

The weather was hot with afternoon highs near 90-degrees on both days of the event and, sadly, Janu-

ary's ice storm destroyed many of Coiner Park's much needed shade trees. Yet, sun-loving festival goers strolled around the park shopping in the vendor market and had the opportunity to enjoy their favorite food, treats and spirits.

The Saturday morning parade, sponsored by South Lane County Fire and Rescue, included 50 entries showcasing local organizations and businesses.

Entries included longtime organizations such as the Prospectors and Gold Diggers Club's Saloon Float, Cottage Grove Riding Club members and rodeo royalty on horseback, the One More Time Marching Band and the last surviving WW II Rosie the Riveters. Santa Claus made a surprise appearance to promote the

Cottage Grove Speedway's upcoming Christmas in July event and invited KEZI News Reporter Noah Chavez to ride along with him in the parade.

This year's Grand Marshal was Grant Johnson.

See the full version of this story and more photos of the event at cgsentinel.com.

DEATH NOTICES

David Chang

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of David Chang Born on October 13, 1942, died

on December 22, 2024, in Cottage Grove, Oregon. Arrangements in the care of Sunset Hills Funeral Home.

Worship Guide

COTTAGE GROVE:

6th & Gibbs Church of Christ
195 N. 6th St. • 541-942-3822
10:00am
Christian Education: Pre-K through 5th
Tim Baker, Senior Minister
www.6thandgibbs.com

Cottage Grove Bible Church
1200 East Quincy Avenue
541-942-4771
Pastor: Ron Harris
Worship 11am
Sunday School: 9:45am
AWANA age 3-8th Grade,
Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm
www.cgbible.org

Cottage Grove Faith Center
33761 Row River Rd.
541-942-4851
Lead Pastor: Kevin Pruett
www.cg4.tv
Full Children's Ministry available
Services: 10:00am

Delight Valley
Church of Christ
33087 Saginaw Rd. East
541-942-7711 • Pastor: Bob Friend
Two Services:
9am - Classic in the Chapel
10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium

Hope Fellowship
United Pentecostal Church
100 S. Gateway Blvd.
541-942-2061
Pastor: Dave Bragg
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Bible Study: 7:00pm Wednesday
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467 S. 10th St. • 541-942-2612
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Youth Worship Sundays: 11a (all ages welcome)
Mondays: 5:30p (6th-12th grades)

Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Philip Benizi Catholic Churches
1025. N. 19th St.
541-942-3420
Father John J. Boyle
Holy Mass:
Saturday Vigil - 5:30 pm
Sunday - 10:30 am
For weekday and Holy Day of Obligation schedule see website OLPHCG.net
Confession: 4 PM to 5 PM Saturdays or by appointment
St. Philip Benizi, Creswell
552 Holbrook Lane
Sunday 8 am

St. Andrews Episcopal Church
1301 W. Main • 541-767-9050
Rev. Lawrence Crumb
"Scripture, Tradition, Reason"
Worship: Sunday 10:30am
All Welcome

Seventh-day Adventist Church
820 South 10th Street
541-942-5213
Pastor: James D. Boram
Bible Study: Saturday, 9:15 am
Worship Service: Saturday, 10:40
Mid-week Service: Wednesday, 1:00

Trinity Lutheran Church
6th and Quincy
541-942-2373
Vacancy Pastor: Herb Percy
Sunday School and Adult Education 9:15 a.m.
Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.
Comm. Kitchen Free Meal Tuesday 5:15 p.m. to 6:5 p.m.
TLC Groups tlccg.com

United Methodist Church
334 Washington 541-942-3033
Worship 10am umcgrrove.org

CRESWELL:

Creswell Presbyterian Church
75 S 4th S • 541-895-3419
Rev. Seth Wheeler
Adult Sunday School 9:15am
Sunday Worship Service 10:30 am
website www.creswellpres.org

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State government has more money, and more challenges, than ever before

TIM NESBETT
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Editor's note: The Capital Chronicle is running an end-of-year fundraising campaign, with a \$10,000 goal, to help us continue our first-class coverage next year. A lot is at stake, and there's a long legislative session in 2025. We're completely dependent on donor dollars, and they're tax deductible. Please contribute to us if you can.



