

THE COTTAGE GROVE Sentinel

City Budget Relief

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Cottage Grove

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Wednesday,
May 13, 2026
A.M. Showers



Wednesday May 13, 2026 | 137 years

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Small town, big celebration

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove will officially mark the completion of the multi-million-dollar Main Street Revitalization Project with a community celebration May 16.

The event begins at approximately 11 a.m. and will be held all along Main Street from Cottage Grove City Hall to 8th Street, with the main focus around 7th Street and the city's All American Park. A stage will be set up for live music and presentations and ribbon cuttings. Main Street will be closed early that day for an early morning bicycle race and then the city celebration. Traffic will be re-routed around the area. Main Street is expected to re-open to traffic at approximately 3 p.m. that day.

Cottage Grove City Manager Mike Sauerwein said two ribbon cuttings will be conducted during the celebration. One ribbon cutting for all the elected officials and city staff involved in the project. The second ribbon cutting will be for the city's contractor, Wildish, and the sub-contractors.

"We just want to make sure we thank everybody as well as all the local businesses," he said. "Main Street businesses and restaurants plan sidewalk sales during the celebration. We'll be blocking off the street, so it will be a really great street party."

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Sauerwein said the Main Street Revitalization will improve the livability of the community and help sustain and grow local businesses.

"It makes a huge difference in the livability of the community," he said. "You can stand on Main Street and just visualize what it was like three years ago. Sidewalks looked like the surface of the moon. They



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

(Top) Main Street looing east. (Bottom) New banners fly over Mian Street marking the city's Historic District.

were too narrow to put tables and chairs from the restaurants. People couldn't pass. Now there is plenty of room with big lights. When you opened your car door, it would scrape the ground on the street. Now we have a brand-new street completely designed properly and the street drains beautifully."

Sauerwein said the revitalization project is also designed to jump start the local economy.

"By rebuilding all the infrastructure, it's going to give some real incentive to the building owners and to all the businesses along Main Street to upgrade their store frontage," he said. I think it is going to be a great jump start for the local economy."



Sauerwein added that there are still adjustments expected along Main Street.

"Making sure that we are maintaining the landscaping for the first couple of years as part of the contract to make sure everything grows up," he said.

City crews are also still adjusting the brightness of the new street lighting.

"Our downtown is not just a business district, it is also a neighbor. A lot of people live on Main Street. Several of the buildings have upper-level apartments," he said. "So, you have to balance the lighting to make sure it will be safe for traffic at night, but also you don't want to blast light into someone's bedroom window."

PROJECT FUNDING

The City of Cottage Grove received a \$5 million federal grant from the Economic Development Administration through the American Rescue Plan and with a local contribution of \$1.3 million for the Main Street Revitalization project, which in February of last year. It includes new landscaping, utilities improvements, ADA-compliant sidewalks, and updated street furnishings between the Main Street Bridge to 8th Street.

Read previous coverage of the Main Street Revitalization project online at cgsentinel.com and follow new developments in the Wednesday print editions of *The Sentinel*.

Election 2026

East Lane County Commissioner hopefuls talk priorities

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Ballots for the May 19 primary election are now in the hands of voters as election day draws near.

The Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee and KNND Radio partnered to host the final forum for the three individuals vying for the East Lane District 5 seat on the Lane County Board of Commissioners. The May 4 event offered both in person and livestreamed on the Chamber's Facebook page.

Cameron Reiten and Natalie Clark of the Chamber's Legislative Committee moderated the forum, giving each candidate three minutes for opening and closing statements and two minutes to answer each question.

About 20 people gathered in the Shepherd Room of the Cottage Grove Community Center for the 6 p.m. event. Incumbent Commissioner Heather Buch, who has served since 2018 and is seeking another four year term, was unable to attend due to a family matter. Challengers Jake Pelroy and Bob Zybach participated, responding to questions prepared by the Legislative Committee and supplemented by audience submissions.

East Lane District 5 covers eastern and southern Lane County, including Coburg, Marcola, the McKenzie River Valley, Oakridge, Westfir, Lowell, Creswell, Cottage Grove, and part of southwest Eugene. The district includes small cities, rural communities, forested terrain, and high fire risk areas.

Although Buch did not attend, her campaign website outlines priorities she says she will continue to pursue if re-elected, including affordable housing, wildfire recovery, rural public safety funding, behavioral health and homelessness services, transportation infrastructure, and long term financial stability.

CANDIDATE BACKGROUNDS

Buch previously worked in affordable housing with St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County and operated a small real estate business. Her work on the board has included wildfire recovery, rural public safety funding, and housing development.

Pelroy is a Marine Corps veteran who later worked in the solid waste industry and served as president of the Lane County Garbage and Recycling Association. His campaign focuses on public safety, cost of living concerns, and forest management issues.

Zybach is a forest scientist with a PhD from Oregon State University and a former reforestation contractor. His campaign emphasizes active forest management, timber harvesting, and reducing reliance on federal payments.

OPENING STATEMENTS

Pelroy said he is running because he believes East Lane residents "are being failed by Lane County in several major ways," beginning with public safety. He noted that only three deputies patrol the county

Step Right UP: Circus coming to town

CINDY WEELDREYER
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove families and circus lovers of all ages will gather at Bohemia Park on Monday, May 18, as the Culpepper and Merriweather Circus brings its classic big top show back to town.

Hosted by the Coast Fork Kiwanis Club, which uses the proceeds to support youth and family programs throughout the community, the circus remains one of the club's most meaningful fundraisers.

Club President Don Ehrich said the circus continues to draw strong support from local families.

"Culpepper and Merriweather Circus is a unique family-oriented organization that provides exciting and enjoyable performances that are loved by young fans all over," he said. "Our two shows in 2024 were both sell outs, so get your tickets early at the Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce office."

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus has toured the country since 1985 and is known for its intimate one ring format that brings audiences close to the action. The show features aerial artistry, acrobatics,



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Simone Key wears many hats in this family-owned circus troupe: wife of Big Cat handler Trey, ringmaster, trapeze artist, refreshment maker, and unicycling juggler.

balancing acts, comedy, and classic circus pageantry presented under a traditional big top tent. The company is based in Hugo, Oklahoma, a town known as Circus City USA because it has served as home to more than twenty circuses since the 1940s. It is one of the few remaining tented

circuses still traveling to small towns across the country.

Ehrich said the partnership between the service club and the circus follows a long-established rhythm. "Kiwanis sponsors this event in our Cottage Grove area on an every other year cycle as the Circus travels along the west coast on their established circuit

of smaller towns and cities," he said. "Their program is developed to provide a unique experience in those host communities and as a fundraiser for service clubs and organizations such as the Kiwanis."

CIRCUS DAY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES

Circus Day activities begin at 9:30am with the tent raising and tour. The box office and midway open at 4pm with pony rides, a moon bounce, a giant slide, face painting, and food. Performances are scheduled for 5pm and 7:30pm, and each show runs about ninety minutes.

The circus will set up in Bohemia Park early Monday morning and the public is invited to watch the tent raising, a behind the scenes look at how the crew transforms an empty field into a full circus venue. Performers and staff are often available to answer questions during the setup period and families can see the equipment, rigging, and layout that make the show possible. The tent raising has become a popular tradition for local families who enjoy seeing the preparation that goes into the evening performances.

