

100
Years
Ago

See Page 5

Wednesday August 26, 2026 | 137 years

CGHS
Track
Fundraiser

See page 4

www.cgsentinel.com

83
52

Cottage
Grove

Wednesday,
Aug. 26, 2026
Partly Cloudy



\$2.00

Studies show major upgrades needed to keep Cottage Grove’s drinking water safe

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Two major reports outline how Cottage Grove must prepare its water system for future growth and emerging risks.

The 2026 Water Master Plan and the Cyanotoxin Treatment Feasibility Study provided by West Yost, a regional engineering and consulting firm that specializes in water and wastewater systems. The company provides planning, design and technical analysis for cities and utilities throughout the West Coast.

Both studies presented to the Cottage grove City Council Aug. 10, identify the long term investments needed to keep drinking water reliable and safe as the community continues to expand.

As previously reported in the Oct. 22 Sentinel, the City Council approved a \$125,000 grant from the Oregon Health Authority to fund a feasibility study examining potential cyanotoxin contamination in the city’s drinking water supply. The report presented Monday is the follow up to that grant. The Water Master Plan evaluates the entire water system from supply to storage to distribution. The Cyanotoxin Study focuses on protecting drinking water from harmful algal blooms that can occur in Dorena Reservoir.

Together the reports give city officials a clear picture of what must



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage grove Sentinel

City explores options to protect drinking water from seasonal toxic algae blooms in Dorena Lake.

be done to maintain dependable service for residents over the next 20 years.

WATER MASTER PLAN

The Water Master Plan is the city’s first full update since 1998. Cottage Grove has grown steadily over the past two decades and is projected to increase from 10,714 residents in 2022 to 11,523 by 2045. Water use will rise accordingly. The city currently produces an average

of 1.46 million gallons per day. This unit is abbreviated as mgd which means million gallons per day. By 2045 average daily use is expected to reach 1.82 mgd.

The plan evaluates whether the city’s water system can meet those future demands and identifies deficiencies that already exist. The hydraulic model shows that the system needs additional pumping capacity and additional storage

capacity to maintain adequate pressure and fire flow throughout the service area. The city’s two reservoirs and two booster pump stations will require upgrades to support both current and future needs.

The Water Treatment Plant has sufficient production capacity for

See more WATER
On Page 6



Courtesy photo

A bear’s strongest sense is smell. This means everything from trash cans to grill drippings can bring them to your property, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

Bear encounters prompt warnings

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Local and state agencies have issued bear encounter advisories in the region.

As fall sets in, bears are beginning their annual fall feeding as they prepare for winter.

This intense feeding period begins in late summer when berries and fruits ripen and peaks when fruits like pears, apples, and plums become available. During this time, bears spend up to 20 hours a day foraging for food, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

ODFW is urging Oregon residents, vacation rental managers, and visitors to secure attractants and prevent bears from accessing trash, bird seed, pet food, livestock and poultry feed and other tempting food sources – including dirty diapers. If these types of food are easily accessible, bears won’t turn down an easy meal. Bears that become used to “people food” can pose a serious safety risk to people, the ODFW states in a release.

Bear encounters have forced the closures of an Oregon campground and prompted warnings from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Lincoln County Sheriff’s Office.

The BLM has issued a bear encounter warning.

A mother bear and her cub have been aggressively looking for food in and around Fan Creek Campground, on the Nestucca River Corridor, roughly twenty-five miles west of McMinnville. In the interest of public safety, Bureau of

See more BEAR
On Page 6

\$2.1M estimated for local street repairs

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council has given the green light for reconstruction work on a major east–west connector, a busy commercial corridor, and a residential street.

The council approved a plan at its Aug. 10 public session that Cottage Grove Public Works Director Faye Stewart said is necessary to prevent further pavement breakdown on the streets this construction season.

Stewart told council that Branch Engineering has completed reconstruction plans for segments of Row River Road, Gateway Boulevard, and West Harrison Avenue. He said the three corridors have deteriorated significantly.

“These roads are what keep me up at night because they are in very, very poor shape and could turn themselves into gravel very quickly under the right conditions,” he said.

The selected segments are Row River Road from Thornton Lane east to the Currin Connector (next to the car dealerships), Gateway Boulevard’s southbound lanes from Carl’s Jr. to the Truck Stop entrance, and West Harrison Avenue from River Road to R Street.

Stewart said the Row River Road project will meet the edge of ODOT’s jurisdiction, and he is



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Alligator cracks and ruts in the southbound lanes of Gateway Boulevard.

already in talks with the agency about a partnership that could expand the reconstruction area. He said Gateway Boulevard’s

southbound lane is deeply rutted and difficult to drive across, particularly for drivers attempting to move from west to east into the northbound

lane. Stewart said the condition of the pavement makes the segment a priority for reconstruction.

Branch Engineering has completed 75 percent design documents and provided cost estimates for the three projects:

- Row River Road: \$1.08 million
- Gateway Boulevard: \$288,726
- West Harrison Avenue: \$731,000

The total estimated total cost is approximately \$2.1 million.

The estimates include a 20 percent construction contingency and an 18 percent administration fee for the road work. ADA improvements carry a 30 percent administration fee because of survey work and potential easement acquisition needed to accommodate reconstruction of ADA structures.