Courtesy of the Oregon Department of Transportation

Oregon needs to create stable funding to pay for the rising costs of wildfires, which hit a new record this past season, burning 1.9 million acres.

Once every decade or so, state government gets a big gift from Oregon taxpayers — a surge of revenues that exceeds the cost of maintaining ongoing services. This is one of those times, when the governor and lawmakers get to decide not just how to make ends meet, but how best to use new money to address new challenges.

In early December, the state economist released a new revenue forecast that found an extra \$2.7 billion flowing to state coffers above what was estimated last year for the current budget (2023-25). Most of that extra money will be carried forward to the next budget period and added to a rising tide of revenues in the following two years (2025-27). Even after paying out \$1.8 billion in a new kicker payable in 2026, there will still be \$35.6 billion in revenue to be allocated in the next budget period compared to \$28.1 billion in the current period — an increase of 27%!

The last time we saw a surge in state revenue of this magnitude was in the tech-driven economy of the 1990s. But property tax reforms in that decade forced the state to devote the lion's share of its revenue dividends to patching shortfalls in school budgets.

Revenues rebounded after a recession in the early 2000s, but those gains were wiped out in the Great Recession of 2008.

In both the 1990s and 2000s, what could have been a get-ahead decade for public services became an exercise in trying to protect schools while cutting other programs. Then, the 2010s became a decade of cost cutting efforts — mostly focused on the Public Employees Retirement System, or PERS, along with new taxes for schools and rebuilding state capacity.

This decade can be different. The state economist doesn't expect another recession. And, if one does occur, the state's record level of reserves, now exceeding 20% of an annual budget, should be adequate to keep programs afloat. Further, although revenue gains are expected to moderate (to 7-8% per year) in the final years of this decade, so too is inflation (at 2.3% a per year) and

population growth (at 0.6% per year). We should see revenue gains outstripping costs for the foreseeable future.

Deficits force exercises in paring budgets and resetting priorities. But surpluses create opportunities that are harder to grasp and get right. That's the challenge that faces the governor and state legislators now.

We got our first look at how Gov. Tina Kotek intends to address this challenge in the recommended budget that she has released.

The center of attention and often the biggest problem for every state budget is funding for K-12 schools — but it shouldn't be a problem this time. Kotek is updating the K-12 funding formula and proposing a \$600 million increase for the next two years. That's on top of a billion dollars in targeted funding from the new Corporate Activities Tax and another billion dollars in one-time funds from the corporate kicker. All told, that's an additional \$3,500 per student for the next two years after paying for PERS cost increases.

Is it time to move on from the school funding debate, at least for this budget, double down on delivering results for our students and shift the state's focus to other challenges?

Kotek's budget suggests as much, emphasizing the need to continue spending to meet the three-fold, inter-connected crises of homelessness, housing and behavioral health, and arguing in her press release that "progress takes persistence" in sustaining an effort she launched in her first budget. Time will tell if these expenditures become permanent line items in future budgets or short-term interventions that, once they pay off, can free up funds for more far-sighted purposes.

But there are challenges on the horizon that haven't yet been recognized in existing budgets. They're the kind that get harder and more expensive to solve the longer they are ignored.

One example is the need to create a permanent funding mechanism to respond to the increasing likelihood of severe wildfires and catastrophic weather events

in a changing and more volatile climate. Diverting additional funding from an already robust Rainy Day Fund to a new fund for climate resilience could serve that purpose. Kudos to the governor for suggesting exactly that to deal with wildfire costs.

Another example arises from the fact that local governments are not benefiting from economic growth the way state government is. That's already evident in the number of cities and counties facing shortfalls in their budgets. And that problem will only become more acute if state policy makers expect them to absorb more housing and then leave them tied to a property tax system that can no longer keep up with the rising costs of providing services to a growing population. Creating a state revenue sharing program for cities that excel in building affordable housing would reward them for shouldering the burdens of growth.