TICKETS

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



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A CLOSER LOOK

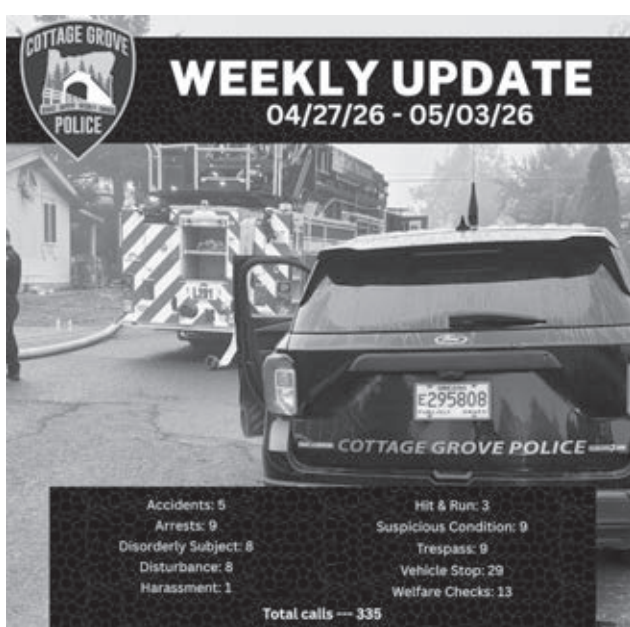
Police help contain structure fire

The following is information from the Cottage Grove Police Department's Facebook Weekly Report.

Officers, along with administrative personnel, attended a scheduled career fair at the local high school through the South Lane School District. They connected with students and staff, shared insight into careers in law enforcement, handed out department swag, gave tours of marked patrol vehicles, and set up a small obstacle course for hands-on engagement. The event was well attended and a great opportunity for positive community interaction. A huge shoutout to high school helper Alexis, who was a rockstar running the obstacle course!

Officers assisted South Lane Fire and Rescue during a First Responders Night event at the local racetrack. Officers engaged with community members, handed out department stickers. During the event, officers were also allowed to drive patrol vehicles onto the track and participated in a lap behind a fire engine, which was providing rides to families in attendance.

Chief Chase attended the annual Heroes with Heart fundraising dinner in support of TIP Lane County on Saturday evening. The Trauma Intervention Programs, Inc. (TIP) is a national 501 C (3) nonprofit organization committed to providing immediate emotional



first aid to survivors of tragedy.

Officers responded to a report of a structural fire near 5th and Madison

Avenue. Upon arrival, they observed flames above the roof line on the southwest corner of the building and were able to extinguish

the main flames until South Lane Fire & Rescue arrived. Officers forced entry through the rear door to improve access but did not enter due to heavy smoke. The South Lane Fire & Rescue crew arrived on scene and contained the fire.

While monitoring city cameras, officers observed a warming fire at the designated campsite. They contacted the individual responsible, who was unaware of city regulations regarding open fires. The individual was instructed to extinguish the fire and was educated on the rules, with notice that future violations could result in enforcement action.

Officers responded to a welfare check at Bohemia

Park involving a male subject lying on the ground. The individual was recognized from prior contacts, and a records check revealed an active warrant through Lane County Parole and Probation. He was taken into custody and transported to the Lane County Jail.

Officers, along with South Lane Fire and Rescue, responded to another reported structure fire on East Monroe Avenue. Upon arrival, heavy fire and smoke were observed. The sole occupant had safely exited prior to arrival. Fire crews quickly extinguished the fire, containing it to the interior and attached carport. The incident was later determined to be accidental.

One dead, two hospitalized in Highway 126 crash

A Florence man has died and two others taken to hospitals following a traffic crash on Highway 126 in Lane County.

Oregon State Police (OSP) responded to the three-vehicle fatal crash involving two motorcycles on Highway 126 near milepost 2.7 in Lane County at approximately 1:54 p.m. May 3.

The preliminary investigation indicated a white Volvo 240, operated by

Lorna 50-year-old Marie Trujillo, of Florence, slowed to a stop in the eastbound lane of Highway 126 to make a left turn into a mobile home park near Rose Hill Road when it was rear-ended by a green Harley Davidson Heritage Softail motorcycle, operated by 38-year-old Brandon Taylor Oetken, of Florence, which sent the rider to the ground.



Courtesy photo

The traffic crash occurred on Highway 126 near milepost 2.7 in Lane County.

A white Harley Davidson Ultra Classic motorcycle, operated by 65-year-old John Carlos Moreno, of Florence, then struck the rear of the green motorcycle causing the operator to lose control and lay the motorcycle on its side. The white Harley Davidson slid approximately 150 feet before coming to a stop. Good Samaritans stopped to render aid to the two down riders.

The operator of the green Harley Davidson (Oetken) was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The operator of the white Harley Davidson (Moreno) was transported to an area hospital with serious injuries.

The operator of the Volvo (Trujillo) was transported to an area hospital as a precaution with reported complaints of pain.

The highway was impacted for approximately one hour during the on-scene investigation.

OSP was assisted by Western Lane Fire and Rescue, the Lane County Sheriff's Office, Florence Police Department, the Lane County Medical Examiner's Office, and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

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, APRIL 27

- 00:08: Suspicious vehicle, 200 block N. 12th St.
- 00:18: Illegal camping, 200 block N. 12th St.
- 00:22: Suspicious vehicle, 1300 block E. Main St.

- 01:50: Assault, 400 block E. Main St.
- 04:14: Disorderly subject, 1200 block E. Main St.
- 08:33: Agency assist, 900 block W. Main St.
- 08:35: Abandoned vehicle, 500 block Boardwalk Pl.
- 10:35: Found property, 400 block E. Main St.
- 11:56: Suspicious vehicle, Monroe/5th
- 12:19: Suspicious vehicle, Carnegie/R
- 14:43: Disorderly subject, 400 block E. Main St.
- 15:03: Abandoned vehicle, 2100 block South R St.
- 16:15: Found dog, 1200 block Birch Ave.
- 17:29: Dog at large, 2700 block Row River Rd.
- 18:25: Trespass, 1700 block Parks Rd.
- 22:10: Trespass, 700 block Hwy 99

TUESDAY, APRIL 26

- 00:42: Fire, 500 block E. Madison Ave.
- 01:00: Trespass, 900 block Row River Rd.
- 02:10: Illegal camping, 200 block N. 12th St.
- 02:30: Suspicious condition, 900 block Olson Pl.
- 02:44: Suspicious vehicle, 1700 block S. 11th St.
- 06:54: Dog at large, 6th/Benjamin
- 08:04: Fire, 200 block N. 12th St.
- 08:48: Abandoned vehicle, 100 block Palmer Ave.
- 10:50: Mental subject, 600 block N. 9th St.
- 11:40: Abandoned vehicle, 1500 block S. 5th St.
- 13:19: Theft, 900 block Row River Rd.
- 13:35: Suspicious condition, 200 block N. 12th St.
- 14:08: Disturbance, 200 block River Rd.
- 14:12: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 14:22: Criminal mischief, 600 block N. Douglas St.
- 15:12: Juvenile trouble, 1000 block S. 8th St.
- 15:44: Juvenile trouble, 700 block S. 6th St.
- 16:18: Dog at large, 1100 block E. Harrison Ave.
- 16:41: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

