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Sentinel

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Cottage Grove

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Downtown kicks off fall with community fun

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove’s Historic District will be buzzing this Saturday, Sept. 26, as two popular community events return with expanded energy



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Crowds filled Washington Avenue at the 2025 Cottage Grove Oktoberfest and Cook-off. (Left) Cottage Grove Mayor Candace Solesbee shows her Oktoberfest Spirit.

kicks off the day just a few blocks away at Cascade Home Center. Additional activities at The Public (CG Public Market) round out a full district celebration.

OKTOBERFEST

Oktoberfest began years ago at Coast Fork Brewing as a simple thank you to customers and a chance to share food and drink from around the world. As attendance grew, Downtown Cottage Grove, the nonprofit sponsor of the event, adopted the project as a way

to support cultural activities and increase foot traffic in the Historic District.

Coast Fork Brewing has been involved since the beginning, led by Emily McDaniel and Stephen Mathys, and Downtown Cottage Grove’s involvement over the past four years has helped the festival grow steadily.

See more FEST On Page 6

City behind on annual audits

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove’s long-delayed city audits have revealed multiple deficit fund balances and budget deficiencies that went unnoticed for years while the city fell behind on required financial reviews.

Consultant Summer Sears, CPA, said the findings reflect accounting errors that accumulated during the period when no annual audits were completed, underscoring the importance of catching up by 2027.

The city hired Summer Sears, CPA, LLC, an independent municipal finance consultant specializing in audit preparation and accounting support for local governments.

“I am a consultant the city hired to ‘patch up the books,’” Sears said, noting that City Manager Mike Sauerwein asked her to explain audit requirements, why the city is behind, and the timeline to complete overdue audits. The report was delivered during the Cottage Grove City Council’s Sept. 14 meeting, where Sears outlined the audit process, recent findings, and the projected catch-up schedule.

Sears emphasized that audits provide assurance of accuracy and transparency in financial statements, accounting practices, internal controls, and legal compliance. Federal grants may require a single audit to verify how funds were spent.

“Auditors are not looking for fraud but if they see something they will flag it for investigation,” she said.

The city’s delays stem from extended staff absences, turnover, increased reporting requirements, auditor turnover, and statewide shortages in government finance professionals. As of July 2026, 33 Oregon cities are two or more years behind on audits.

Recent audit results included partially qualified opinions due to new accounting pronouncements and subscription-based IT arrangements. Deficit fund balances were flagged in the Industrial Park Fund, Street Fund, and General Fund Reserve Fund. No budget deficiencies were found in FY 2022-23; ten were identified in FY 2023-24.

Sears projected the city will be fully caught up by December 31, 2027, with FY 2026-27 expected to

See more Council on page 6

Lane Transit District steadies South Lane riders after Wheels closure

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

When South Lane Wheels closed on Aug. 30, many Cottage Grove and Creswell residents feared losing the transportation lifeline they had relied on for decades.

Lane Transit District (LTD) stepped in immediately, expanding its Connector service and adjusting operations to ensure riders could continue accessing work, shopping, medical appointments, and essential services. The transition brought questions and uncertainty—especially for vulnerable riders who depended on SLW’s long standing presence.

To help provide clarity, The Sentinel asked LTD’s Director of Regional Mobility Management, Cosette Rees, to address the changes directly.

Q&A WITH COSETTE REES

Q1: What changes has LTD observed in South Lane County since the closure of South Lane Wheels? Rees said LTD expanded Connector hours to 7 a.m.–6 p.m. and added a second vehicle to reduce wait times. Ridership



Courtesy from the Lane Transit District

The LTD Connector operates weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. within Cottage Grove city limits. It is an affordable, on demand service offering rides to work, shopping, healthcare, and other essential destinations.

increased significantly: since March, Connector trips rose from about 47 rides per day to roughly 72. LTD also piloted a rural shuttle outside city limits. After several months and a mid pilot evaluation, ridership remained very low, and the shuttle was discontinued. Rees said LTD

continues evaluating opportunities to serve rural communities.

Q2: Have rider inquiries or needs shifted during this transition? Rees said LTD spoke directly with riders who previously used SLW to help them identify other transportation programs. LTD has also engaged

rural South Lane communities and continues to hear strong demand for rural mobility options. The district is collaborating with partner agencies to explore potential solutions.

Q3: What LTD services are currently available in Cottage Grove, and how do they fit into the broader system? Route 98 provides seven round trips Monday through Friday, three on Saturday, and two on Sunday between Eugene Station, Creswell, and Cottage Grove. Riders can use the Walmart park and ride lot to leave their car while traveling. Once in Eugene, riders can connect to regional and statewide networks reaching the coast, Bend, and beyond.

The LTD Connector operates weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. within Cottage Grove city limits. It is an affordable, on demand service offering rides to work, shopping, healthcare, and other essential destinations. Riders book trips through the mobile app or by calling 541

See more Wheels On Page 4



WHO'S THE BEST IN SOUTH LANE COUNTY?

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NATIONAL POLICE WOMAN DAY

Staff REPORT
Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove Police Department (CGPD) is honoring two of its female officers as the law enforcement agency recognizes National Police Woman Day to celebrate the women who serve and protect our communities, “The Cottage Grove Police Department is proud to recognize Detective Gordon and Officer Lane, two dedicated members of our department who bring professionalism, compassion, strength, and commitment to their work every day,” a CGPD social

media post states. “We are grateful for the experience and perspective they bring to our team and for the important role they play in serving the Cottage Grove community. Thank you, Detective Gordon and Officer Lane, for your service and dedication. We are proud to have you both on our team!”

National Police Woman Day is celebrated annually on National Police Woman Day on September 12 to honor the courage, dedication, and contributions of female law enforcement officers.



Courtesy photo
Cottage Grove Police Department Detective Gordon and Officer Lane.



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 7
00:09: Assault, 1000 block Hwy 99
00:26: Warrant service, 200 block S. River Rd.
00:30: Alarm, 2000 block Getty Cir.
08:21: Nuisance, 200 block S. River Rd.
09:01: Disturbance, 200 block S. River Rd.
11:21: Agency assist, 200 block Palmer Ave.
11:27: Abandoned vehicle, 1200 block Hwy 99
11:53: Welfare check, 1300 block N. 19th St.
16:55: Disturbance, 37000 block Row River Rd.
19:59: Vicious dog, 700 block South R St.

22:22: Disorderly subject, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
02:57: Suspicious subject, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
06:22: Warrant service, 900 block Row River Rd.
07:57: Mental subject, 900 block S. 10th St.
08:09: Death investigation, 1100 block S. 7th St.
08:34: Abandoned vehicle, 800 block Pierce Ave.
09:12: Suspicious subject, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.
09:37: Missing person, 800 block E. Main St.
09:52: Alarm, 1200 block S. River Rd.
10:01: Suspicious subject, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.
10:25: Abandoned vehicle, 1100 block W. Main St.
11:55: Found dog, 400 block Holly Ave.
12:38: Burglary, 1200 block E. Jefferson Ave.
12:51: Suspicious subject, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
13:24: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

14:18: Fraud, 400 block S. 10th St.
14:47: Abandoned vehicle, 700 block Fairview Lp.
15:14: Suspicious condition, R/Fairview Lp.
19:08: Harassment, 700 block Row River Rd.
19:49: Warrant service, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.
21:52: Disorderly subject, 83000 block Hwy 99
22:23: Illegal camping, Samuel/Hillside

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
01:54: Disorderly subject, 500 block Grant Ave.
03:11: Intoxicated subject, 500 block Grant Ave.
03:35: Suspicious condition, 1100 block S. 2nd St.
04:29: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
08:09: Trespass, 900 block W. Main St.
08:56: Disturbance, 100 block South S St.
09:57: Suspicious condition, 8th/ Monroe
10:14: Trespass, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.
10:30: Theft, 900 block E. Main St.

11:27: Agency assist, 500 block Grant Ave.
14:36: Suspicious condition, 200 block Gateway Blvd.
17:58: Juvenile trouble, 100 block S. 10th St.
18:04: Criminal mischief, 200 block N. 12th St.
20:40: Animal info, 1400 block E. Madison Ave.
21:36: Suicidal subject, 300 block North J St.
21:42: Suspicious condition, 1400 block Hwy 99
22:31: Suspicious subject, 200 block Gateway Blvd.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
03:24: Suspicious condition, 10th/Lincoln
08:43: Suspicious condition, 800 block Taylor Ave.
09:28: Illegal camping, 2700 block Row River Rd.
10:10: Trespass, 1700 block S. 6th St.
16:09: Disturbance, 31000 block CG Lorane Rd.
17:14: Suspicious subject, 77000 block Hwy 99
17:34: Assault, 1600 block E. Grover Ave.