Oregon taxpayers have given the state its best budget in decades. It will be much easier now for the governor and lawmakers to stabilize existing programs within state government. But they can do better than that, if they respond with foresight to the horizon issues that require a far-sighted and expansive vision for the state as a whole — not just for one budget, but for years to come.

Tim Nesbitt, a former union leader in Oregon, served as an adviser to Governors Ted Kulongoski and John Kitzhaber and later helped to design Measure 98 in 2016, which provided extra, targeted funding for Oregon's high schools.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2024/12/09/state-government-has-more-money-and-more-challenges-than-ever-before/>

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EDITORIAL CARTOON



YEAR IN REVIEW

Insight into the Trump victory and what's ahead

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Editor's Note: Following the Nov. 5 General Election, The Sentinel presented the following interview with Pacific University's Dr. Jim Moore concerning Donald Trump's presidential victory.

As the dust settles following the Nov. 5 General Election, and Donald Trump returns to the White House as President of the United States, what can residents of Cottage Grove, those in Oregon, and those across the nation expect?

For insight into this, The Sentinel turns to Dr. Jim Moore, Psephologist and Director of Political Outreach, McCall Center for Civic Engagement Politics and Government International Studies at Pacific University.

The Sentinel: From your vantage point, what led to the Trump victory?

Dr. Jim Moore: It is pretty clear that two things contributed to Trump's win. First and foremost, frustration with and uncertainty about the economy. Whether people are still hit by inflation worries, frustrated that government programs seem to give advantages to those who don't work as hard, or concerned about the economic future as companies and jobs seem to disappear overnight, memories of the way things were when Trump was president won out over Harris's message that things were getting better pretty fast.

Secondly, the Make America Great Again message that the United States has to return to the days when there was more order in society and people felt more a part of the country resonated with millions. All sorts of concerns can be put into this category. That was part of its genius—people could hope for whatever they wanted.

The Sentinel: Given so much evidence of what has been described as Trump's criminal activities, his proven lies, and his hateful communications, what can

we expect over the next four years?

Moore: Just as when Trump was first elected in 2016, we have to watch what he does, not treat what he says as the guideposts for his presidency. If some of his words turn into action, we will see if the United States governance system can handle that. The first test of all this: all those "on my first day" promises. If there are arrests of political enemies and massive deportation orders given, then the Congress (regardless of whether it is run by Republicans or Democrats) and courts must act quickly to counter these actions that would be well beyond the powers of the presidency.

The Sentinel: How is this mood of voters shifting democracy in America?

Moore: In the study of politics, we often talk about voters (and citizens) wanting more freedom or more order. The American people want more order right now. The two main threats to order are understood to be immigrants and economic uncertainty.

Democracy has been flexible enough to provide for these differences in public mood in our history, but there are times when there is strain in the system. Examples of straining to provide order: Japanese internment in WWII, Lincoln's suspension of many rights in the Civil War, the passage of Alien and Sedition Acts in the late 1700s (forbidding criticism of the government and providing for political deportations of noncitizens).

In all those cases, the country eventually came to see those actions as going beyond the bounds of what America was all about. But it took at least several years for that to happen.

Democracy in the United States is a process, but it is not necessarily able to quickly respond to threats or change by the government or citizens.

The Sentinel: Do you sense a revolt from Trump's opponents and what would that be?

Moore: I don't sense a revolt from Trump's

opponents. If Harris had won, I think we would have seen lots of talk of revolt by Trump's supporters. Trump's opponents will be divided into two sets of players.

Those in government (e.g. Congress) know that in two years there will be another election, that the Republican majority in the Senate (and the House, if that happens) is narrow, and that the president's party tends to lose seats in an off-year election. These insiders will focus on opposition in the halls of government and plan to retake power in 2027.