- 17:24: Criminal mischief, 1600 block W. Main St.
- 18:00: Disorderly subject, Villard/Lane
- 21:45: Agency assist, 900 block Row River Rd
- WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29**
- 00:32: Suspicious subject, 1200 block Anthony Ave.
- 01:28: Suspicious subject, 1200 block E. Main St.
- 04:35: Disturbance, Taylor/Hillside
- 09:05: Trespass, 1500 block E. Main St.
- 10:11: Found drugs, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 12:18: Suspicious condition, 100 block E. Harrison Ave.
- 14:01: Juvenile problem, 700 block Hwy 99
- 14:16: Suspicious condition, 10th/Main
- 17:09: Abandoned vehicle, 300 block E. Monroe Ave.
- 17:49: Suspicious condition, 200 block S. River Rd.
- 18:01: Disturbance, 78000 block Layng Rd.
- 19:10: Unlawful entry into motor vehicle, 100 block South S St.
- 19:19: Hit and run, 1100 block Pennoyer Ave.
- 20:29: Found dog, 900 block S. River Rd.
- 22:34: Disturbance, 1200 block E. Main St.
- 23:43: Warrant service, 100 block S. 10th St.
- THURSDAY, APRIL 30**

- 08:19: Abandoned vehicle, Birch/L
- 09:07: Illegal camping, S. River Rd/Whitman
- 11:00: Disorderly subject, 1000 block E. Main St.
- 11:01: Abandoned vehicle, 1100 block S. 8th St.
- 11:18: Fraud, 2800 block Row River Rd.
- 11:38: Vicious dog, 600 block S. 6th St.
- 12:53: Found dog, 2400 block E. Whiteaker Ave.
- 13:05: Missing person, 1500 block Gateway Blvd.
- 15:30: Juvenile problem, 1300 block S. River Rd.
- 15:32: Suicidal subject, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 15:39: Menacing, 100 block S. 10th St.
- 15:56: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 17:32: Fire, 200 block Grant Ave.
- 17:45: Suspicious condition, 13th/Van Buren
- 18:16: Disturbance, 200 block N. River Rd.
- 20:56: Assault, 2400 block E. Main St.
- 22:10: Disturbance, 900 block Arthur Ave.
- 22:53: Suspicious condition, 100 block Sweet Ln.
- FRIDAY, MAY 1**
- 00:28: Disturbance, 79000 block Hwy 99
- 01:12: Trespass, 1500 block Village Dr.
- 02:33: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.

- 07:59: Illegal dumping, 200 block N. 12th St.
- 09:00: Fire, 1400 block Hudson Ave.
- 09:55: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 11:11: Warrant service, 1000 block Taylor Ave.
- 12:36: Disorderly subject, 200 block River Rd.
- 12:39: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 13:15: Criminal mischief, 1300 block S. 8th St.
- 13:39: Illegal parking, 1100 block S. 4th St.
- 15:23: Fraud, 1700 block Bryant Ave.
- 16:13: Motor vehicle crash, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 16:35: Disturbance, 32000 block Cleveland St.
- 16:52: Theft, 900 block E. Main St.
- 17:07: Suspicious condition, 2100 block Wilson Ave.
- 18:52: Trespass, 200 block N. 14th St.
- 19:06: Suspicious condition, 100 block Sweet Ln.
- 21:46: Fire, Patrick Lp/6th
- 21:54: Suspicious vehicle, 200 block N. 12th St.
- 22:18: Criminal mischief, 100 block S. 10th St.
- 23:34: Suspicious subject, 400 block E. Main St.
- SATURDAY, MAY 2**
- 00:54: Abandoned vehicle, Hwy 99/Carnegie
- 01:01: Criminal mischief, 100 block Gateway Blvd.
- 01:13: Disorderly subject, 500 block Grant Ave.
- 01:35: Intox subject, 100 block N. 7th St.
- 03:28: Suspicious vehicle, 200 block W. Harrison Ave.
- 05:01: Disorderly subject, 2000 block Hwy 99
- 08:14: Illegal camping, 1000 block E. Main St.
- 13:37: Dog at large, 300 block South R St.
- 17:01: Hit and run, 200 block Quincy Ave.
- 18:20: Disorderly subject, 70 block Row River Rd.
- 19:30: Abandoned vehicle, 1400 block Birch Ave.
- 20:36: Warrant service, 400 block E. Main St.
- 21:16: Shots fired, 1300 block E. Main St.
- 21:36: Death investigation, 1600 block Hwy 99
- SUNDAY, MAY 3**
- 00:51: Agency assist, 200 block S. 13th St.
- 05:57: Fire, 1300 block Monroe St.

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Americanisms

“There is no sunrise so beautiful that it is worth waking me up to see it.”
— Mindy Kaling

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MAY 13

- 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.
- “Reversing High Blood Pressure Naturally Workshop” 7–8:30 p.m. Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- Jaxson’s Pub Games with live music by Bradly Shepherd. 6–8 p.m. Cottage Grove Public Market.
- 6:30–9:30 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.
- Elks Lodge Bingo. Early Bird 6:30 p.m. Regular Games 7 p.m. Elks Lodge, 775 N. River Rd.

MAY 14

- Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Club. 8–9:30 a.m. Coast Fork Brewery
Speaker: Travel Lane County
- 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.



Courtesy photo from Bradly Shepard Photography

Springtime at Great Days Learning Center

- Teen Gaming. 4 p.m. CG Public Library.
- Community Center Table Tennis. 4–6 p.m. Community Center, 700 E. Gibbs Ave.
- Bread Club. 5–7 p.m. CG Public Market
- Celebrate Recovery. 5:15 p.m. Calvary Chapel. 1447 Hwy 99N.
- Bradly Shepherd & Friends (country, blues, rock). 5–7:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery
- Stone Hart (rock). 6–8 p.m. CG Public Market
- Mother’s Day Tea. 5–7 p.m. Seventh-day Adventist Church

- LB and Friends (Americana) 5–7:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery
- Open Mic Night. 5–7 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

MAY 15

- Storytime. 11:30 a.m. CG Public Library.
- American Legion Bingo. 5–7 p.m. American Legion Post 32. 826 W. Main St.
- Elks Lodge Community Steak Dinner. 5:30–7 p.m.
- Saginaw Vineyard Friday Night Live. 6–9 p.m. 80247 Delight Valley School Rd.

- Jaxson’s Pub Karaoke Night. 6:30 p.m. CG Public Market
- The Regulars (Americana). 6:30–9:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- Weekly Pool Tournament. 7 p.m. Bohemian Tavern. \$5 entry; BCA rules.
- Jeshua Marshall and The Flood. (Americana/Reggae/Punk) 8–10 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

MAY 16

- Share Fair USA. 9 a.m. 1133 E. Main St. (free stuff

giveaway behind Dirt Cheap Copies)

- South Valley Farmers Market. 10 a.m.–2 p.m. 7th and Main Street
- Historic Main Street Grand Opening Celebration. 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Historic Downtown District.
- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 4–10 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Armed Forces Night (past and present free general admission) 6 p.m. CG Speedway.
- Pants with Pockets. (bluegrass/folk). 6:30–9:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- AlAnon “Courage to Change.” 7 p.m. Sinclair Room. City Hall.
- Greg Nestler Trio. (funk/rock/blues) 8–10 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.
- Cake-n-Sip (21+). 6 p.m. CG Public Market Fee: \$65/person Register at www.JamieCakes.biz
- SBMD Special 100th Anniversary Screening of “The General”. 7:30 p.m. Opal Center. 513 E. Main St.

MAY 17

- Bradly Shepherd (blues, country & rock). 11 a.m.–4 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.