20:36: Abandoned vehicle, Jefferson/2nd
23:48: Illegal camping, 1000 block E. Main St.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11
02:49: Suspicious subject, 200 block Gateway Blvd.
03:35: Disorderly subject, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.
09:35: Juvenile trouble, 100 block S. 10th St.
12:14: Suicidal subject, 300 block S. 5th St.
14:47: Vicious dog, 1700 block Clark Ave.
15:27: Criminal mischief, 500 block N. 10th St.
18:16: Harassment, 100 block Village Dr.
22:16: Nuisance, 600 block N. 14th St.
22:41: Warrant service, 100 block S. 10th St.
23:09: Disturbance, 31000 block CG Lorane Rd.
23:43: Disturbance, 1000 block Villard Ave.
23:43: Suspicious vehicle, 100 block S. 10th St.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12
04:26: Suspicious vehicle, 900 block Row River Rd.
05:59: Fire, 3000 block Row River Rd.
16:40: Fire, 1000 block S. 10th St.
18:23: Order violation, 200 block N. 16th St.
20:10: Suspicious subject, 900 block Row River Rd.
23:01: Harassment, 800 block Gateway Blvd.
23:42: Illegal camping, 1000 block E. Main St.
23:49: Welfare check, 200 block Quincy Ave.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
04:21: Suspicious subject, 100 block S. 10th St.
08:19: Agency assist, Row River Rd/Gateway
09:01: Trespass, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.
11:15: Found property, 400 block E. Main St.
15:01: Fire, 16th/Main
15:05: Motor vehicle crash, 100 block N. 14th St.
15:38: Disturbance, 100 block N. 9th St.
16:18: Disturbance, 100 block South S St.
18:08: Disturbance, 800 block Row River Rd.

Drone helps reunited missing woman, man

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Lane County Sheriff’s Office (LCSO) has released details of a confusing search and rescue operation that, fortunately, ended with the two missing people being reunited.

At approximately 11 p.m. September 10, the LCSO received information about an overdue subject in the Cape Creek area.

A woman reported dropping off a male to go mushroom picking, but she was unable to find him when she went back to pick him up. The man had a puppy with him, but he had no additional provisions.

LCSO deputies and Search & Rescue (SAR) volunteers responded to the area.

“Cellular communication is patchy in this part of Lane County,” LCSO Sgt. Levi McKenny said. “The woman

continued searching on her own, so deputies were unable to reach her for additional information.”

At about 2 p.m. September 11, the volunteers SAR located the male and the puppy.

“He had made it to the woman’s vehicle, but she was not present,” McKenny said. “She had left a note in her car stating she was still out looking for the man. SAR continued searching the area and at about 3:20 p.m., located the woman by drone. Thankfully both people were found uninjured.”



Courtesy photo

This latest rescue underscores the need of all people heading into the wilderness to be prepared.

arrived,” LCSO Sgt. Levi McKenny said.

The US Coast Guard dispatched a helicopter and transported the patient to a local area hospital for treatment.

The Lane County Sheriff’s Office is urging everyone to recreate safely.

“Please remember, information is crucial to searchers,” McKenny said. “If you are making a report, ensure you have a way to be reached

for additional information. Wanting to help is admirable, but do not put yourself in the same situation as those you are trying save.”

The LCSO offers the following recommendations:

- Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Know conditions before you leave - rain in the valley can mean ice up high!

- Be prepared to stay out overnight - even if you don’t plan to get out of your car.
- Bring maps for offline navigation - cell service can be spotty!
- If you go on the water, ALWAYS wear a life jacket!
- If you become lost, STAY PUT! Find a way to signal or make your location visible. Always carry a whistle and flashlight in the outdoors – it just might save your life.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 23

• Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 3–5:30 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
• Senior Center Pinochle Games. 1 p.m. Senior Center. 700 E. Gibbs Ave.
• Acoustic Jam with Gregg Biller. 6–7:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.
• Elks Lodge Bingo. Early Bird 6:30 p.m. Regular Games 7 p.m. Elks Lodge.
• Board Game Night with Ayla. 6:30–9:30 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

SEPTEMBER 24

• T.O.P.S. Club. 9:30–11 a.m. Delight Valley Church of Christ, Saginaw.
• Baby Laptime. 11:30 a.m. CG Public Library.
• Bohemia Gold Mining Museum. 1–4 p.m. 308 S. 10th St.
• Community Center Table Tennis. 4–6 p.m. Community Center.
• Bread Club. 5–7 p.m. CG Public Market.

• Celebrate Recovery. 5:15 p.m. Calvary Chapel. 1447 Hwy 99N.
• Stone Hart (rock). 6–8 p.m. The Public (CG Public Market).
• 6–8 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
• Open Mic Night. 6:30–8:30 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

SEPTEMBER 25

• Storytime. 11:30 a.m. CG Public Library.
• Bohemia Gold Mining Museum. 1–4 p.m. 308 S. 10th St.
• American Legion Bingo. 5–7 p.m. American Legion Post 32. 826 W. Main St.
• Elks Lodge Fundraising Dinner: Fish Fry (tilapia & cod) 5–6:30 p.m. A la carte menu
• Visual Artist Ame Beard. 5–8 p.m. Axe and Fiddle. Free
• Art Walk. Historic Downtown District. 6–8 p.m. Free
• Saginaw Vineyard Friday Night Live. 6–9 p.m. 80247 Delight Valley School Rd.



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Coast Fork Willamette River.

• Lance Alton Troxel and Wandering Wolves Students. 6–8 p.m. CG Public Market. 912 E. Main St.

• The Huckleberrys (Americana). 6:30–9:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
• Weekly Pool Tournament. 7 p.m. Bohemian Tavern. \$5 entry. BCA rules.

SEPTEMBER 26

• Share Fair. 9 a.m. 1133 E. Main St.
• Community Cook-Off. 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Cascade Home Center.
• Kids: Art Making with Michele. 10 a.m. CG Public Market
• South Valley Farmers Market. 10 a.m.–2 p.m. 7th and Main Street.
• Oktoberfest. 10 a.m.–8 p.m. Historic Downtown District. Free
• Cottage Grove Museum. 1–4 p.m. Birch Avenue and H Street.
• Bohemia Gold Mining Museum. 1–4 p.m. 308 S. 10th St.
• Community Dance (EDM, Pop Dance). 7 p.m.
• The Regulars (Americana). 1–3 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.

• Flesh and Form Drawing Class with T. 5–7 p.m. (Every Sunday thru Oct 11) CG Public Market.
• Kourtney Branchfield (Country). 6–8 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

SEPTEMBER 28

• Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 1–5:30 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
• Senior Center Bingo. 12:30 p.m. Cottage Grove Community Center.

SEPTEMBER 29

• Ukulele Club. (for adults) 9 a.m. CG Public Library.
• Bilingual Story Time. 5 p.m. CG Public Library.
• Trinity Lutheran Free Take Out Dinner. 5:15–6:15 p.m. 675 S. 7th St.
• Trivia & Games with Gerald and Cribbage with Ted. 6–8 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.
• Sabor Latino Dance Night. (Latin and Caribbean). 6:30–8:30 p.m. Axe and Fiddle. \$6/dancer

Oregon’s forests facing continued stresses, new report finds

STAFF REPORT

Cottage Grove Sentinel

Drought stress continues to be a “key factor” in the health of Oregon’s forests, according to a new report on the state of health of Oregon’s forests.

Based on an extensive aerial survey of Oregon’s forests completed by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the USDA Forest Service, the report shows that while tree death and damage was lower last year than the 10-year average, drought is still a key stressor of Oregon’s forest trees, making it harder for trees to defend against insect pests.

The full 2025 report is available at <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/documents/forestbenefits/fhh-report-2025.pdf>

ODF Forest Entomologist Christine Buhl helped produce the report. She said

drought is often paired with rising temperatures.

“Together these are often the underlying cause of tree deaths in our state,” she said. “Drought reduces tree growth and lowers their defenses against insect pests and some diseases, which healthy trees may otherwise resist or tolerate.”