Citizens who oppose Trump will either try to ignore the federal government or band together to fight for causes they believe in. In the 1960s there was a fair amount of banding together—not just against things (like Vietnam) but for things (like civil rights and the environmental movement). Will that positive energy be there in 2025 and 2026? Or will it be more politically quiet?

The Sentinel: Feel free to add any other comments you might have.

Moore: There is a lot of talk of a "Republican wave" right now. Given the narrow margin of victory for Trump in the popular vote (he is up by 3.5% as I write this), the narrow Republican lead in the Senate (at most the Rs will have 55 seats out of 100, and 53 looks more likely), and narrow lead for either party in the House, this is no wave.

A wave is when Republicans gained 54 seats in the House and 8 seats in the Senate in the "Republican Revolution" of 1994. Control of both Houses went to the Republicans for the rest of the 1990s.

What we have in 2024 are some Republican ripples within evenly divided bowls of partisan water in Washington, D.C. As mentioned above, Democrats will have good chances to take back control of Congress in 2026.

Join the conversation. Send your Letter to the Editor to jruark@countrymedia.net and follow developments at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

Weekly Online Poll

Would you support additional taxes to fund City of Cottage Grove public services?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Previous Poll Results

Heading into the New Year do you feel:

50% Upbeat and positive
50% Uncertain and worried
0% In Between



THE FIRST AMENDMENT

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How to Reach Us

Joe Warren | Chief Executive/Operations
jwarren@countrymedia.net

Newsroom

Jeremy C. Ruark | News Editor
jruark@countrymedia.net

Display Advertising

Jeanna Petersen | 541-902-3529
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2025

Cottage Grove facing sobering challenges in 2025

From Page 1

problems.

On Jan. 13, newly re-elected Mayor Candace Solesbee will give her State of the City Address, and four councilors will be sworn in. New Councilors Christine Hyink, Darrell

Wilson and Jim Settelmeyer will take their seats on the dais. They will join re-elected Councilor Greg Irvin and Councilor Randall Lammerman, who was appointed in September to fill the Ward 2 seat vacated by Jon Stinnett. After an unsuccessful bid for mayor last November, Councilor Dana Merryday will complete the two years remaining on his four-year term.

This month, Sauerwein provides the new council with an updated quarterly report on revenues and expenditures in the current budget. An in-depth discus-

sion on the City’s financial challenges for the 2025-26 budget will be a topic at its planned retreat March 8. The discussions will likely focus on funding solutions for public safety and transportation, economic development, and homelessness.

Budget challenges extend well beyond the City of Cottage Grove. Inflation continues to take a toll on public entities and the citizens they serve. Other cities around the state are increasing fees and asking voters to approve new taxes to help with budget

problems. With personal incomes and municipal revenues stagnant and ongoing increases in the cost of living, taxpayers are reluctant to approve any new taxes. An exception was last May when Springfield voters overwhelmingly passing a \$20M bond to improve their roads.

Cottage Grove city officials hope some of the fiscal and policy constraints related to homelessness and transportation can be addressed by the Oregon Legislature when it convenes on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

Given the budgetary chal-

lenges to current city service levels, the Sentinel is presenting a special series of reports to help our readers understand the historical context, past and current uses, and the financial impacts on six of the City of Cottage Grove’s major assets that benefit residents and visitors.

The Sentinel is in the middle of publishing this six-part series. Previously published stories reviewed the Historic Downtown District (12/7), the Community Center and Library (12/11) and the Cottage Grove Armory (12/25).

In future editions, The Sentinel hopes to provide information about Bohemia Park, Middlefield Golf Course and the Skatepark. We will also closely follow the city leaders discussions, and their decision, as they navigate through the budget challenges.

Join the conversation. Send your comments in a Letter to the Editor to jruark@countrymedia.net and follow this special series of reports online at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

LETTER

Discrimination letter triggers statewide response

From Page 1

After news began spreading statewide about the contents of the letter, statements were issued Friday by Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and the Portland office of the FBI.