- VFW Bingo. 2–4 p.m. VFW Post 3473. 3160 Hillside Dr.
- South Valley Athletics Bingo Fundraiser. 3:30–5:30 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery
- Dad Ideas (inspirational singer/songwriter). 6–8 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

MAY 18

- Cottage Bowl Open Bowling. 1–5:30 p.m. 740 Row River Rd.
- Senior Center Bingo. 12:30 p.m. Cottage Grove Community Center.
- The Regulars (Americana) 1–3 p.m. Coast Fork Brewery.
- Gardeners Meeting. 5:30–7 p.m. Axe and Fiddle.

MAY 19

- Ukulele Club (for adults) 9am, CG Public Library
- Bilingual Story Time, 5pm, CG Public Library
- Trivia & Games with Gerald and Cribbage with Ted. 6–8 p.m. Coast Fork Brewing.
- Trinity Lutheran Free Take-Out Dinner. 5:15–6:15 p.m. 675 S. 7th St.

City library, pool may get needed funding

JEREMY C. RUARK
Cottage Grove Sentinel

Community members pressing city officials to continue funding for the public library and city pool may see funds shifted within the city budget to answer their concerns. Cottage Grove City Manager Mike Sauerwein is expected to make a presentation about the shifting funds during the May 14 city budget meeting. “At the last budget committee meeting, the

community asked the city staff to come back with options for how we could add \$90,000 to what we call community promotions. That’s the budget we use to do everything like funds for the swimming pool, to work with events like Bohemia Ming Days, Family Relief Nursery, and other such organizations that the city provides funding to,” he said. Sauerwein also said the staff was asked to come back with options to

provide \$100,000 to fund 2.7 positions in the city library. “But as I’ve said at the budget committee meetings repeatedly, the city budget is extremely tight and if we are going to increase funding in one program, we are going to have to decrease funding in some other city program and department,” he said. Sauerwein would not speculate on where the

additional funds would come from. During a town hall to discuss the city budget, approximately 300 Cottage Grove residents filled the Community Center delivering a unified message to the city’s budget committee that the Warren H. Daugherty Aquatic Center and the Cottage Grove Public Library are essential public services, not optional amenities. The 90-minute meeting Thursday night, April 23,

drew one of the largest turnouts in recent memory, with speakers ranging from longtime residents to newcomers, young families to seniors. Many wore t-shirts supporting the pool and library as they urged the committee to reconsider deep cuts proposed in the first draft of the 2025–26 city budget. The city budget committee has another public meeting scheduled for May 19.

“The budget process takes as long as it takes, but I am guardingly optimistic that we can wrap up the committee meetings on May 19,” he said. The Cottage Grove City Council is required to adopt a balanced budget in June. *Follow developments online at cgsentinel.com and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel*



Cindi Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

Approximately 300 people attended the city’s April 23 Town Hall meeting at the Armory about the draft 2026-27 budget. Many asking for financial support for the city library and city pool.



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OBITUARIES/NEWS

Pamela Renae Long

August 28, 1957 - April 25, 2026

Pamela "Pam" Renae Long passed away on April 25, 2026 after a hard fought and courageous battle against cancer at the age of 68. Pam was born on August 28, 1957 in Cottage Grove, Oregon to Clarence B. Long Jr. and Sharon Jean (Weddel) Long. Pam was the third of six children and was raised and went to school in Dorena, Oregon.



she would give a smile or a kind greeting. She never met a stranger and made friends effortlessly. She was easy to love for her kindness. She was one that could make you laugh at the silliest of things, and that is one thing she wanted was for the people around her to have a sense of humor. She loved with her whole heart, and she was loved back with OUR whole hearts. She was a compassionate soul with the heart of a giant who was always concerned about everyone else. She will be forever remembered and forever loved.

Pam was preceded in death by her father, mother, brother CB (Clarence B. Long III) and daughter Jessica Marie Long.

She worked at the old Dairy Queen in Creswell, Oregon and at St. Vinnie's in Eugene, Oregon in the 1980's and the 1990's respectively until she became disabled due to multiple health issues.

She was a genuine animal lover. She had owned dogs and cats that she would dote on and give them special treats. Her favorite wildlife animal was the wise old owl.

She enjoyed playing Yahtzee, Scrabble, other board games, playing word games on the I-pad during trips to Portland, and games she played on her phone. She liked to ride in fast and loud cars, definitely motorcycles and a variety of music.

The time she spent with her family at reunions, picnics at various parks around Cottage Grove and at the lake brought her great joy. No matter how she was feeling,

She is survived by her daughter Andrea Hutchinson (Bob Casto) grandchildren Emily (Justin), Isaiah, Alexis (Mike), Zachary (Electra), Christian, Trenton, and Lillianah, great grandchildren Arya, Ava and Jackson; her siblings Shelia Morelock (Michael), Virginia Long, David Long and Jennifer Long and many nieces, nephews and a large extended family.

There will be a graveside service at Fir Grove Cemetery in Cottage Grove, Oregon at 1:00pm on May 16, 2026 with a Celebration of Life potluck to follow at the Row River Grange (aka Dorena Grange) located at 34360 Row River Rd Cottage Grove, Oregon. Sandwich bar, coffee, tea and water will be provided. Bring your favorite dish, favorite story, and help us celebrate the life of Pamela.



Alex Baumhardt / Oregon Capital Chronicle

Gov. Tina Kotek (center) and Kacey KC, the new director of the Oregon Department of Forestry (left), at a briefing on the wildfire season at the Office of the State Fire Marshal in Salem on May 5, 2026.

Oregon faces longer fire season due to historic heat, drought, fire experts warn

ALEX BAUMHARDT
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregon's wildfire season started early this year and is expected to last into October, according to state fire experts.

The season is made more difficult by historic heat, drought and a potentially early El Niño weather pattern that could further stir up temperatures and lightning storms into the fall, fire officials said at a Tuesday, May 5, news conference with Gov. Tina Kotek. Oregonians need to be proactive about protecting themselves and their properties from wildfire and behave far more cautiously when starting campfires or burning debris than in recent years, they advised.

"It's not one thing that brings the wildfire season, it's many things," Kotek said. Although May is officially Wildfire Awareness Month, the season's first Level 3 fire — meaning residents were ordered to evacuate immediately — occurred in La Pine in March, burning 20 acres.

"All indications suggest a more challenging fire season ahead of all of us," Kotek said. Oregon's winter was among the warmest on record and snow-pack across the Northwest was one-third of normal levels, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Last year's wildfire season burned significantly fewer Oregon acres than in previous years, in large part because the Oregon Legislature allocated hundreds of millions of additional dollars to the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Both in turn beefed up preparation and response systems since the 2020 Labor Day Fires that

became the most expensive in state history.

But most fires last year — more than 60% of wildfires — were started by humans, a disappointing reversal from years prior, which had human-caused fires trending downward. People burning yard waste and other debris is the number one cause of human-ignited wildfires, Oregon State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple said.

She encouraged Oregonians who burn debris to download a new Before You Burn app developed with support from state and federal fire agencies, which will provide users information about local burn regulations, burn statuses, required safety measures and fire and weather alerts. About 700 Oregonians have downloaded it since it launched in April, she said.

Oregon's new state forester, Kacey KC, said it's likely that wildfire risk will be above normal east of the Cascades in rangeland areas beginning in June and above normal southwest of the Cascades by July, heading up further into forests that have experienced record-low snowpack this year.