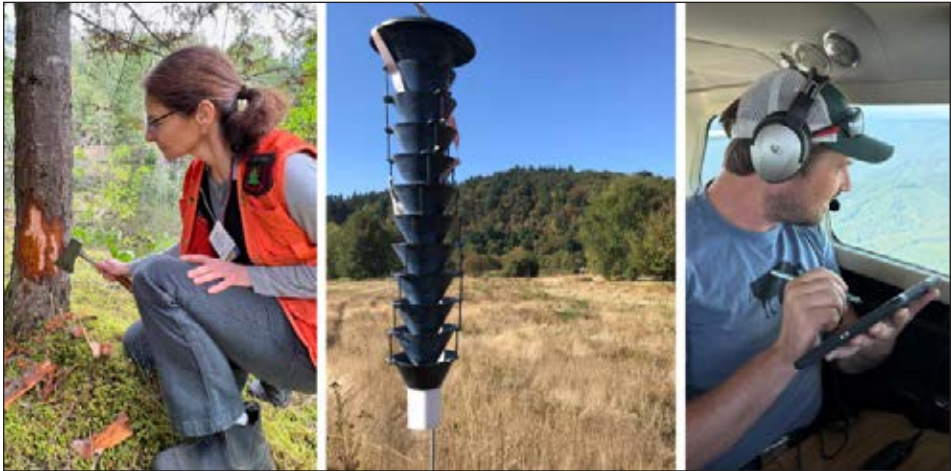
Lower than average death and damage

The report stated that 2025 saw a return to typical precipitation amounts, but spring was the fourth driest on record. A total of 181,500 acres showed death or damage of some kind from one or more causes. The damage was well below the 10-year average and less than half the peak year for damage in 2022. That year, 1.8 percent of Oregon’s 30 million forested acres showed signs of death or damage, compared

to 0.7 percent in 2025 and 0.8 percent in 2024.

The highest percentage of damage or death was seen in eastern Oregon. Union County was worst affected, with 2.4 percent of its forested acres showing death or damage. This was followed by Umatilla County at 1.24 percent and Harney County at 1.12 percent. Coastal counties and those bordering the Coast Range had the lowest percent of death and damage in their forests.

Buhl said a majority (78 percent) of the damage seen from the air this year resulted from the interplay of drought and opportunistic beetles targeting stressed Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), true



Courtesy photo from Christine Buhl / ODF

Data collection through on the ground sampling, trapping, and an aerial survey.

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SPORTS

Cottage Grove starts football season 1-1

WILL LOHRE

Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Lions snapped into the football season in early September and started on a high note, taking a win in their first game. Cottage Grove hosted Creswell at Herald White Stadium on Sept. 4, and the Lions beat the Bulldogs 25-18. It was Cottage Grove's first win on the football field since opening day last year, when the Lions beat North Marion 34-14 on Sept. 5, 2025. The game also showed how far the Lions have come in the past year. Last season, the Lions lost to Creswell 21-13 when the programs met on Sept. 19, 2025. Fast forward to this season, and the Lions grit out a one-possession win, and Head Coach Nate Farrell was happy with how his team grew into the game. "Slow start, but our defense set the tone," Farrell



Courtesy photo from Rye Daves

The Lions during the National Anthem ahead of the opening game against Creswell on Sept. 4.

said. "Focus going forward is being physical!" Coming off that win, Farrell turned his attention to the game against Mazama on Sept. 11. It was an away test for the Lions, and ahead of the game, Farrell stressed how important a tenacious mentality would be. "Being relentless and getting after the opponent is

always the goal, and has been the message this week against Mazama! They are big, but we are going to have to be more physical. It's going to be a battle the entire time," Farrell said. "Go Lions!" Mazama proved to be a tough challenge, and Cottage Grove ended up losing 52-16 on the road. Despite the lopsided final score, the Lions did put up a fight. The Lions and Vikings each scored in the first quarter, with Cottage Grove finishing the period with 7 points compared to Mazama's 13. Cottage Grove added nine more points in the second quarter, but they couldn't keep pace with Mazama, which scored 21 more points. Going into halftime, Cottage Grove trailed 16-34. Unfortunately, only Mazama scored in the second half, posting six points in the third and another 12 in the fourth. Despite the 52-16 loss, Cottage Grove played hard for the entire contest, refusing to throw in the towel and giving a good account of themselves. Two of the highlights of the day came from the connection between quarterback Andrew Horner and wide receiver Isiah Grogan. In the first quarter, Horner hit Grogan for a back-shoulder touchdown in the red zone to tie the game 7-7 after the extra point. Later in the first half, Horner fired a 28-yard touchdown strike to Grogan again, slicing open the defense to add another six points to the scoreboard. Following that game, Cottage Grove hosted North Bend on Sept. 17. It was the first game of Special District 3 league play, and the result was unknown at the time of press. The Lions will be back in action on the road against South Umpqua on Sept. 25. Follow game results at osaa.org and see Cottage Grove sports features online at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

Coollest Thing Made in Oregon finalists selected, voting open

Oregon Business & Industry has released the 16 finalists in the fourth annual Coolest Thing Made in Oregon contest and the list includes two Lane County businesses. The contest recognizes the breadth and ingenuity of Oregon's manufacturing sector. This year's finalists represent a wide variety of products manufactured throughout the state, from Ashland to Boardman. The finalists appear on a bracket that will be used to determine the Coolest Thing Made in Oregon. The first round of voting, which will cut the list to eight products, is now open and will continue through noon on Sept. 28. Oregonians can view the bracket, learn about the Coolest Thing finalists and – most importantly – vote on the contest website here. A panel chose this year's finalists from scores of products nominated by Oregonians over the spring and summer. Members of the public will narrow the field of finalists during several rounds of voting. The manufacturer of the winning product

will receive formal recognition and enjoy bragging rights for producing Oregon's coolest thing. At least until next year, when Oregonians will identify a new coolest thing. The 16 finalists and the company locations: • Aerostar's Zero Pressure Balloons (Tillamook) • Crater Lake Spirits' Hazelnut Espresso Vodka (Bend) • Georgia Pacific's Angel Soft Toilet Paper (Wauna) • Icicle Tricycle's Ice Cream Vending Bike (Portland) • Lamb Weston's Waffle Fries (Boardman) • Miles Fiberglass' Pantan Chair (Clackamas) • North River Boats' Seahawk Fastback (Roseburg) • Nuro's WaveCel Helmet Lining (Wilsonville) • Overwatch Imaging's TK Series Smart Sensors (Hood River) • PNW Assistive Technology's Wayfinder Ride-On Toys (Eugene) • Reser's Fine Foods' Deviled Egg Potato Salad (Hillsboro) • Tillamook's Sharp Cheddar Cheese (Tillamook) • Tucker Sno-Cat's Model 1600 Over Snow Vehicle (Medford) • Twist Bioscience's Synthetic DNA on a Silicon Wafer (Wilsonville) • VISCO's Cast Iron and Steel Decorative Streetlights (Eugene) • Work Sharp's RMX Reverse Tanto Folding Knife (Ashland) OBI is a statewide association representing businesses from a wide variety of industries and from each of Oregon's 36

counties. In addition to being the statewide chamber of commerce, OBI is the state affiliate for the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Retail Federation. "Our 1,500 member companies, more than 75% of which are small businesses, employ more than 250,000 Oregonians. Oregon's private sector businesses help drive a healthy, prosperous economy for the benefit of everyone," according to the release.