The letter is titled “The Brown Round-Up Part 1,” and it states in the first sentence, “Starting the last part of January of 2025, this nation will commence the largest round-up of brown illegals in our history.” The letter goes on say that people should “start identifying those folks who you suspect are here in our country on an illegal basis,” and it outlines steps on how

to do that.

Toledo Mayor Rod Cross was the one who raised the topic of this letter during last week’s meeting, saying that he and other council members had received an anonymous letter from “a fake post office box in Otis.” He added, “Mayor Wahlke in Lincoln City received this, other councilors in Coos Bay and North Bend have received these.

“I’m livid because I don’t know if history is just not getting taught anymore or if the memories of my father and his generation have just been wiped out of existence, but this is not America,” Cross said. “This is not who we are. Ronald Reagan once said we are to be a shining city on the hill. This is where people come to get away from stuff, to be able to provide for their families, to have opportunities for themselves and their loved ones.”

City Councilor Tracy Mix said, “I would like to see us

make a declaration or something at our next meeting ... that we will not tolerate this kind of behavior. We are inviting and open. We’re the type of people that respect people for who and what they are. That is what Toledo is.”

Cross agreed. “We should make a statement at our next council meeting. One of the things that I always firmly believed in is that darkness cannot stand the light, and I want a spotlight shone on this whole idea that people don’t belong in the greatest country in the whole world,” he said. “I wanted the community to be aware of what’s out there. There is not a place for this. This is not acceptable behavior in Toledo.”

The following morning, the sheriff’s office issued a media release saying, “The Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office recently learned about a letter being circulated throughout Lincoln County which encourages

community members to track and report information regarding people of color, specifically community members that are believed to be undocumented.”

The release continues, “We want to be unequivocal in our stance: this type of behavior is harmful, divisive, and inconsistent with the values we uphold as public servants and community members. Targeting individuals in this manner erodes trust and undermines the sense of safety and inclusion that we strive to maintain in Lincoln County.”

Sheriff’s office officials encourage community members “to do the right thing and use compassion as we encounter these types of messages. We strongly advise against engaging in activities such as those outlined in this letter, including collecting or sharing information about individuals based on their demographic or perceived immigration

status.”

The release also states that the Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office is committed to upholding Oregon law with regard to immigration enforcement. Oregon law generally prohibits the inquiry or collection of an individual’s immigration or citizenship status, or country of birth, with few specific exceptions as outlined in Oregon Revised Statute 181A.823. Consistent with this, the sheriff’s office does not inquire about, document, or share such information with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The statement from Attorney General Rosenblum reads: “In Oregon, we stand united in our commitment to create and maintain a place that is open, welcoming, and safe for all individuals, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status, or any other aspect of their identity. Attempts to intimidate our communities and their

leaders through racist letter writing campaigns has no place in Oregon, and we will continue to stand together in opposition to those who seek to divide us.”

And the FBI states in its release: “The FBI is aware of the offensive and racist mailings sent to individuals and organizations in Lincoln County, Oregon. The FBI’s mission is to protect the American people and uphold the U.S. Constitution. Actions outside a lawful process infringe on everyone’s rights and law enforcement’s collective ability to keep people safe, regardless of their race. Community members who feel they are being physically threatened should report those concerns to their nearest local law enforcement agency.”

Follow this developing story online at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

This front-page photo graced the early November editions of the Sentinel showing workers completing the new park entrance restroom.



Jeremy C. Ruark / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Weather has slowed landscaping at the park plaza entrance.

PLAZA

Plaza entrance '95% complete'

From Page 1

inclusion in the project. The following year it received a \$1.1 million grant from the federal Economic Development Administration and a \$350,000 grant from the State Parks Department.

The Sentinel reported in June that bids to create the conceptual drawings exceeded the engineer’s original estimate. It forced the shelving of a historically themed water tower with a digital sign. Stewart said fundraising continues to complete the remaining improvements in the future.