Federal partners? Oregon's fire agencies have roughly 700 wildland fire fighters and 300 fire trucks ready to protect 16 million Oregon acres this season. They'll rely as well on more than 300 local fire departments and federal and tribal wildland firefighters to respond in an emergency.

"We are ready, we are coordinated and we are all hands on deck as we prepare for the season," Kotek said.

Oregon's congressional Democrats have raised concerns that federal support could be lacking in light of budget and personnel cuts to the U.S. Forest Service

over the last year. The cuts, according to a letter from Oregon's senior U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, included 1,400 employees who hold the necessary certifications to support firefighting operations during a wildfire.

KC said she talks frequently with the Forest Service's regional director — at least weekly as the state prepares and gets closer to the fire season — and that she's been assured no wildland firefighters working for the Forest Service or U.S. Department of the Interior in Oregon have lost their jobs.

Although federal officials have been criticized for consolidating wildland firefighting efforts at both agencies to create the new U.S. Wildland Fire Service so close to the start of the fire season, KC said signs so far indicate that moving all firefighting efforts under the Interior as opposed to several agencies could be beneficial in the long run.

"They're working together to figure out how to do this more effectively. And so I feel confident that this year, on a firefighting front, they're going to be as active as they've always been, and that it may actually even be a little simpler," she said.

<https://oregon-capitalchronicle.com/2026/05/05/oregon-faces-longer-fire-season-due-to-historic-heat-drought-fire-experts-warn/>
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DEATH NOTICE

Rodney David Edward Stone, 63, of Eugene, Oregon, passed away on May 1st, 2026. Arrangements are in the care of Sunset Hills Funeral Home, Crematorium & Cemetery.

New research reveals increased wildfire risk

STEVE LUNDEBERG
Cottage Grove
Sentinel Guest Article

A new wildfire risk assessment tool that takes social vulnerability into account indicates more than 400 communities in the Pacific

Northwest are at greater risk than previously thought.

However, researchers at Oregon State University and The Nature Conservancy say their assessment tool could inform fair distribution of risk reduction resources.

Andy McEvoy of the OSU College of Forestry led the creation of the tool, which integrates social vulnerability with factors such as structure density and environmental hazard and was presented in Environmental Research Letters.

Among the communities whose risk level increased are the Oregon towns of Cave Junction, La Pine and Glendale and the Washington towns of Selah, White Salmon and Ellensburg.

The researchers found that Northwest communities with both high wildfire hazard and high social vulnerability tended to be small — having fewer than 5,000 buildings — and were mainly in the drier portions of the region. Examples of communities in need of higher prioritization by funding allocators include Warm Springs, Oregon, and Goldendale, Washington.

"Warm Springs and Goldendale have slightly lower wildfire exposure than some nearby, better-resourced communities like Bend and Leavenworth, but they experience greater social vulnerability and therefore are likely to experience greater impacts if a fire occurred," said co-author Chris Dunn, also of

See **RISK**, Page 5

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Americanisms

"There is no sunrise so beautiful that it is worth waking me up to see it."
— Mindy Kaling

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JOBS REPORT

Lane County payroll jobs little changed in March

Lane County's seasonally adjusted payroll employment decreased by 100 in March after a loss of 600 in February and a gain of 100 in January.

GAINS AND LOSSES

In the not seasonally adjusted private-sector industries in March, job gains were estimated in education and health services (400), mining and logging (100), and leisure and hospitality (100).

Losses were posted in manufacturing (-100); transportation, warehousing, and utilities (-100); financial

activities (-100); and professional and business services (-100).

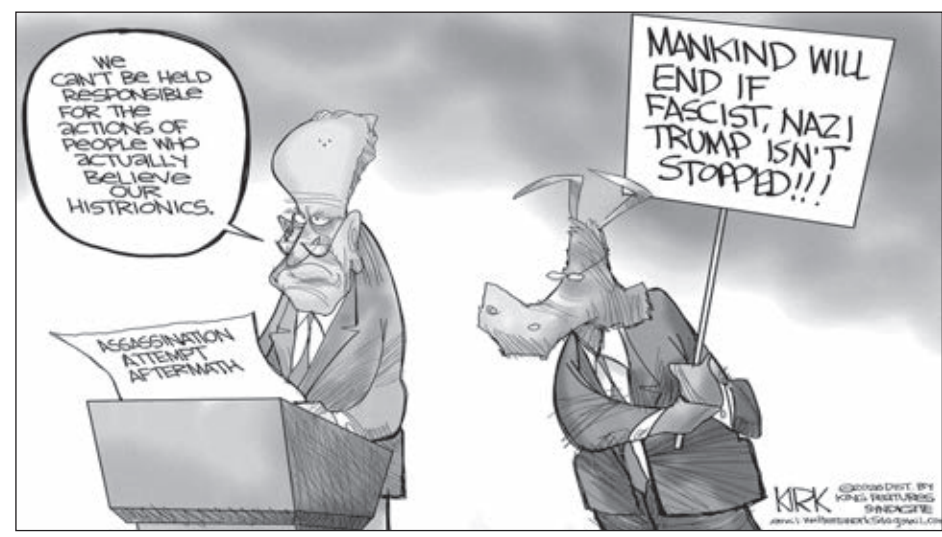
Government gained 100 jobs in March due to an increase in local government education (100).

When comparing March 2026 with March 2025, total nonfarm employment dropped 1,500 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis for a loss of 0.9%. There was a relatively large increase in health care and social assistance (1,700). There were losses in professional and business services (-600), leisure and hospitality (-500), manufacturing (-500), wholesale trade (-200),

information (-200), and retail trade (-200).

There was an over-the-year loss of 400 in government in March – from losses in both local education (-600) and federal government (-100) – that was countered by a gain in noneducation local government (300).

Lane County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was little changed over the month at 5.2% in March. The rate was up from 4.6% in March 2025. The Oregon seasonally adjusted March rate was 5.2% and the U.S. rate was 4.3%.



Risk
From Page 4

the College of Forestry. "By blending a mix of factors, our assessment method is a path toward more equitable investments in community wildfire risk reduction."

Social vulnerability refers to community characteristics that partially influence capacity to withstand and recover from events such as wildfires, floods and earthquakes. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention uses data categorized under four themes – socioeconomic status, household characteristics, racial and ethnic minority status, and housing type and transportation – in its social vulnerability index.

"This tool balances the important element of social vulnerability with wildfire exposure, highlighting communities that are experiencing a relatively high degree of both," Dunn said. "In a paper published in 2024 by OSU researchers, we observed that a lack of investment in mitigation and fire suppression resources led to more fire impacts in socially vulnerable communities – even when their other risk factors were comparatively low. The new tool is a huge step forward for allocating risk mitigation funds in a more equitable and effective way."

The authors explain that the level of wildfire impact on a community depends on a variety of factors including

its firefighting capacity, the surrounding landscape and the characteristics of its "home ignition zones" – i.e., how much flammable material is in close proximity to buildings.

Prefire mitigation, smoke management plans, wildfire response and postfire recovery are a function of a community's access to resources and its level of participation in wildfire management networks, the researchers say.

"Despite official and unofficial demands that social vulnerability be better accounted for in wildfire mitigation decision making, there have been few decision-support tools to help with that," McEvoy said. "The current tools don't really factor in a community's demographic and socioeconomic data."