Stewart said he has worked with Interim Finance Director Eric Kytola to identify a possible funding strategy. He said the projects could be paid for with a combination of the Street Fund and short term loans, with repayment coming from future Street Fund allocations over several years.

See more REPAIRS
on page 6

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SCAN TO VOTE ONLINE

A CLOSER LOOK

Patient refusing to leave hospital taken to bus stop

The following is from the Cottage Grove Police Weekend Update.

- A disturbance involving a male and female resulted in officers responding to a report that the male was armed with a machete and handgun. Officers reviewed cell phone video of the incident and determined there was probable cause to arrest the male for Menacing (ORS 163.190). He was taken into custody and lodged at the Lane County Jail.

- A traffic stop for speeding and reckless driving resulted in the driver being taken into custody. The driver was issued a citation in lieu of custody for Driving While Suspended (ORS 811.182), along with citations for Careless Driving (ORS 811.135), Driving Uninsured (ORS 806.010), and Failure to Carry Registration (ORS 803.505).

- Cottage Grove Officers responded to assist Oregon State Police (OSP) with a driving complaint that ultimately resulted in a motor vehicle crash near I-5 southbound at Milepost 170. South Lane 911 received three separate driving complaints

regarding a possible intoxicated driver traveling southbound on I-5 through the Cottage Grove area.

The vehicle was reportedly leaving the roadway into the dirt before swerving back onto the highway, passing vehicles on the shoulder, and at one point driving through the grass parallel to the roadway. The vehicle eventually left the roadway and crashed into the ditch near Milepost 170. Officers arrived and contacted the female driver until OSP and ODOT arrived on scene. OSP took over the investigation and ultimately arrested the driver for DUI—Drugs and Reckless Driving.

- A brush fire near the bike path behind Walmart generated more than 20 calls to Police Dispatch as flames climbed the hillside underneath the I-5 overpass. Officers quickly arrived and began evacuating nearby homes while South Lane Fire and Rescue responded. Firefighters successfully extinguished the blaze, which burned approximately 80–100 yards but fortunately caused no structural damage. Multiple witnesses reported seeing a white male leaving

the area shortly after the fire began. Officers contacted the individual and ultimately determined he was not responsible for starting the fire. Anyone with additional information is asked to call our non-emergency line at (541) 942-9145 ext. 1 and reference case #2026-1103.

- An assault involving two juveniles was investigated near the Chambers Covered Bridge. The victim was evaluated by South Lane Fire and Rescue, while officers spoke with juvenile witnesses and identified the suspect. The juvenile suspect was interviewed and admitted to the assault. The juvenile was counseled regarding their behavior, and the incident was addressed with the juvenile’s parents. At the time of the incident, the victim and their parents did not wish to pursue criminal charges.

- Cottage Grove Emergency Department staff called requesting assistance removing a patient who had been discharged but was overstaying her welcome and refusing to leave. Officers arrived and located the female, still wearing her hospital gown and pretending



WEEKLY UPDATE

08/10/26 – 08/16/26



 ACCIDENTS	1
 ARRESTS	12
 DISTURBANCE	4
 FRAUD	3



TOTAL CALLS

301

 THEFT	6
 TRESPASS	6
 VEHICLE STOPS	74
 WELFARE CHECKS	10

to be asleep in one of the rooms. Officers attempted to wake her eventually, got dressed, and agreed to leave the hospital. The female explained she was trying to make her way back to Portland but did not have transportation. Officers ultimately gave her a courtesy ride to Walmart, where she planned to wait for the bus.

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, AUGUST 10

00:09: Suspicious subject, 1000 block W. Main St.

00:33: City ordinance violation, 200 block N. 12th St.

01:21: Suspicious subject, 900 block Row River Rd.

01:29: Suspicious subject, 3000 block Row River Rd.

01:35: Suspicious condition, 200 block N. 12th St.

09:39: Found property, 1200 block E. Main St.

10:24: Fraud, 600 block E. Jefferson Ave.

10:36: Trespass, 900 block Row River Rd.

10:44: Overdose, 100 block E. Madison Ave.

11:22: Criminal mischief, 300 block S. River Rd.

11:24: Abandoned vehicle, North M/Ash St.

11:48: Suspicious subject, 200 block Gateway Blvd.

14:03: Abandoned vehicle, 1700 block Harvey Rd.

15:27: Theft, 900 block Row River Rd.

15:52: Trespass, 700 block E. Gibbs Ave.

16:41: Motor vehicle crash, Gateway/Row River Rd.

18:53: Fire, 300 block S. 5th St.

19:28: Mental subject, 1000 block W. Main St.

20:30: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

22:00: Warrant service, 400 block E. Mains St.

23:24: Disturbance, 200 block S. River Rd.

23:35: Warrant service, 200 block S. River Rd.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11

00:36: Welfare check, 900 block Row River Rd.

04:33: Suspicious vehicle, 100 block N. 9th St.

07:03: Trespass, 900 block Row River Rd.

07:56: Illegal camping, 200 block N. 12th St.

08:24: Illegal camping, 1500 block Village Dr.