A restroom has been added to the park entrance with inside amenities yet to be completed.

“The bathroom fixtures

are on back order and due to arrive the first week in January,” Stewart said. “If all goes well everything will be done by the end of January first of February.”

Stewart said the entrance project to date is within budget.

“We have had \$19,000 in change orders and this is paid by our contingency line item,” he said, adding that the main challenge for the project has been the weather.

“It has slowed the work and made installing irrigation and landscaping a bit difficult,” Stewart said. “The other challenge is the bathroom fixtures have been on backorder for six months.”

Despite the challenges, the new park plaza entrance is a significant economic development project for Cottage Grove, according to Stewart.

“The significance of the project is that it is creating new recreational opportunities for our youth, capturing

the early history of our city and surrounding area, and it will encourage tourists to visit Bohemia Park,” Stewart said.

PARK HISTORY

Stewart’s great uncle, Loren LaSells “Stub” Stewart [1911-2005], was the owner and president of the Bohemia Lumber Company. In 1998, the elder Stewart, who served 30 years the Oregon Parks and Recreation Board developing parks statewide, envisioned redeveloping what was an environmentally contaminated industrial property on 10th Street into a large park to benefit the individuals and families in his hometown. Stub wanted the park to also pay tribute to the industries that shaped the development of Cottage Grove in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

From 1879 to 1991, the property was home to a variety of businesses that

included warehouses for the Southern Pacific Railroad line, a sawmill, and the Oregon Pacific and Eastern Railroad. From 1991 to 2000, the site was vacant, with only a few old buildings and a roundhouse as reminders of its once bustling past.

The Bohemia Foundation, under Stub’s leadership, purchased the site in 2000 and began working to produce a park that would become a community centerpiece and pay tribute to Cottage Grove’s rich heritage. The stated purpose of the park is to “provide connection, recreation, and culture to fuel healthy, vibrant lives for all”.

Eight years later, after much site preparation work and extensive fundraising, the Phase 1 groundbreaking ceremony heralded the creation of a pavilion with restrooms, a 2000-seat amphitheater, a large fountain and colorful playground for families to enjoy. Other up-

grades have been added such as light poles and benches.

PARK EVENTS

Each improvement has been enthusiastically received by the community and has increased usage at Bohemia Park, according to city officials.

It’s now the home of birthday parties and a variety of celebratory events. Music emanates from the park’s amphitheater from Chamber of Commerce’s annual summer concert series and the annual Eugene Symphony concert. For many years it hosted the Bohemia Mining Days carnival. For BMD 2017, the country music band Home Free made Cottage Grove a stop on its national tour. Last month, South Lane Concerts held its first faith-based summer concert in the amphitheater.

Other notable events held at the park include one of the largest toga parties in history

and a 90th anniversary celebration of Buster Keaton’s classic silent movie, The General, that was filmed in Cottage Grove in 1926.

Stewart wears two leadership hats to oversee the completion of the Park Entry Plaza project. In addition to his duties as Cottage Grove’s public works director, he also serves as president of his family’s foundation. He said excitement is building for the completion of the park’s third phase of development.

“It is exciting to see the progress as the project takes shape. We can’t wait to see it completed and our youth enjoying the splash pad and everyone enjoying the new entry plaza,” Stewart said.

Cindy Weeldreyer contributed to this story. Follow developments online at the cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

CGS 24-3035

NOTICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION VACANCY The City of Cottage Grove Historic Preservation Commission has one vacancy to fill on this volunteer body for a term that expires December 31, 2027. The Commission members are appointed by the City Council. The Historic Preservation Commission meets once on the third Monday of the month at 7pm. People interested in applying for this position need to complete a Volunteer Appointment Application available at the Community Development Department at City Hall or online at www.cottagegrove.org. The deadline for receiving applications is January 8th, 2025, by 5 p.m. For further information please contact the Community Development Department at 541-942-5501.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