The researchers applied their novel tool, which integrates a social vulnerability index with a quantitative wildfire risk assessment, to 1,005 communities in the Northwest. Almost half of them, 459, were shown to be at greater risk than the quantitative assessment alone indicated. Based on the new tool, 26 would be elevated to the "priority" status for receiving funding for risk mitigation measures such as education, planning and fuels reduction.

Those 26 include Ephrata, Washington, and White Swan, Washington.

"Communities experiencing less social vulnerability often have the capacity and resources needed to apply for and make use of publicly

funded mitigation," McEvoy said. "The many communities across the Northwest that are experiencing high social vulnerability have less capacity and fewer resources – but that doesn't mean they aren't facing the same risk, or even greater."

For 541 communities in the study, risk level went down when social vulnerability was included in the equation. The largest decreases in risk were seen in communities with the highest per-capita income.

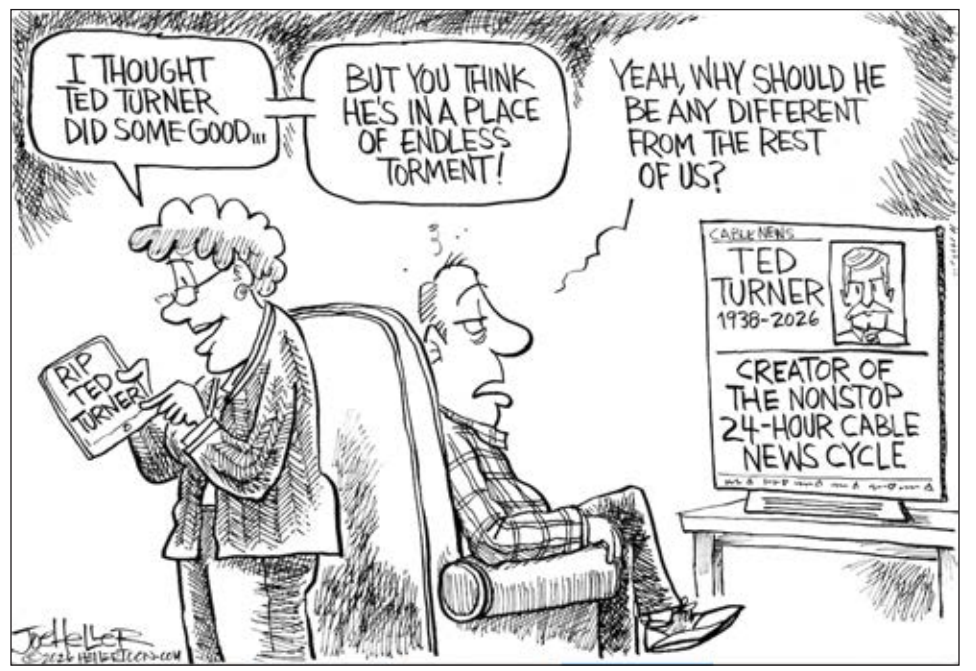
Seventy-four communities were considered priority communities with or without taking social vulnerability into account; all are in regions categorized as high hazard.

"Oregon and Washington communities increasingly see the direct impacts of extreme wildfire on people and the forests that support them, and these datasets reveal which communities experience the greatest wildfire risk and are under-resourced for fire preparedness and recovery," said co-author Kerry Metlen of The Nature Conservancy. "Using these data will facilitate more effective local partnerships to restore resilient landscapes, help communities adapt and develop smoke management plans that will allow forests and people of the Pacific Northwest to thrive."

The U.S. Forest Service funded the study.

Steve Lundeberg is a news and research writer at Oregon State University. He may be reached at Steve.Lundeberg@oregonstate.edu

EDITORIAL CARTOON



COMMENTARY

The truth about Oregon's mail-in ballots

BARBARA KLEIN
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Have you ever taken a tour of your local elections office? I have, and other members of the League of Women Voters around Oregon have done the same. If I had to choose one word to describe the processes there, it would be "secure." If I were able to choose two words, they would be "secure" and "impressive."

It's difficult to imagine why those intent on escalating polarization wars for their own political gain choose to attack the Oregon vote-by-mail system that has multiple safeguards. Such naysayers who claim they only intend to stop non-citizens from voting have been accused (rightfully) of inventing an issue with little actual evidence.

A "solution looking for a problem" it is said; but it's much more dangerous than that. Data show that fraudulent ballots are extremely rare in Oregon and not a crisis. Conversely, the perilous effects of voter intimidation and suppression are becoming major concerns.

Whether you describe our country as a democracy, a republic or a democratic republic, we are in this together and want to protect our freedoms and rights. Falsehoods, half-truths and dis/misinformation are not the way to maintain free and fair elections; instead, they suppress the voice of fellow citizens.

We can't always be on the winning side of an election, but the process of casting ballots to express our views is how we shape the world we want. And once they are cast, our votes must be respected, no matter the results. Many county clerks have been harassed and intimidated but continue to defend your voice and your right to vote.

False claims spread misinformation, are inaccurate and misleading, and weaken the common good of our state.

Here is a Top Ten list of facts regarding Oregon's vote-by-mail procedures.

1. Oregon safeguards mail ballots by verifying signatures, tracking barcodes, using auditable logging requirements and setting clear chains of custody for all ballots.

2. There is no connection to the internet from voting equipment, nor does tabulation ever use connected routers.

3. Pairs of bipartisan staff work together examining each ballot.

4. Both pre- and post-election tests are conducted on voting equipment. Additionally, there are opportunities for public observation of the ballot counting processes.

5. Vote-by-mail does not favor one party over another, nor is it significantly more prevalent in urban or rural areas. Indeed, it has increased voter turnout between 2-5% since its inception. (The majority of Oregonians are automatically registered as nonaffiliated when first presenting ID for state-issued cards.)

6. Providing a paper trail, the vote-by-mail system allows for regular risk-limiting audits, permitting a double-check of the vote count and identification of any irregularities that need to be resolved.

7. Non-citizens are already restricted from voting. Strict penalties are issued for any non-citizen, or citizen, attempting to cast a prohibited ballot or tampering with the process. Luckily, it is not a significant problem. According to the Oregon Legislative Fiscal Office report of the vote-by-mail system across 20 years of voting, and with approximately 61 million ballots cast, the voter fraud rate in Oregon was 0.00006%. (I believe this is a ratio equivalent to one drop to more than 22 gallons of water.)

8. Voters in Oregon are allowed to drop off ballots belonging to others (such as spouse, parents, neighbors). It is not "ballot harvesting."

9. Deniers who proclaim there are more people on the voter rolls than qualified voters don't report that we maintain both inactive and active voters on rolls, but only ACTIVE registered voters can receive and cast their ballot.

10. There is a reason a voter may receive 2 ballots. As the Oregon Capital Chronicle reported, you can easily switch parties in Oregon to take part in a primary. This year, Oregonians have until April 28 to do so; however, the ballots are often printed and prepared for sending ahead of that. If you change your party and receive a second ballot, you can only vote on the one provided from your recent party change. Anyone attempting to cast both ballots will be caught.

No matter how busy our lives are, with vote-by-mail ballots we can make time to sit at our kitchen table and participate in our democracy (getting our ballots in the mail at least a week before the election). Let's get our facts straight and make sure we don't spread false claims about our convenient and safe system.