09:06: Agency assist, 32000 block Southgate Way

09:39: Fraud, 200 block S. River Rd.

09:45: Alarm, 100 block S. 6th St.

12:14: Suspicious condition, 900 block Chestnut Ave.

12:24: Theft, 900 block Row River Rd.

13:02: Theft, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

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

13:19: Fire, 72000 block London-Weyerhauser Rd.

13:34: Illegal camping, 1200 block E. Main St.

14:14: Alarm, 1500 block S. 4th St.

14:29: Abandoned vehicle, 800 block S. 1st St.

20:11: Disorderly subject, 200 block N. 12th St.

23:02: Trespass, 900 block Row River Rd.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12

00:20: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

02:30: Animal info, 900 block South V Ct.

09:52: Suspicious condition, 3000 block Row River Rd.

10:57: Fraud, 1000 block S. 4th St.

16:51: Theft, 1500 block E. Main St.

17:18: Suicidal subject, 300 block E. Monroe St.

17:20: Suspicious subject, Woodson/9th

17:51: Suspicious subject, 400 block E. Main St.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13

00:09: Juvenile problem, 900 block W. 7th St.

00:11: Trespass, 1200 block Gateway Blvd.

08:16: Agency assist, 200 block N. 12th St.

09:29: Disturbance, 200 block S. River Rd.

11:01: Suspicious subject, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.

16:16: Alarm, 3000 block Row River Rd.

20:23: Juvenile problem, 100 block Gateway Blvd.

21:07: Theft, 30000 block Overholser Rd.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

02:20: Warrant service, E. Whiteaker/8th

07:01: Suspicious vehicle, J/Chestnut

08:08: Trespass, 1500 block Village Dr.

09:36: Found property, 700 block Row River Rd.

12:20: Harassment, 200 block S. River Rd.

14:16: Found property, 900 block S. 8th St.

15:29: Suspicious subject, 200 block N. 12th St.

15:35: Abandoned vehicle, 900 block E. Quincy Ave.

16:26: Abandoned vehicle, Pennoyer/99

17:02: Disturbance, 3000 block Row River Rd.

20:45: Fire, 900 block Row River Rd.

22:34: Fire, 1500 block Hwy 99

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

00:47: Suspicious vehicle, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.

01:05: Suspicious vehicle, 100 block S. 10th St.

02:32: Suspicious vehicle, 800 block Row River Rd.

02:49: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

09:03: Death investigation, 1300 block Cottonwood Pl.

10:01: Mental subject, 200 block N. 10th St.

10:44: Suicidal subject, 1700 block Hwy 99

15:09: Alarm, 3000 block Row River Rd.

15:56: Unlawful entry into motor vehicle, 2700 block Row River Rd.

15:59: Suicidal subject, 100 block Crestview Ter

16:32: Assault, 100 block S. River Rd.

18:23: Suspicious subject, Washington/12th

18:35: Alarm, 500 block E. Whiteaker Ave.

19:49: Dog at large, Edison/Harrison

21:08: Found property, 400 block Main St.

23:01: Suspicious vehicle, 700 block N. River Rd.

23:11: Suspicious vehicle, 1400 block N. Douglas St.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

10:07: Disorderly subject, Coiner Park

10:25: Alarm, 100 block Palmer Ave.

10:28: Fire, 1600 block Gibbs Ave.

10:38: Found property, 700 block N. River Rd.

11:02: Suspicious condition, 100 block Hwy 99

11:58: Assault, 1500 block Village Dr.

12:22: Juvenile trouble, 1500 block Samuel Dr.

13:04: Theft, 900 block Row River Rd.

14:29: Abandoned vehicle, 10th/Quincy

14:49: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

16:58: Animal info, 900 block Row River Rd.

18:41: Fire, 34000 block Shoreview Dr.

19:01: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

19:38: Warrant service, 900 block W. Main St.

20:38: Disturbance, 300 block S. 1st St.

22:35: Shots fired, 300 block N. 16th St.

Apple Pay and employment offer scam warnings

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Law enforcement agencies continue to issue consumer scam warnings this summer and the latest warning comes from the Newport police Department.

The first warning involves an Apple Pay scam.

If you receive a text from Apple Pay with a message like this, it’s a scam, according to the police warning.

“Apple Pay has found a payment originating from a

device awaiting clearance. A device with incomplete verifications was used to submit a [dollar amount] request in Cupertino, CA. processing has been paused as a result, and the payment will stay pending until the necessary identity check is cleared. Clearance case [number]. Did you authorize the payment made through this device? If yes, nothing further is expected from you. We’ll complete the remaining clearance and resume processing

automatically. If you did not authorize it, contact 877-389-**** [or other phone number] promptly. We’ll examine the activity and help protect your account. For billing assistance, call [same number as the previous number mentioned].”

First, know that Apple does not text or call users about suspicious activity or unauthorized charges on Apple Pay. Any text message claiming to be an Apple Pay fraud alert with a phone number

to call or a link to click is a phishing scam, the Newport Police state in a social media post.