Wheels From Page 1

682 3238. All vehicles are accessible, and fares are \$1 per person per trip. Q4: How does LTD determine service levels for rural communities like Cottage Grove and Creswell? Rees said long range planning projects such as Connect 2045 help incorporate rural needs into LTD's future service decisions. She noted that what works in downtown Eugene may not work in Cottage Grove, so LTD collaborates with partner agencies and conducts outreach to "right size" services. The Connector is an example of a service tailored to Cottage Grove's needs. LTD's service policy states that rural fixed routes are generally expected to maintain at least 10 average weekday riders per revenue hour. Q5: What options exist for riders who previously relied on SLW for medical trips? RideSource provides free Non Emergent Medical Transportation for eligible Oregon Health Plan members throughout Lane County. Medicaid riders can schedule trips by calling 541 682 5566. Non Medicaid riders can use the Connector for medical appointments within Cottage Grove. To reach appointments in Eugene Springfield, riders can take the Connector to Walmart and transfer to Route 98. LTD's Customer Service Center (541 687 5555) can help anyone plan their trip. Q6: Does RideSource operate in South Lane County, and what should

residents know about eligibility? RideSource's ADA paratransit service operates within Eugene, Springfield, and Florence for riders unable to use fixed route buses due to a disability. RideSource also provides free Non Emergent Medical Transportation for Oregon Health Plan members across Lane County, including South Lane. Q7: Is LTD coordinating with local agencies to fill transportation gaps created by the SLW closure? Rees said LTD is collaborating with agencies and partners to explore useful and efficient service options in South Lane County. LTD's engagement model includes outreach plans, communications assessments, and coordination with community organizations. Q8: What steps is LTD taking to ensure Cottage Grove residents understand available services? LTD staff have participated in local events, including the Lane County Transit Equity meeting, Concert in the Park, and Splash Into Summer. LTD advertises the Connector on KNND Radio and is developing a partnership plan with the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce. Social media posts highlight Route 98 and Connector service. LTD also notified community organizations—including South Lane School District, Be Your Best, South Lane Mental Health, and Cottage Grove Mutual Aid—after the rural shuttle pilot ended to ensure they understood current service options. Q9: Are there planned changes or evaluations underway regarding future service levels in South Lane County? Rees said LTD is developing Connect 2045, a long range plan aligning investments with community needs, including rural areas. She noted that sustainable funding for new services requires state level support and encouraged residents to participate in the planning process. Q10: What does LTD want Cottage Grove residents to

know moving forward? Rees encouraged riders to use the bus and share feedback. She also urged residents to participate in Connect 2045, saying the plan is stronger when more voices are heard. LTD BACKGROUND Lane Transit District began in 1970 with a handful of Volkswagen vans after replacing a failing private bus company in Eugene. Over the next five decades it grew from that modest start into the regional public transit agency serving communities across Lane County today. LTD's operations are funded primarily through payroll taxes, federal and state assistance, and rider fares. Payroll taxes remain the largest revenue source, followed by government support. Rider fares contribute only a small portion of the agency's annual budget. LTD's overall budget is roughly \$105 million, and only about \$4.5 million of that comes from fares—a common misconception that fares pay for the county's transit system LTD is led by General Manager and CEO Jameson T. Auten, who oversees district operations and implements policies adopted by the Board. The agency employs roughly 300 people across operations, maintenance, customer service, planning, and administrative support.

LTD is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Governor of Oregon, with each member representing a geographic subdistrict. The Board adopts LTD's annual budget, long range financial plan, and community investment plan, ensuring service decisions reflect regional priorities. LOOKING AHEAD LTD continues evaluating service needs in South Lane County and encourages residents to participate in Connect 2045 to help shape future transportation options. Connect 2045 is LTD's long range mobility plan guiding how the district invests in service, infrastructure, and funding priorities over the next two decades, including rural communities like Cottage Grove and Creswell. More information is available at: https://www.ltd.org/plans_and_projects/long-range-mobility-plan-ltd-connect-2045/ EDITOR'S NOTE The Sentinel reached out to Heather Murphy, South Lane School District's Early Learning and Community Services Administrator and LTD's Subdistrict 3 representative. With school starting last week she was unavailable for comment by press time. She welcomes feedback from the community. Email: Heather.Murphy@ltd.org.

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COMMENTARY

Oregon small businesses deserve a break from steep credit card fees

FRANK SQUILLO
Oregon Capital Chronicle

A recent survey from Gov. Tina Kotek’s Prosperity Council found that most Oregonians believe high costs, taxes and regulations are making it harder for businesses to grow. The governor acknowledged the challenge plainly: “We have to be intentional here, to be competitive.”

One place to start is with the steep credit card processing fees Oregon businesses pay on nearly every transaction.

Credit card interchange fees, commonly known as “swipe fees,” typically take 2 to 4 percent of every credit card purchase. For a small business like ours, that means paying a fee each time a customer buys a cup of coffee, a box of pastries or even leaves a non-cash tip for an employee.

Those percentages add up quickly. Businesses across the U.S. paid a record \$157 billion in credit card “swipe fees” last year, \$9 billion more than in 2024. For small businesses already facing rising costs for food, labor, insurance and utilities, processing fees have become another significant expense with little ability to negotiate them.

That’s largely because Visa and Mastercard dominate the credit card payments market, leaving merchants with few alternatives.

Oregon lawmakers have an opportunity to provide some relief. One commonsense reform would be to prohibit credit card companies from charging “swipe fees” on gratuities. While Oregon businesses don’t face the additional challenge of paying processing fees on sales taxes, we still pay them on tips intended for our employees. Businesses shouldn’t have to pay a fee on money they don’t actually keep.

The credit card industry argues that separating

portions of transactions would be difficult. But the payments system already identifies different components of transactions for accounting purposes. This small tweak would require an operational adjustment, not rebuilding the entire payments ecosystem.

Congress can also address the lack of competition in the credit card market. The bipartisan Credit Card Competition Act would require large card-issuing banks to provide a second processing network beyond Visa or Mastercard. Giving merchants a choice could create natural competition over “swipe fees,” contributing to savings as high as \$17 billion annually for consumers and businesses alike.

Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley could support that effort federally, while state lawmakers pursue reforms that can provide relief here at home.

If Oregon is serious about becoming more competitive and helping small businesses succeed, reducing excessive credit card “swipe fees” is a practical place to start. Even modest reforms would allow more of every dollar spent at a local business to stay in that business, as well as in the community it serves.

Frank Squillo is the co-owner of Wanda’s Cafe + Bakery in Nehalem, Oregon.
<https://oregon-capitalchronicle.com/2026/09/02/oregon-small-businesses-deserve-a-break-from-steep-credit-card-fees/>

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Alexander Castro / Rhode Island Current

Credit card companies charge businesses swipe fees, and businesses often pass them on to consumers.

EDITORIAL CARTOON



GUEST COLUMN

Shades of Trump in Oregon

RANDY STAPILUS
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregon voters as a whole have not approved of Donald Trump any time he’s been on the general election ballot, handing him losses in 2016 (39.1%), in 2020 (40.4%) and 2024 (41%).

But parts of Oregon then and now have expressed different attitudes, as an election map of the state would show. Slicing the data in a different way, we now have a new report breaking the state’s current polling data into 35 geographic units, similar in number to the state’s 36 counties, but in this case each with similar populations.

This recasting shows up in a new national report in the polling analysis site Strength in Numbers, led by G. Elliot Morris (whose Substack is well worth a review), and drawing on an unusually large and detailed data set.

Nationally, it gives Trump an overall polling average of 38.2%, which if anything is a bit higher than some other polling aggregators conclude. Oregon, being a little bluer than the nation overall, gives Trump a job approval of 32.8%

Rather than using county maps, where enormous spaces may contain few people, and vice versa, distorting the voter picture, the report relies on Census Public Use Microdata Areas, or PUMAs. Each of the 35 in Oregon contains roughly 100,000 adults.

There are no massive surprises here. But we can see some sharp patterns.

First, the three — and there were only three — PUMAs where Trump polling approval topped 50%: the Klamath, Malheur, Lake and Harney four-county area (55.6%); the Union, Baker, Wallowa and southeastern Umatilla counties region (54.8%), and Douglas County (53.3%). That these areas support Trump is not surprising at all, though two years ago Trump scored 70% or more in nearly all these places.

Then there are the batch of PUMAs where Trump’s favorables have dropped below 50%, but still clearly above the national average: the Josephine, Coos and Curry counties area (49.1%); Deschutes (leaving out the city of Bend), Crook and Jefferson counties (47.7%); most of Linn County including Albany (46%), Marion County except Salem and Keizer (44.7%); the Columbia River counties from northwest Umatilla to Hood River County (44%); the cities of Medford and Central Point (43.9%); and southeastern Clackamas County (43.6%). Up to this point, the PUMAs have been essentially rural, with a few mid-sized cities thrown in (Medford, Albany, Grants Pass).

The Oregon PUMAs roughly matching Trump’s support nationwide include Jackson County minus Medford and

Central Point (40.5%); Lane County except Eugene and Springfield (39.1%); Yamhill County (39%); Columbia, Clatsop, and Tillamook counties (38.2%); Northern Salem city and Keizer 37.4%; Polk and Lincoln counties (36.8%). These areas may hit close to the national average but still are more pro-Trump than Oregon overall.