Barbara Klein is first vice president of the League of Women Voters Oregon and the action chair for the league in Rogue Valley.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2026/04/27/the-truth-about-oregons-mail-in-ballots/>

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Weekly Online Poll

How much do you depend on your mobile device?
Can't go anywhere without it
I use it once in a while
I don't have a mobile device

Previous Poll Results

Will you vote for or against the South Lane Fire & Rescue District money measure in the May 19 election?
 For 78.69% Against 21.4%

Quote of the Week

"If I only had a little humility, I'd be perfect."
Ted Turner



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.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AT:

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

Periodicals postage paid at Cottage Grove, Oregon.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Annually.....\$90
6 months.....\$65
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DIGITAL ONLY

Electronic edition annually.....\$75
Electronic edition monthly.....\$9

LOCAL MAIL SERVICE:

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CIRCUS

From Page 1

Advance discounted tickets are on sale now at the Cottage Grove Area Chamber of Commerce office at 836 Main Street through Friday, May 15. Advance prices are \$14 for adults and \$8 for children ages 2 to 12 and seniors 65 and older. Day of box office prices are \$17 for adults and \$10 for children and seniors. More information is available at www.cmcircus.com.

Two shows are scheduled for Monday evening and both are expected to draw strong attendance based on last year's sell-outs. Kiwanians encourage purchasing tickets early because last year's performances filled quickly and demand remains high. The circus is designed to be family friendly and accessible for all ages with a performance length that works well for young children.

LOCAL IMPACT AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Ehrich said the local impact remains the heart of the event. "Our local Coast Fork Kiwanis Club utilizes the funds raised through sponsorship of the Circus for many of our youth and family-oriented community services and programs.

For the Coast Fork Kiwanis Club, the circus is more than entertainment. It is a way to strengthen the community through programs that support youth leadership, literacy, family stability, and local service

projects. The club has a long history of investing in children and families through partnerships with schools, youth organizations, and community groups. The funds raised through the circus help sustain those efforts and allow the club to respond to needs throughout the year.

A FAVORITE STOP ON THE WEST COAST CIRCUIT

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus includes many small towns on its west coast circuit, and those communities often rely on service clubs to host events that bring families together. The partnership with Kiwanis aligns with the circus mission to provide memorable experiences in places that value tradition, volunteerism, and local engagement. The Cottage Grove stop has become a favorite for both the circus and the families who attend.

As the big top goes up in Bohemia Park, the Coast Fork Kiwanis Club members hope the community will once again come out to enjoy the show and support the programs that make a difference for local youth. The circus offers a blend of nostalgia and live performance that continues to resonate with families and provides a fundraiser that directly benefits the Cottage Grove area.

Local Kiwanians invite families to arrive early, enjoy the atmosphere, and experience a classic American circus presented in the heart of the community.

Oregon DMVs regularly pushed to close due to short staffing

MIA MALDONADO
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Jessica Lavery starts her mornings, sometimes as early as 6 a.m., deciding if she needs to close one of the offices she manages or shift her staff to another location.

Lavery manages the Oregon Department of Transportation's Northwest region of Oregon's Driver and Motor Vehicle Services division, which has offices across the Willamette Valley and two along the coast. On May 1, she and other agency leaders decided to close the Albany office for the day after each of the four staff members were unavailable. Two called in sick while the others had already been approved for time off, she said.

Decisions like hers are routine for DMV managers grappling with severe staffing shortages caused by outdated and limited positions within the agency, as well as a spike in employee departures following a budget crisis within the agency.

Albany's office closure marked the 34th full day that DMV offices have had to close across Oregon since Jan. 1, with smaller offices such as Madras, Prineville or Newport

regularly closing because of similar staffing issues. Last year, there were 92 full-day closures across Oregon because of staffing issues, according to agency spokesperson Chris Crabb.

The Oregon DMV employs a total of 768 employees in 58 offices across the state. Its bigger offices are mostly located within the Portland metro region and typically have more than seven counter spaces.

Since late June 2025, 64 DMV employees have left their positions after state lawmakers failed to pass a bill that would have updated the Oregon Department of Transportation's funding structure for operations and maintenance. The budget uncertainty, combined with nearly 500 ODOT workers receiving layoff notices and a hiring freeze that lasted until March, accelerated employee departures, Crabb said. Lawmakers passed a short-term funding fix this spring and avoided layoffs by eliminating vacant positions, but many transportation department workers quit or retired early because of uncertainty.

Oregon DMV offices are in the process of hiring 35

positions, but that process takes time, Crabb said.

And even if all vacancies were filled, there still wouldn't be enough employees to cover the demand for services, Crabb said, because the state has employed roughly the same number of people at DMV offices over the last 25 years despite the state's population growing by more than 840,000 people in the same timeframe.

Oregon voters this month will have a say on whether to pass a law that would raise revenue for maintenance and operations within the Oregon Department of Transportation. Measure 120, placed on the ballot for the May 19 primary, proposes raising the gas tax by six cents, doubling the payroll tax from 0.1% of a paycheck to 0.2% of a paycheck until 2028, and raising title fees and most vehicle registration fees.

A balancing act Lavery said she understands the community members who are frustrated by DMV office closures, particularly those living in rural areas.

"Gas is expensive, so then they have to drive however many miles to go to another DMV," she said. "I know for the community

it feels really frustrating and feels like they're being left out, but that just isn't the case. It's a real balancing act."

The resulting staff shortages means DMV managers regularly ask staff to commute to a different location to help severely short-staffed offices, which isn't always efficient.

For instance, a staff member commuting from the Albany or Salem office to help in Newport, has to drive, work and take lunch and other breaks all within an eight-hour window.

"In reality, they're really only helping for four to five hours," said Mia Ravell, the Oregon DMV customer service manager for South Salem and Albany.

The alternative of doing nothing, however, would mean more DMV office closures.

"Frequently there is no amount of staff shifting that can avoid closures entirely," Crabb said. "We have some offices with only three, two or even one full-time staff member. We try to limit the impact on any one community, but due to staffing constraints in each geographic region, sometimes

See OREGONIANS Page 8

COUNTY

From Page 1

at any given time and said the Sheriff has described Lane County as one of the least patrolled counties in the nation. Pelroy criticized what he called "wasteful spending," including support for the proposed CleanLane food waste facility, and argued that the county's land use processes slow wildfire recovery and economic development.

Zybach said Lane County needs to "get back to work and off welfare," arguing that Oregon once had strong schools, roads, and public services supported by forest, mining, and fishing industries. He said reliance on federal payments in lieu

of taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) began after "spotted owl politics and litigation" in 1990. His campaign focuses on returning to active forest management to reduce wildfire risk, create rural jobs, and restore county revenue.

PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING

Both candidates agreed that the Sheriff's Office and District Attorney's Office need more resources. Pelroy pointed to a Public Safety Funding Task Force that found all viable solutions would require increased taxes. He said Lane County must "get our fiscal house in order first to build trust with voters" and argued that the county should push the federal government to return a larger share of timber sale

revenue from O&C Lands to the General Fund.

Zybach cited the 1937 federal law placing 2.3 million acres of O&C Lands in trust for 14 Oregon counties. He said PILT and SRS payments amount to "pennies on the dollar" compared with historic timber revenue and argued that active forest management would provide sufficient funding for essential services. Both candidates said they support putting money measures before voters.