“The sense of urgency to contact the sender is the tactic used to cause your panic,” the post states. “Telling you that the charge will automatically go through if you do not call them right away is their scare tactic to get you on the phone so they can begin the process

See more SCAM On Page 3

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AUGUST 26

- 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.
- Chamber Concerts in the Park: RIFFLE (rock) Bohemia Park Amphitheater. Vendors 5:30–8 p.m. Concert 6:30–8 p.m.
- Acoustic Jam with Gregg Biller. 6–7:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.
- Axe and Fiddle Game Night. 6:30–9:30 p.m. Free
- Elks Lodge Bingo. Early Bird 6:30 p.m. Regular Games 7 p.m. Elks Lodge.
- Concerts in the Park After Party 8–9 p.m. Cottage Grove Public Market.

AUGUST 27

- 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.
- 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. CG Public Market.
- Blessed Relief Jazz Trio. 6–8 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- Open Mic Night. 6:30–9:30 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

AUGUST 28

- Bohemia Gold Mining Museum Yard Sale. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. 308 S. 6th St.
- Storytime. 11:30 a.m. CG Public Library.
- American Legion Bingo. 5–7 p.m. American Legion Post 32. 826 W. Main St.
- Art Walk Guest Artist: Gloria Glow Worm.
- Elks Lodge Fish Fry Dinner (tilapia and cod). 5:30–7 p.m. 775 N. River Rd. (a la carte prices)
- Saginaw Vineyard Friday Night Live. 6–9 p.m. 80247 Delight Valley School Rd.
- Last Friday Art Walk. 6–9 p.m. Historic Downtown District and 6th Street.
- Jackson’s Pub Karaoke Night with Jesse Hart. 6:30 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.

- Roaring Twenties Costume Contest. 7–7:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- “The General” movie showing. 7:30 p.m. Cottage Theatre. 700 Village Dr. (All seats \$10)
- Jazz Dance of the Century. 8 p.m. Odd Fellows Lodge. 317 E. Main St.
- Wild at Heart (Oldies). 8:30–10:30 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

AUGUST 29

- Share Fair, 9 a.m. 1133 E. Main St.
- South Valley Farmers Market. 10 a.m.–2 p.m. 7th and Main Street.
- Cottage Grove Museum. 1–4 p.m. Birch Avenue and H Street.
- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 4–10 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Championship Night at the Races, 6 p.m. Cottage Grove Speedway
- Sattori Bob (Americana). 6:30–9:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- AlAnon “Courage to Change.” 7 p.m. Sinclair Room. City Hall.
- Belly Dancing. 8–10 p.m. Axe and Fiddle. Free.

AUGUST 30



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Foggy morning in the lower Row River Valley.

- Cottage Grove Museum. 1–4 p.m. Birch Avenue and H Street.
- VFW Bingo. 2–4 p.m. VFW Post 3473. 3160 Hillside Dr.
- Bradly Shepherd B’day Bash. 12–4 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- Walker T. Ryan (blues). 6–8 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

AUGUST 31

- 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 1

- 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.

New survey asks Oregonians how they want transportation dollars spent

MIA MALDONADO
Oregon Capital Chronicle

The group tasked with developing recommendations on how to maintain Oregon’s transportation system wants to hear from Oregonians about what they think the state’s transportation priorities should be in a new survey.

See the link to the survey with this story online at cgsentinel.com.

The Oregon Department of Transportation is facing a \$200 million budget shortfall in the 2027-29 budget cycle. The gap marks the fifth budget cycle in a row where the agency will have to cut services and staff unless the Oregon Legislature

finds a way to provide additional revenue. The agency’s budget shortfall stems from the rising cost of materials and labor, as well as flattening gas tax revenue as more people drive fuel-efficient and electric vehicles.

After spearheading several unsuccessful attempts at finding new revenue for the state’s

massive transportation agency, Gov. Tina Kotek convened 12 transportation and business experts to participate in a workgroup to help come up with solutions to the agency’s budget gap. The group has until the end of the year to deliver funding recommendations to Kotek, though lawmakers asked to receive recommendations earlier.

The survey asks Oregonians their top six transportation

priorities, how they think the agency should spend its limited funding and what reductions would impact them the most.

Oregonians have until 6 p.m. Sept. 10 to complete the survey. Oregonians can also send their feedback to the workgroup’s email at rebuildingtransportation@odot.oregon.gov.

[https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/08/14/new-survey-asks-oregonians-](https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/08/14/new-survey-asks-oregonians-how-they-want-transportation-dollars-spent/)

how-they-want-transportation-dollars-spent/

Oregon Capital Chronicle is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Oregon Capital Chronicle maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Lynne Terry for questions: info@oregoncapitalchronicle.com.



Courtesy from the Oregon Department of Transportation

Aerial view of the Interstate 5 bridge connecting Portland and Vancouver. Members of a workgroup meant come up with sustainable funding for the Oregon Department of Transportation said that among their greatest challenges is overall negative public perceptions of the agency.

See More SCAM FROM Page 2

of asking questions to gain your personal information.”

Newport Police urge anyone receiving such a text to examine the wording in the text. It isn’t how Apple normally communicates. Phrases such as device awaiting clearance, incomplete verifications, necessary identity check is cleared, and processing has been paused sound deliberately technical and official, but they don’t resemble Apple’s normal terminology for Apple Pay transactions, Newport Police explain.