Now, as the Trump numbers decline sharply, we move into urban and suburban areas, nearly all in the Willamette Valley (the big exception being the city of Bend, which is also in this group). These PUMAs include northwest Clackamas County including Oregon City (32.9%); central and southern Salem city (31.7%); the Milwaukie and Happy Valley areas in Clackamas County 31.3%; Springfield and northeast Eugene cities (29.7%); the Gresham, Troutdale and Gorge areas in Multnomah County (29.5%); Bend city (27.6%); Hillsboro area in Washington County (25.6%); Benton County and southwest Linn County (25.3%); the Wilsonville and Lake Oswego area in Clackamas County (25.9%), Forest Grove and western Washington County area (27.5%); the Tigard, Tualatin and Sherwood area in Washington County (25.5%); eastern Portland city (23.7%); and the Beaverton area (23.1%).

Finally, we get to the areas where you have to go on an intense search to

find evidence of Trump support, though some does exist if you look for it. These places include central and western Eugene (20.7%); eastern Beaverton (19%); south-east Portland (13%); west Portland (11.6%); north-central Portland (10.9%); and east-central Portland (10.4%). For the record, Trump received 17.1% of the Multnomah County vote in 2024, which still represented higher support than current polling indicates.

Viewed as a whole, the usual patterns — more Republican and Trump support in the more rural areas, and farther from large metro areas — seems to continue in force.

But those numbers are significant. They do seem to represent, both in red and blue areas, across the board decline in support for the president. If that has an effect on votes cast for other Republicans in the state, it could have a big impact on Oregon elections in another couple of months.

<https://oregon-capitalchronicle.com/2026/09/03/shades-of-trump-in-oregon/>

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New Poll

What Fall-time staple are you most looking forward to?

Sweater Weather

Homecoming Game

Halloween

Pumpkins... Pumpkins Everywhere

Last Week’s Poll Results

Are you ready for the change of seasons?

Yes. Bring on the fall colors 100%

No, I am still working on my summer tan.

Quote of the Week

“Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations.”

Thomas Jefferson, first inaugural address, 1801



THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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OBITUARIES

Caleb Benjamin Leczel

April 15,1996 - August 31, 2026

Caleb Benjamin Leczel, of Cottage Grove OR, was born April 15,1996 in Springfield, OR to Eric and Maggie (Thompson) Leczel. Caleb went home to Jesus at the age of 30 on August 31, 2026, at OHSU in Portland, OR due to a massive stroke.

Heissurvivedbyhisparents; younger sister, Chloe Leczel; grandparents, Joe and Sally Leczel, and grandmother, Sally Thompson. He was preceded in death by his grandfather, David Thompson.

Caleb graduated from Cottage Grove High School in 2014 and went on to receive a Bachelor of Science at the University of Oregon in 2018. He worked as a caregiver for his grandmother and also worked at Dari Mart.

Caleb was a competitive swimmer for 6 years and played water polo during high school. Caleb won two 4A state championships in the 100-yard breaststroke and helped lead his team to be the 4A Swimming State Champions two of his high school years. He was named the OSAA MVP for the 4A State Championships in 2014 and in 2013 was honored by Oregon Swimming as a Top 5 Swimmer.

Some of Caleb's favorite hobbies included playing video games, hanging out with



family and friends, watching movies, shooting targets and playing D & D. His favorite movies were Lord of the Rings and the Star Wars saga. His favorite TV shows were Avatar: The Last Airbender and SpongeBob SquarePants. He also enjoyed traveling with his family to many places like Disneyland, Scotland, Alaska, and Colombia to visit his “adopted” older sister, Eliana.

Caleb loved his family and friends fiercely! He counted many of his closest friends as family and called them “brother” or “sister”. He had a huge loving, tender heart that continued past his death because he registered as an organ donor and was the answer to at least 4 people's prayers. He was funny, silly, and loved to make people laugh at his goofy antics. He will be so desperately missed on this side of heaven. But we have the hope of seeing him again because he claimed Jesus as his Savior. He chose as his life verse: Isaiah 43:1 “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.

A memorial service for Caleb will be held on October 10, 2026, at 2:30 pm at Riverside Church of God, 1255 South River Road, Cottage Grove, OR 97424. Arrangements are in the care of Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel and Crematorium.

Jerol Ware

12/23/1932 - 7/23/2026

Jerol Ware, 93, passed away at home surrounded by his family on July 23rd, 2026. Jerol was born in Boone County, Arkansas on December 23rd, 1932, to John and Ruby Ware. Jerol was the youngest of several siblings. Jerol moved to California as a young child, and then up to Oregon where his family planted roots. His father remarried and he had a younger sibling.

In 1950, he was drafted into the Army during WW2 and sent across the seas to Germany where he met the love of his life Magdalena. They were married in a lavish German ceremony in Germany on February 5th, 1955. He served in the Army for 6 years including the reserves as a Sergeant.

In late 1955, Jerol brought his bride home to America to the little town of Lorane, Oregon to live for the next 71 years of their lives. Jerol worked for International Paper for over 30 years. They had many adventures



over the years that involved hunting, fishing, many trips to Reno and the casino. He loved wood-working, puzzles and reading old Western books.

He is survived by his wife of 71 years, Magdalena; their children, Joe (Denita) and Anna (Mike); four grandchildren, Justin, Amanda, Jessica and Joel; as well as 6 1/2 great-grandchildren.

A private celebration of life was held in early September.

Funeral Arrangements, Andreason's Cremantion & Burial

DEATH NOTICES

Dick Albert Crane, 91, of Eugene, Oregon, passed away on September 5th, 2026. Arrangements are in the care of Sunset Hills Funeral Home, Crematorium & Cemetery.

Hoover Chambliss, 71, of Eugene, Oregon, passed away on September 7th, 2026. Arrangements are in the care of Sunset Hills Funeral Home, Crematorium & Cemetery.

Kenneth Bull, 64, of Eugene, Oregon, passed away on September 11, 2026. Arrangements are in the care of Sunset Hills Funeral Home, Crematorium & Cemetery.

fun, and organizers say the event has grown quickly thanks to strong community support and partnerships with local meat producers and non-profits. For more information, attendees can email tdamore@cascadehc.com.

THE PUBLIC

Additional activities nearby help fill out the day. At 10 a.m., The Public (CG Public Market) hosts Kids Art Making with Michele, offering a creative, hands on activity for families. Later in the evening, a Community Dance begins at 7 p.m., featuring a substance free, ecstatic inspired EDM/Pop Jam Groovefest that welcomes all ages.

With multiple events happening within walking distance, this Saturday offers Grovers a chance to celebrate local businesses, nonprofits, and the Historic District's renewed energy. From morning brisket to evening music, the day kicks off fall with a lively burst of downtown energy.

FEST From page 1

Planning now spans nearly the entire year. The committee meets regularly for 11 months, with activity increasing sharply as the event approaches. This year's festival required even more coordination because it now stretches the full length of Main Street from Highway 99 to 5th Street. Several local business owners and community members volunteer their time to organize the

event, and organizers say none of its success would be possible without their dedication and investment.

Oktoberfest opens at 10 a.m. with the Farmer's Market and the singing of the National Anthem. The festival runs until 8 p.m. and features live music, artists, food vendors, crafts, a kids zone, four beer gardens with activities, beer tastings, and dozens of local vendors.

Organizers say the festival creates new memories every year. One favorite from last year came when volunteers installed an enormous balloon arch

over the Armory entrance. Festival goers stopped to admire it, take photos with it, and laugh as children gleefully popped stray balloons that drifted into the festival area. Another joy is seeing residents arrive in dirndls and lederhosen, adding a touch of tradition and humor to the celebration.

Planning an event the encompasses the entire Historic Downtown District comes with challenges. Organizers say the most difficult part is ensuring everyone feels represented — sponsors, vendors, businesses, and

the community itself. The committee works intentionally to reach out, listen, and act as ambassadors for the businesses and people involved.

This year's expanded footprint gives organizers a chance to showcase the Historic District's recent restoration and improvements. They hope attendees of all ages will rediscover the businesses that anchor downtown and help recharge foot traffic.