CGS 24-3036

NOTICE OF PLANNING COMMISSION VACANCY The City of Cottage Grove Planning Commission has one vacancy to fill on this volunteer body for a term that expires December 31, 2027. The Commission members are appointed by the City Council. The Planning Commission meets on the second and third Wednesday of the month at 7pm. People interested in applying for this position need to complete a Volunteer Appointment Application available at the Community Development Department at City Hall or online at www.cottagegrove.org. The deadline for receiving applications is January 8th, 2025, by 5 p.m. For further information please contact the Community Development Department at 541-942-5501.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

CGHS Lions make incredible season turnaround

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove High School football team went into game one of the 2024 OSAA / OnPoint Community Credit Union 3A Football State Championship Saturday afternoon, Nov. 9, with high hopes.

The team had assembled a 9-0 regular season record in an amazing turnaround from previous losing seasons.

Cottage Grove hosted Burns in the playoff game.

Burns took the lead 24-0 in the first half of the contest. The Lions came back scoring 7, but at the end of the game, it was Burns taking the game 46-7.

OTHER CGHS TEAM RESULTS

In the Nov. 5 state playoff game, the CGHS boys soccer team won 2-0

against Hidden Valley / New Hope Christian but lost in the Nov. 9 playoff contest 2-3 against Crook County.

The CGHS girls soccer team was defeated Nov. 2 in the state play-in 0-2 by Hidden Valley / New Hope Christian.

In the OSAA / OnPoint Community Credit Union Cross County Championships, the CGHS boys squad placed 4th. CGHS Senior Carter Bergson took first in the individual results. The CGHS girls squad took 11th place at State. See the overall individual team member results at osaa.org.

See original coverage and additional Cottage Grove High School sports team features at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.



The Cottage Grove High School Lions football team's grasp of victory in the state playoff game was just out of their reach.



Burns moved the ball with strengthen and focus during the playoff game against Cottage Grove.



The Lion's make a run for the goal line during the state playoff battle.



In the end Burns overpowered Cottage Grove with touchdowns, including this one, during the state playoff game.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Slabtown BMX project moving ahead

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

In September, The Sentinel reported on the efforts to re-opening a BMX track in Cottage Grove.

The thrill of competitive bicycle motocross (BMX) racing and the strong camaraderie among racing families created Cottage Grove's original BMX track in 1984.

Against the backdrop of First Lady Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" national campaign to win America's War on Drugs, city leaders and the business community saw the track as a positive alternative to give local youth a reason to say no to drugs.

For decades, the track was a second home to most riders and fostered close relationships among families with children.

When the popularity of the sport waned more than



A rendering of the proposed Slabtown BMX track.

a decade ago the use of the track diminished. Racing fees pay for track maintenance and with fewer races the track conditions became hazardous. The lease agreement with the City required the nonprofit organization to maintain

the track and its structures. In 2016, it was determined to be abandoned, and it was removed.

REOPENING CHALLENGE

Slabtown BMX organizers emerged from the

pandemic with a renewed passion to re-open the racetrack. They've held many fundraisers, applied for grants, submitted planning permits and solicited donations from the community to realize their shared dream.

Fueled by happy memories and a desire to re-energize the local BMX community, the Kelley family has eagerly accepted the challenge to work with others to provide the strong leadership necessary to make it a reality.

The new track has a smaller footprint to address floodplain issues with the nearby Row River.

FUNDRAISING GOAL

The fundraising goal to reopen the track is \$200,000. The Kelly family has received \$10,000 from the City of Cottage Grove and a \$35,000 matching grant from the Yarg Foundation. The group has participated in numerous fundraising events: car

washes, the Chamber music concerts, bike raffles, holiday gift wrapping, and Mother's Day flower baskets at Shady Oaks.

Mike Kelley said the group is highly motivated to re-establish another professional racetrack in Cottage Grove. They hope to have all the pieces in place to be operational by next summer.

For more information, or to donate, send an email to: slabtownbmx@gmail.com.

Read the original version of this story and follow develop online at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

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