“Did you also notice the contradiction? The text clearly states processing has been paused but then states if you authorized the payment (but doesn’t explain HOW you authorized it), nothing further is expected of you, and they will complete the transaction automatically,” the post states.

Newport Police urge anyone who receives such a text to never call the number provided, reply to the text, or click any links.

“If you have Apply Pay, open the Wallet app on your device to review your actual Apple Pay and Apple Cash transaction history, or use Apple’s official support channels.” Newport Police urge in the post. “If there is an actual issue with a credit or debit card linked to Apple Pay, contact your bank – not Apple – and your bank will handle the fraud protection and alerts. If you wish, you

may also take a screenshot of the fraudulent message and email it to reportphishing@apple.com. Then block the number that sent you the original text.”

Employment Scam

Another scam that has appeared in many Facebook community groups, usually posted by someone who has just joined the group, is fake employment offer. Thos scam has shown up in multiple groups across the country

with a link to a form to fill out in Google docs.

Newport Police caution that anyone seeing such a post should be aware of employment posts that do not list the name of the employer, where the job is located, what the job duties entail, etc.

“Do not fill out forms online that ask for your personal information if you cannot verify the employer,” the Newport Police post states.

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Many Oregonians may qualify for SNAP work or activity rule exemptions without realizing it

OREGON DEPARTMENT
OF HUMAN SERVICES

Many Oregonians who are required to meet SNAP work or activity rules may qualify for an exemption based on their health, work, education, caregiving responsibilities or other circumstances.

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is encouraging people to contact the agency so staff can review their situation and help them keep the food benefits they qualify for.

Currently, 93% of Oregonians subject to SNAP work or activity rules qualify for an exemption.

“A change in your life can change whether SNAP work or activity rules apply to you,” ODHS SNAP Director Jessica Amaya Hoffman said. “You may have started caring for someone, experienced a health change or begun a new job or training program. Contact us before assuming you have to meet the requirements. We’ll listen, explain your options and help you take the next step.”

Common reasons someone may qualify for an exemption



Courtesy photo

SNAP is a federal program that provides food assistance to approximately 1 in 5 eligible, low-income families and individuals in Oregon, including many older adults and people with disabilities.

- Depending on their circumstances, people may qualify for an exemption if they are:
- Pregnant.
 - Physically or mentally unable to work.
 - Already working enough hours to meet the requirement.
 - Participating in a qualifying education or training program.
 - Move to an exempt county or waived Tribal land.
 - Responsible for caring for a child or another person, depending on their circumstances.
- Report changes as soon as possible
- Life circumstances change. If you’ve started a new job, become pregnant, experienced a change in your health or your household responsibilities have changed, contact ODHS as soon as possible. Those changes may mean you now qualify for an exemption.

People who think they may qualify for an exemption can also complete the Report of Exemptions, Paid or Unpaid Work, or Good Cause form. The form can help identify whether someone may qualify for an exemption and report volunteer hours, work activities or other qualifying information to ODHS.

How ODHS can help

People who contact ODHS may:

- Review their individual circumstances to determine whether an exemption applies.
- Learn what documentation may be needed.
- Report changes in work, volunteer activities or household circumstances.
- Complete the Report of Exemptions, Paid or Unpaid Work, or Good Cause form.
- Connect with WorkSource Oregon and other employment and training resources if they need to meet the work or activity requirements.

About SNAP work or activity rules

As of July 2025, federal changes expanded SNAP work or activity rules, increasing the number of

Oregonians who need to meet these requirements to continue receiving food benefits.

Adults ages 18 to 64 without a child under age 14 in their SNAP household generally need to complete 80 hours of work or qualifying activities each month unless they qualify for an exemption or live in a waived area.

If someone does not meet the requirements and does not qualify for an exemption, ODHS sends a counting month notice. Anyone who receives one of these notices is encouraged to contact the SNAP Work or Activity Rules Team to discuss their options.

Learn more

For more information about SNAP work or activity rules and exemptions:

- English: Oregon.gov/snapworkrules
- Spanish: Oregon.gov/snapnormastrabajo

ODHS SNAP Work or Activity Rules (ABAWD) Team

- Call: 1-833-947-1694
- Email: SNAP.ABAWDTeam@odhsoha.oregon.gov

Wyden gets ‘clear, consistent message’ at health care hearing

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Oregon Senator Ron Wyden conducted an online health care hearing to gain Oregonians concerns and experiences as patients, consumers of long-term care, family caregivers, nurses, doctors and pharmacists.

The Cottage Grove Sentinel spoke with Sen. Wyden following the event conducted Sunday, Aug. 16 in Medford.

Cottage Grove Sentinel: What was the range of questions/comments during your hearing?

Senator Ron Wyden: Sunday’s online health care field hearing for rural Oregonians generated personal and painful stories of medical anguish from every nook and cranny of our state. And the clear and consistent message I heard from those accounts — along with others delivered at similar hearings statewide over the past



Courtesy photo

Oregon Senator Ron Wyden taking public comments during the online health care hearing event.

week — is that Americans are suffering from a health care nightmare. It’s a nightmare that includes crushing expenses, denied coverage, delayed treatments and mind-numbing bureaucracy throwing up roadblock after roadblock between patients and their caregivers.