COMMUNITY COOKOFF

While Oktoberfest fills Main Street with fall tradition, the morning begins on East Washington Avenue at Cascade Home Center, where the 4th

Annual Cottage Grove Community Cook off brings neighbors together over smoked brisket, friendly competition, and a good cause.

The event runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 40 S. 5th Street and features grillmasters from both nonprofit organizations and individual teams. They barbecue brisket and compete in several categories judged by local community leaders. Attendees can also vote in the much coveted People's Choice award.

Tasting plates are \$5, with all proceeds supporting South Valley Athletics. The Cook off includes live music and family friendly

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COUNCIL From page 1

be issued on time with an unqualified opinion. IN OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS Public Comment drew two speakers:

Dale Gangl expressed concern about needles found in a local park inside a plastic water bottle. He advocated for a community awareness program and suggested installing sharps containers in public restrooms.

Jack Jacobs, a crossing guard for ACE Charter School, praised CGPD for speed monitoring on 10th Street but said current measures have not slowed traffic enough. He requested a stop sign to reduce speeding. Public Works Director Faye Stewart explained the process for requesting a stop sign and said he would follow up.

Property owner Samuel Riddle requested expedited

annexation of two parcels at 77918 Hwy 99 and an undressed adjacent parcel. Two neighboring property owners opposed the annexation and requested a public hearing; none were present. Senior Planner Lenni Crow reported that all criteria had been met. The council voted 6-1 to approve the annexation, with Councilor Christine Hynk voting no.

The council unanimously approved declaring surplus property in the alley between 6th and 7th Streets on the west side of the Armory and granted an easement for parking behind the Woodard Building. The action provides space to remove the Armory's

wooden ramp and install a lift on the north side of the alley.

Two bids were received for repairs on Row River Road (I 5 to Currin Connector), Gateway Boulevard, and West Harrison Avenue. Wildish bid \$1,339,566.10 and Knife River bid \$1,450,889.30. The council voted 6-1 to award the contract to Wildish, with Councilor Randall Lammerman voting no.

Councilor Dana Merryday proposed reactivating the long dormant VisionKeepers Committee, which was tasked with managing the City's Vision 2037 plan adopted in 2008. Merryday suggested a citizen driven approach due to staff constraints. Other councilors expressed interest and directed staff to prepare a report on the plan's current status.



COTTAGE GROVE:

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334 Washington 541-942-3033 Worship 10am umcgrove.org

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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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Public comments open on proposed asbestos rules

The Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) is asking for public comment on proposed updates to its Lane County rules for handling and disposing of asbestos.

These changes will impact homeowners, demolition contractors, and abatement professionals. Asbestos is a natural mineral once used to strengthen many building materials found in homes.

The material is not dangerous if left undisturbed, but health risks arise when asbestos fibers break apart, become airborne, and are inhaled. Exposure to these fibers is proven to cause cancer and premature death.

“Many Lane County homes were built before 2004, which means residents may be living with asbestos-containing materials without realizing it,” said Matt



Courtesy photo

The material is not dangerous if left undisturbed, but health risks arise when asbestos fibers break apart, become airborne, and are inhaled. Exposure to these fibers is proven to cause cancer and premature death.

Sorensen, LRAPA Public Affairs Manager. “That’s why we want our asbestos rules written in plain language, so whoever is doing the work understands them and can make sure that when these materials are disturbed, they’re handled and disposed of safely.”

The proposed changes are meant to improve clarity, ensure consistency, and better align local rules with

federal asbestos regulations and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality standards. The updates fall into three categories:

- Clarified requirements: Alignment with current federal asbestos regulations, clearer distinctions between renovation and demolition activity, and updated criteria for properties that are rented or leased.

- Technical: Updates to recordkeeping standards, notification requirements, and consistent enclosure standards for asbestos abatement work.

- Formatting and consistency: Updated section numbering, standardized terminology (replacing “shall” with “must” or “may”), and other readability improvements. The full Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and draft rule language are available at

lrapa-or.gov/event/title-43-asbestos-requirements-public-notice.

Written comments will be accepted through 5 p.m. on Oct. 15, 2026, and may be emailed to rules@lrapa-or.gov. Oral testimony will also be accepted at the public hearing.

A public hearing on the proposed changes will be held Oct. 8, 2026, at 12:15 p.m. at LRAPA offices,

1010 Main St., Springfield, OR 97477, or virtually via Microsoft Teams.

LRAPA’s Board of Directors is expected to consider adopting the rules, including any changes made in response to public comment, at its Nov. 12, 2026, meeting.

About LRAPA
The Lane Regional Air Protection Agency is the local government agency responsible for monitoring and regulating air quality in Lane County, Oregon — the only local air quality agency in the state; the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality regulates the rest of Oregon. Established in 1968, LRAPA carries out its mission through air monitoring, permitting and enforcement, and public programs such as its Outdoor Burning and Home Wood Heating advisories.

State’s unemployment shows ‘slight stabilization’

STAFF REPORT
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Oregon’s unemployment rate was little changed at 5.1% in August and 5.2% in July. It has been within a tight range between 5.0% and 5.3% for the past 18 months, since March 2025 when it was 5.0%.

In August, Oregon’s seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll employment declined by 800 jobs, following a revised loss of 1,800 jobs in July. August’s losses were largest in professional and business services (-1,100 jobs). Gains were largest in construction (+700 jobs) and retail trade (+500).

In the past 12 months, payroll employment dropped by 10,900 jobs, or 0.5%. Health care and social assistance continued its rapid growth of the past four years by adding 10,200 jobs, or 3.2%, in the past 12 months. Private education (+800, or 2.2%) and other services (+1,300 jobs, or 2.0%) were the only other major industries that added jobs since August 2025. Manufacturing (-6,800 jobs, or -3.8%) cut the most jobs in that time. Most of the other major industries cut jobs by less than 2%.

However, there were signs of stabilization over the past five months, as total nonfarm payroll employment inched



Metro Creative Connection

In the past 12 months, payroll employment dropped by 10,900 jobs, or 0.5%.

upward by 1,800 jobs, or 0.1%. The gains since March were largest in health care and social assistance (+3,800 jobs); construction (+2,200); other services (+1,700); retail trade (+1,400); and private education (+1,400). These

gains were partially offset by losses in manufacturing (-3,100 jobs); leisure and hospitality (-2,600); and government (-2,000).

The U.S. unemployment rate was 4.1% in both July and August.

Fast Fact

There were 2,120,570 employed and 113,792 unemployed in Oregon in August, according to the Oregon Employment Department.

Oregon officials urge use of ballot boxes while defending mail voting

JULIA SHUMWAY
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Top Oregon elected officials on Tuesday, Sept. 8, urged Oregonians to use ballot drop boxes, not mailboxes, to return ballots in November as newly released data showed thousands of Oregonians missed having their May primary votes counted because of postal delays.

Secretary of State Tobias Read, Gov. Tina Kotek and U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, all Democrats, held a press conference at the state Capitol in Salem to reiterate their commitment to protecting Oregon’s decades-long history of mail voting.

Read, the state’s top election official, is seeking \$1.25 million from the Legislature’s emergency board this week to add 20 drop boxes, expand a ballot tracking system used by five counties and cover other unanticipated election costs.

His funding request and the officials’ comments come as the U.S. Supreme Court weighs whether the U.S. Postal Service can implement a rule that would upturn how states run elections weeks before states begin mailing ballots. Oregon is among the states

that sued to block the Postal Service rule and President Donald Trump’s executive order that preceded it.

Read and others said they’re confident the court will block the rule, and that even if it didn’t, it’s too close to the election for it to practically take effect.

“School’s back in session now,” Read said. “You could go to any playground and ask kids, ‘Does it make sense to change the rules in the middle of the game?’ The answer is ‘no.’ It’s not practical. It’s not right. And we believe it’s not legal.”

His funding request, which the Legislature’s emergency board will consider Thursday, includes roughly \$150,000 to expand the BallotTrax ballot tracking system to all 36 counties.

Voters in Clackamas, Marion, Multnomah, Yamhill and Washington counties have been able to sign up for text alerts to follow their ballot from when it’s first mailed to them to when election workers have verified the ballot envelope signature and sorted it for counting.

It also includes \$120,000 for 20 new ballot boxes at \$6,000 apiece and \$344,000 for operational support for ballot boxes, as well as 5



Julia Shumway / Oregon Capital Chronicle

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, speaks during a press conference in Salem, Oregon, on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2026.

cents per voter, or about \$153,000, for county election support.