CGS: How will you address those concerns?

Wyden: As the top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, I will keep leading the fight when Democrats regain the majority to make Congress wake up, end this health care nightmare and turn the dream of universal health care into a tangible reality. Medicare for All would lower costs and ensure Americans’ health care can’t be yanked away.

CGS: What will be the challenges in addressing those concerns?

Wyden: Donald Trump and Republicans made the health care nightmare worse,

and Democrats will build the system Americans deserve. There’s no doubt that powerful special interests like Big Pharma and Big Insurance will keep scheming to defend the failed health care status quo. I am more convinced than ever after these initial “reimagining health care” field hearings across Oregon that ‘people power’ can and will defeat those special interests.

Wyden is holding multiple statewide “Reimagining Health Care for America” field hearings during the August congressional work period to take testimony ahead of what he cited as upcoming massive changes inflicted on Oregonians by Donald Trump and congressional Republicans. Wyden has conducted in-person field hearings during this month in Eugene, Salem, Portland and Medford. Additional in-person hearings are planned

throughout 2026 in additional Oregon cities.

“My goal throughout all these hearings is to advance a fresh plan to reimagine the American health care system that makes good on the promise that health care is a basic human right,” Wyden said. “Essential elements of that fresh health care plan must deliver a home-care guarantee for all Americans to get ahead of the long-term care crisis, keep reining in Big Pharma, hold insurance companies accountable and provide every American with a public Medicare choice for their health care that is affordable and high-quality.”

Starting in January 2027, nearly 250,000 Oregonians will be at risk of losing their health insurance, a huge blow that will hurt all Oregonians by making health care even harder to access for everyone, according to Wyden.

Cottage Grove to host kickoff fundraiser for high school new track

WILL LOHRE
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove High School’s track is due for a revamp, and the program is hosting an event to kick off a capital campaign that will raise funds to resurface the 23-year-old track.

The event will be hosted at the Cottage Grove High School cafeteria on Aug. 26 from 5:30-6:30 p.m., and the program’s goal is to replace the aging track with a new Beynon Sports BSS 300

surface. The surface is touted as the “industry standard for safety, performance, durability, and long-term value.”

The goal for the campaign is to raise \$550,000 by late spring 2027, allowing construction to take place that summer. Ricky Knutson is Cottage Grove’s head coach for the school’s cross country and track and field programs, and he detailed what the night should look like.

“It’s going to be an official kickoff for some of the people and possible donors

that are potentially interested in helping contribute in some way or another,” Knutson said. “So there will be a presentation and some ice cream and a video and that type of thing. Kind of a challenge to get people interested and hopefully helping out.”

The program hosted a golf fundraiser earlier in August, which Knutson said went well. The goal now is to build a strong grassroots push to show potential donors they are “serious about the project.”

The need for the track has been apparent in recent years. Multiple spots on the track surface are wearing thin, and

the asphalt underneath is beginning to show through. As a result, training on the surface is becoming unsafe, and the program has shifted many workouts to the turf and grass when possible to help prevent injuries.

A release from the program gave more insight to the issues that the track has presented.

“Currently, student-athletes need to train on the adjacent turf field and must forgo using spikes during practice. The aging surface has also created safety concerns, including reduced shock absorption, uneven surfaces, and poor traction,

increasing the risk of injury, while also limiting the school’s ability to host major competitions,” the release stated.

A new surface is needed to host future events and practices; the current track will not be suitable for hosting international teams in the future, as the program did with Botswana this summer and for Oregon 22.

With the track in its current state, Knutson said it was difficult for the U20 team that visited to train ahead of the championships in Eugene. During some reps, some athletes had to remove their spikes to run on the

track because the surface is so hard. With the track’s original lifespan projected to last around 10-15 years, Cottage Grove has gotten plenty of use out of it for the last 23 years. The program hopes to raise the funds to make it state-of-the-art for years to come.

“We hope we can get this track done. [Team Botswana] have talked about potentially coming back in 2028 to get ready for the Olympics down in L.A. So hopefully we can have that track surface ready for them,” Knutson said.

Find more information at <https://www.cgtrackandfield.com>.

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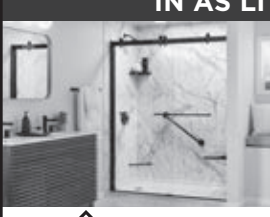
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GUEST COLUMN

100 years ago, Buster Keaton brought an economic boom to Cottage Grove

CASEY WOODARD
Cottage Grove
Sentinel Guest Column

Editor's Note: A two-day anniversary event celebrating the movie, The General, filmed in Cottage Grove is scheduled August 28–29. The event organized by the Cottage Grove Historical Society, will bring screenings, tours, and tributes to the 1926 production that transformed local streets and railroad tracks into a living set. See the full story online at cgsentinel.com

One hundred years ago this summer, Buster Keaton stood in Cottage Grove and looked out at the Row River Valley. He took in the timber-covered ridges and said it was the most perfect place he had ever seen for a motion picture. What happened here in the summer of 1926 became one of the most celebrated sequences in film history. And, for a struggling timber town, it also became one of the largest local paydays of the decade.

My grandparents were among the four thousand people who gathered on the banks of the Row River on July 23, 1926, to watch Keaton destroy a bridge on purpose. Their story is a small piece of a much bigger one, the story of what this production meant for the local economy.

Finding Cottage Grove Keaton was preparing what he believed would be the defining film of his career, The General, based on a real Civil War railroad raid. When his team scouted the actual Georgia locations, the scenery was, in Keaton's words, terrible. It was overgrown, crude, and unconvincing. His location manager, Burt Jackson, was sent west instead. He arranged cooperation with the Oregon Pacific and Eastern Railroad, whose logging lines and rugged, timbered terrain looked more authentically Southern than the South itself, and wired the studio that he had found exactly what they needed. Keaton inspected the valley himself in May 1926, climbing over locomotives and touring abandoned lumber camps, and declared it exactly what he wanted.

The Company Arrives

When full production began on May 28th, Keaton's crew brought eighteen carloads of equipment, twelve hundred costumes, and an advance party of twenty people into a town of a few thousand residents. A former moose lodge became a makeup and wardrobe department. Cannons, prairie schooners, wagons, and a stagecoach arrived by rail. Sections of Cottage Grove itself were rebuilt with new lumber to resemble a Georgia town. A reporter at the time wrote that the rebuilt streets already looked as if they had stood for fifty years, new construction paid for

entirely by the production. The company, along with its visiting families, stayed for nearly thirteen weeks, filling hotel rooms, buying meals, and pulling local goods and services onto an out-of-town payroll. Baseball games against the local Methodist team and neighborhood dances turned the arrangement into something more than a transaction, but the money was the foundation of it.

Jobs When Jobs Were Scarce

The production's real impact on Cottage Grove was economic. Money was tight in the mid-1920s, and jobs were not plentiful in a timber-dependent town at the mercy of lumber prices. Keaton's crew hired nearly anyone willing to work. "It was a godsend, a lifesaver for the community," recalled Kermit Sams, a local man who found a job on the set. "They hired anybody and everybody who wanted to work in the film."

The local National Guard company was enlisted almost wholesale. Reazen Longfellow, a volunteer with the 249th Coast Artillery Division, remembered that the production "took all of us who were in the National Guard, lock, stock and barrel." Unemployed men from around the region jumped at the chance to earn up to five dollars a day [approximately \$87 in 2026 dollars] playing soldiers, parading as Confederate troops in the morning and changing into Union blue by afternoon. Several Pullman cars were brought in just to house the hundreds of extras and laborers on the payroll.

Farmers were compensated too. When sparks from the film's locomotive set haystacks along the right of way ablaze, the crew paid twenty-five dollars [approximately \$437 in 2026 dollars] for every stack that burned. The paychecks outlasted the cameras, too. After filming wrapped, a celebratory train ride sent sparks into the hills near Culp Creek, starting several fires. Many extras were kept on for extra paid days specifically to help fight them.

For some, the connection outlasted the summer entirely. Both Sams and Longfellow went on to spend the greater part of their working lives in Cottage Grove's timber mills, a steady occupation they later traced back to that first summer of work the movie people offered.

The Bridge at Culp Creek

The film's climax required a locomotive to plunge through a burning bridge into the Row River. It was a shot Keaton refused to fake with a miniature. No existing trestle met his requirements, so a construction crew was hired to build one from scratch near Culp Creek. It measured 215 feet long and stood fifty feet above the water, with a dam built to bring the river

to the right depth and a five-hundred-foot spur line laid to connect the new bridge to the main railroad. The bridge, built for the sole purpose of its own destruction, cost \$42,000 [approximately \$750,000 in 2026 dollars] in construction labor and materials. That money was spent locally, on a structure meant to stand for a single afternoon.

July 23, 1926

The day before, a train carrying eight hundred soldiers and ninety horses arrived and was marched to a wardrobe depot downtown, joined by two hundred boys from the local guard company. All were issued uniforms and gear, and all were paid for a day's work. By dawn on July 23rd, spectators lined Row River Road for more than a mile, and most of Cottage Grove's merchants closed for the day. Six cameras, including units flown in from Hollywood at added expense, captured the shot as the bridge, soaked in gasoline and rigged with dynamite, burned and collapsed under the weight of the locomotive Texas. Black smoke rose, the whistle blew a long mournful note, and the crowd of three to four thousand gasped as one. It was, by most accounts, the most expensive single shot in silent film history, and every dollar of it was staged, built, and witnessed in and around Cottage Grove.

The Legacy

The General was financed by producer Joe Schenck at a total cost of more than \$400,000 [approximately \$7 million in 2026 dollars]. That budget, for thirteen weeks, flowed largely through Cottage Grove's hotels, garages, farms, and payrolls. The film was a box office disappointment on release, and its cost curtailed Keaton's creative independence for the rest of his career. He never again enjoyed that scale of financial backing. But its reputation has only grown since. It is now widely regarded as one of the greatest films ever made, its production stills are still compared to Civil War era photography, and film scholars return to it generation after generation. Locally, though, the film's most lasting legacy was never really about art. It was about a paycheck.