And Read is seeking \$480,000 to reimburse counties that have to mail notices to inactive voters, mostly people who moved without updating their addresses and who had their ballots returned as undeliverable. Inactive voters don’t receive ballots but officials must notify voters they’re inactive before removing them from voter rolls.

An official May primary election turnout report the Secretary of State’s Office released earlier on Tuesday showed a steep increase in the number of uncounted ballots over prior years.

Since 2022, Oregon has allowed the counting of ballots postmarked by Election Day that arrive within the next week.

But changes at the Postal Service that require all mail to be taken first to a Portland processing center mean that in most of the state, mail doesn’t receive postmarks until at least the day after an Oregonian mails it.

Of the more than 55,000 ballots that arrived at county election offices during the seven-day grace period after the May primary, more than 7,300 couldn’t be counted because they had a postmark after Election Day. That’s a rate

of 13.1%, higher than any prior election.

Merkley, Oregon’s junior U.S. senator, said mail voting is safer and more trustworthy than other systems.

“On Election Day, it is easy to manipulate the outcome,” he said. “You simply move the locations where people vote, so they get confused. You put the locations where there’s no parking. You put out misinformation about the election day. You put out misinformation about the location. You put in machines that don’t work and slow things down, so people have eight-hour waits to vote, like they did in Georgia. None of that can be done with vote by mail.”

Kotek said Oregon has spent decades building a voting system that works — the state routinely boasts the highest or near-highest turnout rates in the country — and will defend it.

“Vote by mail means a parent doesn’t have to choose between getting somewhere to vote or taking care of their child,” she said. “Vote by mail means a worker who can’t afford to take time off work can sit down at their kitchen table after work and participate in our democracy, and it means an older Oregonian,

or a person with a disability, or someone who would live far away from a polling place can make their voice heard in an easier fashion. These are not abstract benefits.”

And Wyden, the first U.S. senator elected in an all-mail election in 1996, said constituents he spoke to in rural Oregon have been especially worried about maintaining mail elections. Some voters would face driving an hour to a ballot box or their county election office if they can’t rely on their mail, he said.

“To borrow a phrase from our wonderful letter carriers, I’ve got a special delivery message for Donald Trump: Keep the hell away from Oregon’s vote by mail,” he said.

<https://oregon-capitalchronicle.com/2026/09/08/oregon-officials-urge-use-of-ballot-boxes-while-defending-mail-voting/>

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Forests From Page 3

fir species (*Abies* spp.), and pine species (*Pinus* spp.).

The report also measures other causes of trees being injured or killed, such as diseases, storms, and wildfires.

Levels of tree diseases remain much the same

The report showed the acreage or incidence of common tree diseases were largely unchanged. Researchers noted that this can sometimes be the result of limits to how well such diseases can be detected

from the air. An exception is the water mold causing sudden oak death (*Phytophthora ramorum*). Since its initial discovery near the California border in 2001, it continues steadily spreading north and northwest in Curry County around the community of Port Orford in southwest Oregon by about three to five miles a year. Sudden oak death infects scores of different shrub and tree species but kills Oregon’s native tanoak trees. The disease is spread by spores blown by the wind to new areas.

The State of Oregon is cooperating with federal land managers to slow the spread

by identifying newly infected sites and cutting and burning infested vegetation. Private land is also being treated.

Ground-based observations showed that Swiss needle cast disease remains a problem for Douglas-fir growing in areas with high late-spring atmospheric moisture, primarily in the Coast Range. Despite the name, the disease is caused by a fungal pathogen native to the Pacific Northwest.

“The fungus affects the needles, causing many of them to be shed prematurely,” ODF Forest Pathologist Gabriela Ritokova said. “This

produces a sparse crown and 20 to 50 percent slower volume growth, reducing the amount of timber the tree produces.”

Mild temperatures in winter and spring are believed to favor fungal development, worsening its impact. This is especially true in damp coastal areas formerly dominated by Sitka spruce and western hemlock that have been replanted with Douglas-fir plantations.

On the ground collaborators are also important

Buhl emphasized the importance of on-the-ground collaborators to help round out the full picture of forest

health in Oregon. “In addition to data ODF and the USDA Forest Service gather, we rely on Oregon State University Forestry Extension staff from across the state, and collaborate with other natural resource agencies, universities, public and private forest landowners, and members of the public to gather information,” she said.

In the aerial survey, trained observers fly over all forested lands in the Pacific Northwest in fixed-wing aircraft and record damage to trees from all sources. Flights are staffed with one observer on each side of

the aircraft. Survey flights typically fly between 1,500 to 2,500 feet above ground level, following a systematic grid four miles apart and traveling at 90 to 140 miles an hour.

The aerial forest health survey is the longest continuous survey of its kind in the United States. It started in 1947 and has been flown every year since. The only exception was in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data from the annual survey flights in Oregon can be found at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r06/natural-resources/forest-health/aerial-detection-survey>

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PUBLIC NOTICES

CGS26-149
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF LANE In the Matter of the Estate of: Katherine Irene Smith, Deceased. Case No. 26PB07289 NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Mary A. Crawford has been appointed Personal Representative. All persons having claims against the estate are hereby required to present them, with proper vouchers, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, as stated below, to the Personal Representative at 711 Country Club Road, Suite 200, Eugene, Oregon 97401, or they may be barred. All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings in this estate may obtain additional information from the records of the Personal Representative, the Court, or the attorney for the Personal Representative, K.C. Huffman. Dated and first published: September 23, 2026. PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: Mary A. Crawford 76306 Jasper Drive, Oakridge, Oregon 97463 701-290-0213 ATTORNEY FOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: K.C. Huffman, OSB No. 002854 Bromley Newton Huffman 711 Country Club Road, Suite 200, Eugene, Oregon 97401 541-343-4700 541-343-4713 Fax kc@bromleynewton.com 09/23/26

CGS26-150
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF LANE In the Matter of the Estate of: Ruth Geer Garber, Deceased. Case No. 26PB07111 NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that David Peter Garber has been appointed Personal Representative. All persons having claims against the estate are hereby required to present them, with proper vouchers, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, as stated below, to the Personal Representative at 711 Country Club Road, Suite 200, Eugene, Oregon 97401, or they may be barred. All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings in this estate may obtain additional information from the records of the Personal Representative, the Court, or the attorney for the Personal Representative, K.C. Huffman. Dated and first published: September 23, 2026. PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: David Peter Garber 1486 Lathrup Avenue, Saginaw, MI 48638 214-679-6231 ATTORNEY FOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: K.C. Huffman, OSB No. 002854 Bromley Newton Huffman 711 Country Club Road, Suite 200, Eugene, Oregon 97401 541-343-4700 541-343-4713 Fax kc@bromleynewton.com 09/23/26

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PUBLIC NOTICES

CGS26-151
Notice is hereby given that Craig W. Tomlinson, the Grantor of the Craig W. Tomlinson Living Trust as restated on July 28, 2011, and as further amended, passed away on September 13, 2026. All persons having claims against the trust estate are hereby required to present their claims, with proper vouchers, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, as stated below, to the trustee at c/o Hamilton W. Budge, Jr., P.O. Box 10567, Eugene, OR 97440, or the claims may be barred. Date of first publication: September 23, 2026 Kevin W. Merwin, Successor Trustee c/o Hamilton W. Budge, Jr. P.O. Box 10567, Eugene, OR 97440 09/23/26

CGS26-152
NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS: Probate proceedings in the Estate of Harvey R. Paneitz, deceased, are now pending in the Circuit Court for Lane County, Oregon, Case No. 26PB07735. Gregory W. Paneitz has been appointed as personal representative of Decedent. All persons having claims against the Estate are required to present them, in due form, within four months after the date of first publication of this Notice. The date of publication of this Notice is September 23, 2026. Claims shall be presented to the personal representative at this address: c/o Alec S. Marlega, Arnold Gallagher P.C., 800 Willamette Street, Suite 800, PO Box 1758, Eugene, OR 97440-1758, or they may be barred. All persons whose rights may be affected by these proceedings may obtain additional information from the records of the court, the personal representative, or their attorney, Alec S. Marlega, whose address is listed above, and whose telephone number is (541) 484-0188. 09/23/26

CGS26-148
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Tyra Potter has been appointed Trustee of the Potter Family Revocable Trust, whereas Tina Marie Potter and Timothy Dean Potter are the settlors of the trust. All persons having claims against the trust are required to present them within four months from the date of the first publication of this Notice to the Trustee at Willamette NW Law Firm, LLC, 735 W. 7th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97402, or they may be barred. Any person whose rights may be affected by these proceedings may obtain additional information from the Trustee or from the Trustee's attorney. DATED and first Published: 09-09-2026. /s/ Tyra Potter, Trustee. 09/09/26, 09/16/26, 09/23/26

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Fun Fact

Each American consumes an average of roughly 110-140 pounds of fruit in one year. The amounts of some top favorites include 26.8 pounds of bananas, 17 pounds of apples, 10 pounds of oranges and 8 pounds of grapes. Sources: statista.com, ers.usda.gov

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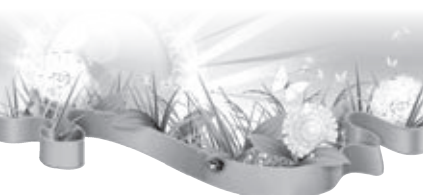
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From the parade and live music to the artisan booths and family fun, BMD 2026 honored our heritage while creating new memories. We especially thank our local businesses and civic partners for their generous support and collaboration.

We're proud to be part of a town that shows up, celebrates together and keeps the Spirit of The Grove alive.

Bohemia Mining Days is made possible by an incredible network of leaders, builders, sponsors and community partners who each play a vital role in bringing Bohemia City to life. From the big-picture planners to the hands-on helpers, this is a community-powered festival through and through.

To produce an event this size takes a small army and there is likely someone who made a valuable contribution and isn't mentioned below. We regret any oversight and thank you for your contribution to this year's successful celebration. (The names listed below are in alphabetical order by first name.)

LEADERSHIP & EVENT COORDINATION

At the core of the festival is our leadership team, made up of volunteers, organizers, and coordinators who dedicate their time, energy and passion throughout the year. Their vision and dedication are the reason this event continues to grow and thrive each year.

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CG Police: Chief Cory Chase and the Cottage Grove Police Officers who ensured the safety of "Bohemia City" and our Saturday Parade: Captain Passadore, Sergeant Braaten, Sergeant Branstetter, Officer Buckland, Officer Callahan, Officer Coons, Detective Gordon, Officer Ristau, Officer Walker, CSO Crosby, Reserve Officer Lemley with assistance from Lane County Sheriff's Office Reserve Deputies Manion, Nelson, Schwarz and Spencer.

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We're grateful for the many organizations and businesses who have helped make the festival—and our other events—possible throughout the year. Bohemia Electric, Bohemia Gold Mining Museum, Bohemia Mine Owners Association, Cottage Grove Art Collective, **Cottage Grove City Council:** Mayor Candace Solesbee, Councilors Christine Hynk, Dana Merryday, Darrel Wilson, Greg Ervin, Jim Settlemeyer, Randell Lammerman, **City Manager:** Mike Sauerwein, **Police Chief** Cory Chase, **City Staff:** Faye Stewart, Jessica Klarr, Leni Crow, Mike Cummings, & Mindy Roberts; Coast Fork Brewing, Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, Cottage Grove Community Foundation, Cottage Grove Garbage Service, Cottage Grove Genealogical Society, Cottage Grove Historical Society, Cottage Grove Public Market, Cottage Grove Museum, Cottage Grove Sentinel (Joe Warren, Jeremy Ruark & Gary Winterholler), Dairy Queen, Family Relief Nursery, Friends of the Cottage Grove Library, Garland Burbach, KNND-Radio, Len Blackstone, Old Mill Farm Story, Opal Center for Arts and Education, Oregon Aviation Historical Society, Partners in History, Pour 818, Prospectors & Gold Diggers Club, Row River Fire Resource, Schweitzer's Work and Western Wear, Singing Creek Educational Center, Slabtown Coffee, South Valley Athletics, The Chronicle, The Huckleberrys, The Regulars, Western Oregon Exposition.

Together, these individuals and organizations are the reason Spirit of Bohemia Mining Days is more than just a festival—it's a celebration of our past, present, and future. Thank you for building something truly special with us.

As a year-round organization we welcome your financial (tax deductible) donations. Call Matthew at 541-999-9833 for payment options.

We've got programs and events happening all year so follow us on social media and at www.SpiritofBmd.com to know what's coming up.

See you next July 15-17 for BMD 2027—where history meets hometown fun.

VOTE NOW!

NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE SOUTH LANE COUNTY BUSINESSES



Go online today: www.cgsentinel.com/ballot to vote!
MUST VOTE IN MINIMUM OF 15 CATEGORIES

Name: _____
Phone: _____

The top two nominations will be named first and second place in each category. The most votes determine placement.
Only one ballot per reader. Duplicate ballots will not be counted.
Ballots from Cottage Grove newspaper only, photo copies will not be accepted.

- AUTOMOTIVE
- ATV STORE
- ATV RENTAL
- AUTO DETAIL
- AUTO PARTS / ACCESSORIES
- AUTO REPAIR
- CAR WASH
- OIL CHANGE
- RV REPAIR
- TIRE SERVICE

- COMMUNITY
- EARLY CHILD LEARNING
- NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
- PLACE TO VOLUNTEER
- PLACE TO WORK
- PLACE TO WORSHIP
- SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY
- SERVICE CLUB
- SUPPORT GROUP
- YOUTH ORGANIZATION

- DRINKS
- BAR
- BARTENDER
- BLOODY MARY
- COCKTAIL
- COFFEE
- CRAFT BREW
- HAPPY HOUR
- MARGARITA
- SMOOTHIE
- TEA
- WINE SELECTION

- ENTERTAINMENT
- FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT
- GOLF COURSE
- INDOOR ENTERTAINMENT
- MUSICIAN / DJ
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PERFORMANCE VENUE
- PERFORMING ARTS GROUP

- FOOD & DINING
- APPETIZER / SMALL PLATE
- ASIAN CUISINE
- BREAKFAST
- BURGER
- BURRITO
- CHOWDER
- DESSERT
- FOOD TRUCK
- MEXICAN CUISINE
- PIZZA
- RESTAURANT
- RESTAURANT SERVICE
- SALAD
- SALSA
- SANDWICHES
- SEAFOOD
- STEAK
- SUSHI
- TACO
- VEGETARIAN / VEGAN

- HOME SERVICES
- CARPET CLEANING
- CONTRACTOR
- ELECTRICIAN
- ESTATE LIQUIDATOR
- FLOORING
- HANDYMAN
- HOME IMPROVEMENT

- HOUSE CLEANING
- HVAC / HEAT & AIR
- INTERNET SERVICE
- LANDSCAPING
- PAINTING
- PEST CONTROL
- PLUMBING
- ROOFING
- SELF-STORAGE
- WINDOWS

- PET
- PET BOARDING
- PET GROOMER
- PET SUPPLIES
- PET TRAINER
- VETERINARIAN (LOCAL)
- VETERINARIAN OFFICE

- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
- ACCOUNTANT
- ATTORNEY
- BANK
- BANK TELLER
- COMPUTER HELP / REPAIR
- FINANCIAL PLANNER
- INSURANCE OFFICE
- INSURANCE PROFESSIONAL
- MORTGAGE LENDING
- PHOTOGRAPHER
- PROPERTY MANAGER
- REAL ESTATE AGENT
- REAL ESTATE OFFICE
- SHIPPING SERVICES
- TITLE COMPANY

- SHOP LOCAL
- ANTIQUES
- APPLIANCES
- ART GALLERY
- ART SUPPLIES
- BOOKS
- BOUTIQUE
- CLOTHING
- FURNITURE
- GARDEN NURSERY
- GIFTS
- HOME DECOR
- HOME IMPROVEMENT
- JEWELRY
- KIDS CLOTHING
- MATTRESS
- THRIFT STORE

- WELLNESS & BEAUTY
- ACUPUNCTURE
- BARBERSHOP
- DAY SPA
- DENTAL OFFICE
- DENTIST
- ESTHETICIAN
- EYE CARE
- HAIR SALON
- HAIR STYLIST
- HEARING SPECIALIST
- MANICURE / PEDICURIST
- MASSAGE
- MEDICAL FACILITY
- MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL
- NAIL SALON
- PERSONAL TRAINER
- PHARMACY
- TANNING SALON
- TATTOO PARLOR