For Cottage Grove, the numbers tell their own story. A production that spent roughly \$7 million in today's dollars, employed hundreds of local residents for thirteen weeks, built a \$750,000 bridge for a single shot, and paid extras, farmers, and firefighters alike, left more than a piece of film history behind. It left a paycheck that many families in this town still remember, a century later, as one of the best jobs Cottage Grove ever had.

Casey Woodard is a Cottage Grove resident.

EDITORIAL CARTOON



COMMENTARY

Oregon's 2026 race for governor: the facts on the ground

RANDY STAPILUS
Oregon Capital Chronicle

The Oregon governor's race this year may hinge on two factors.

One is the record of incumbent Democrat Tina Kotek and Republican Christine Drazan's critique of it and issues on the ground. The other is the Trump administration.

Here, let's look at the first of those, the ideas and topics more specific to the candidates and Oregon. (The Trump factor will come later.)

A good shorthand comparison of what the candidates generally seem to want to emphasize, and how they address those subjects, can be found on the issues pages on the respective websites of Drazan and Kotek.

These pages aren't all that the candidates have, can or will say about various issues. But they do offer useful core messages. The first Drazan television spot this season, for example, plays like a short summary of her website's issues page.

The two candidates talk about many of the same things, especially toward the top of their lists.

Both lead with the rising cost of living, described as a major problem.

From there, they diverge. Kotek says she has addressed high costs through attacking "corporate price gouging," seeking to pause new taxes in the Portland area, blocking freeway tolls and utility rate increases and signing "bills that protect credit from medical debt, ban hidden online fees." Drazan calls for lowering taxes, "repeal(ing) regulations that drive up gas, utilities and food prices," and ending "Oregon's unique death tax" (though how that would cut costs broadly is unclear).

Both also talk about affordable housing as a top priority, though again differently. Kotek mentioned her efforts to increase housing stock through legislation and

otherwise. Drazan proposed regulatory reduction, property tax cuts and programs to help first-time home buyers.

After affordability matters, education was the hottest topic for both candidates — again, in different ways. Kotek noted funds for early literacy, child care programs, expanding access to books and requiring reports from local districts on student learning. Drazan talked about increases in special education funding but also efforts to "restore teachers' ability to remove disruptive kids from the classroom ... Defend and protect women's sports (evidently a reference to transgender students) ... Stop indoctrination from the Department of Education ... End social promotion and ensure kids can read by 3rd grade ... Ensure curriculum transparency and the right for parents to opt out."

Both had plenty to say too about the economy, where Kotek referred to "strengthening" it and Drazan to "unleashing" it.

Kotek spoke of business partnerships and projects and focused on efforts to develop clean and renewable energy; elsewhere, she spoke favorably of a moratorium on new data centers.

Drazan's bullet points were painted with a broader brush: "Fire anti-business bureaucrats. Freeze new rules and regulations. Clear barriers to trade. Tear up anti-business executive orders. Get government out of the way. Invest in Oregon's infrastructure. Prioritize access to affordable, reliable energy. Unleash our natural resource economy. ... Roll back Oregon's hidden sales tax."

Kotek spoke more about public safety, environmental concerns (except for wildfires, which Drazan simply said should be prevented so people could "get our woods working again").

In her review of Kotak's term, Drazan appeared to bear down on the governor's case four years ago that she would be a tough and effective administrator, suggesting she has not been. The headlines on the Republican's issues page says, "Oregon deserves better. Christine Drazan will deliver."

Drazan devoted a major issue section to this theme: "Root out fraud and corruption. Fire ineffective agency heads. Issue a moratorium on new rules and regulations. Eliminate three rules

and regulations for any new one. Undo Tina Kotek's legacy by tearing up her executive orders. ... Veto special interest giveaways, special interest and pork projects."

Drazan's website, however, offers few specifics to go with the rhetoric. Maybe she could document fraud, waste, inefficiency and so on, but she hasn't brought the receipts yet.

Oddly missing from both candidate's major specific talking points: Transportation funding, on which the two clashed repeatedly in the last couple of years, and in which voters strongly rejected a Kotek-signed plan. Maybe that's coming later.

Let's pull back. From a campaign perspective, what do these messages tell Oregon voters?

Both contenders are doing what you might reasonably expect of them. Kotek is making the case that her administration has been active and productive on key issues, and cites programs, funding and legislation to support that. Drazan characterizes the term as ineffective and incompetent, and proposes mainly time-tested Republican answers (lower taxes, less regulation) in response.

She would, of course, have to deal with an (almost certainly) Democratic legislature. Of course, the popularity (ahem) of the Legislature isn't something Kotek has emphasized, either.

That brings us to an unknown: how Oregonians perceive these arguments. The answer seems likely to be a jumble, since Kotek's polling popularity has not been high (raising the question of how well her message will sell), but Republican policies haven't been scoring well at least in Oregon either.

The decisive outlying factor could be summed up in one word: Trump.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/08/13/oregons-2026-race-for-governor-the-facts-on-the-ground/>

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If the Oregon gubernatorial election were held today, who would you vote for?

Tina Kotek
Christine Drazan
Other

Do you believe global warming is contributing to Oregon's wild-fire season?

45.5% Yes
54.5% No



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