COUNTY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Pelroy said Lane County's natural resources remain one of its greatest strengths, noting that experts have described the region as one of the best places in the world to grow timber. He said farms, wineries, and



Cindy Weeldreyer / Cottage Grove Sentinel

The East Lane Commissioner Forum sponsored by KNND and the Chamber of Commerce featured candidates Jake Pelroy and Bob Zybach, sitting on the far left. A family matter kept Incumbent Heather Buch from participating in the May 4 forum.

other resource based industries are central to the local economy but face increasing land use restrictions from the Legislature. Pelroy said too many home grown companies are leaving the state due to regulatory burdens and that commissioners must advocate at the Legislature on taxes and regulations affecting residents and businesses.

Zybach said Lane County is overly dependent on federal grants and needs to "get people back to work." He argued that the county once had strong schools, good roads, healthy forests, and clean air before "letting it all degenerate." He said people without legal status are unable to take jobs because they are "living in slave camps," and he described the

situation as an industry that should not be encouraged.

HOMELESSNESS

Pelroy said most homelessness funding comes from the state, but the county can improve outcomes by gathering better information and setting clear, measurable goals. He criticized the Legislature for placing strain on smaller communities by requiring designated camping plans and said he supported recent reforms to Measure 110 that allow the county to use deflection programs to encourage treatment.

Zybach said homelessness is "a self inflicted, self created problem," arguing that for much of his life, "we didn't have this problem." He said some people are profiting from the homelessness system while those living on

the streets are being taken advantage of.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Pelroy said public safety must come first. "If we're able to have a safe community, it will have a positive impact on all areas of our community," he said. He also listed economic development as a priority and argued that commissioners need to "stop the hemorrhaging of wasted money" on the CleanLane project.

Zybach pointed to wildfire costs as a major budget concern, noting that Lane County spent \$132 million fighting the Cedar Creek Fire in the East Lane district. He said more than 400,000 acres have burned in the district in recent years and argued that the county has not done enough to address the toxic smoke produced by large wildfires.

VOTER REACTION

Local resident Michelle Thurston said she appreciated the chance to hear directly from the candidates about their backgrounds, priorities, and positions on issues that matter to her. "You can't always get that from a pamphlet," she said after the meeting. "I like to see them in person, see their eyes, shake their hands. Personal engagement makes a big difference to me in how I vote."

Signed ballots must be postmarked before midnight on Tuesday, May 19 or placed in the Lane County Drop Box in front of the Community Center at 700 E. Gibbs Ave. by 8 p.m.

Follow election results at the Lane County Elections website and in the Wednesday print editions of The Sentinel.

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Rev. Seth Wheeler
Adult Sunday School 9:15am
Sunday Worship Service 10:30 am
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999 PUBLIC NOTICES

CGS26-124 NOTICE OF SALE NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to ORS. 87.691, I-105 Secure Storage, LLC, will sell to the highest bidder, all personal property located in Units occupied by Ricardo Alejandro Unit C127 David Ellison Unit E110 Joanne Banwig Unit E129 David Vadbunker Unit F135 Jim

999 PUBLIC NOTICES

Metzler Unit G288 The sale will occur at 851 52nd Street, Springfield, Oregon, on June 5, 2026 at 10.00 a.m. All personal property shall be sold as one lot. Jason Merwin, Manager I-105 Secure Storage, LLC Phone # (541 762-1295) 05/13/26, 05/20/26

Weekly SUDOKU

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
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Answers

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10. Cinch Home Services
11. Peddle
12. YMT Vacations
13. Metzler Unit G288
14. Ricardo Alejandro
15. David Ellison
16. Joanne Banwig
17. David Vadbunker
18. Jim Metzler
19. Jason Merwin
20. I-105 Secure Storage, LLC
21. 851 52nd Street
22. Springfield, Oregon
23. June 5, 2026
24. 10.00 a.m.
25. All personal property
26. One lot
27. Jason Merwin
28. Manager
29. I-105 Secure Storage, LLC
30. Phone # (541 762-1295)
31. 05/13/26, 05/20/26

Super Crossword

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

ACROSS: 1. Location board; 2. Bar-y area; 3. Gifford, m Genoa; 20. Peering to the wind; 21. Spiced Starbucks selection; 22. Access for test-driving; 23. Food, drink or drink; 24. Green marker of oil; 25. Green marker of oil; 26. DC-10, e.g.; 27. Last not least; 28. Rude about wily; 30. Market; 31. Grain tower; 32. Like a skimp; 37. Powder; 38. Church; 39. Shoes worn on feet; 40. Health in; 41. Health in; 42. Health in; 43. Health in; 44. Health in; 45. Health in; 46. Health in; 47. Health in; 48. Health in; 49. Health in; 50. Health in; 51. Health in; 52. Health in; 53. Health in; 54. Health in; 55. Health in; 56. Health in; 57. Health in; 58. Health in; 59. Health in; 60. Health in; 61. Health in; 62. Health in; 63. Health in; 64. Health in; 65. Health in; 66. Health in; 67. Health in; 68. Health in; 69. Health in; 70. Health in; 71. Health in; 72. Health in; 73. Health in; 74. Health in; 75. Health in; 76. Health in; 77. Health in; 78. Health in; 79. Health in; 80. Health in; 81. 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SPORTS

Breaking down Cottage Grove's first league win in three years

WILL LOHRE

Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Lions have five league matchups remaining on the baseball diamond, and while the team has some lumps this year, there have been some solid results sprinkled in.

The boys are 1-6 in the Sky Em League as of May 6, but their win against Marshfield in April marked a milestone win for the program. The Sky Em has been one of the best leagues in 4A baseball over the past several years, and as such, it has proved tough to get wins. In 2024 and 2025, Cottage Grove went 0-12 in both seasons, unable to capture a league win.

But this season, that changed!

Facing off with the Marshfield Pirates on Apr.

24, the Lions grabbed an 11-7 win, their first league win since beating the same opponent on Apr. 14, 2023.

It was a resilient showing for the Lions, as they had lost the first two of the three-game series between the two programs. On top of that, the win came as the second of a doubleheader, a rebound game after losing 12-2 earlier in the afternoon.

This time, the Lions jumped out to a huge lead in the first inning, and then held off the Pirates for the remaining six innings. In the opening frame, the Lions scored eight runs, taking advantage of some defensive lapses and some nice hitting. Colton Cogburn batted in the first run of the day with a single. A couple of dropped third strikes and errors allowed



Cottage Grove to tack on three more runs, and then Nolan Spear stepped up to the plate.

After walking to lead off the game, Spear connected with the ball, sending it high to center field for a double

with the bases loaded. Three more Lions' runners crossed the plate, adding another three runs.

The final run of the inning came thanks to some opportunistic running by Felix Garza, who was a pinch runner

for Spear. Garza stole third and then managed to make it home following another Marshfield error. The Lions took an 8-0 lead heading into the bottom of the first.

Marshfield clawed three more runs back, and the score stood 8-3 into the third. Cottage Grove added two more runs in the inning, as Spear and Cogburn each registered singles, pushing Cottage Grove's lead to 10-3. For the remainder of the game, the Lions gave up four more runs, but added another on another error in the fifth, bringing the final score to 11-7.

Nolan Spear and Colton Cogburn led the way for Cottage Grove on both the mound and at the plate.

Spear had two hits, including a double, three RBIs,

and a walk. He also entered the game in relief of starting pitcher Cogburn, pitching the final two innings and giving up just two hits. Cogburn, on the other hand, had two singles and two RBIs. As the starting pitcher, Cogburn had seven strikeouts and gave up just three earned runs.

Since beating Marshfield, the Lions have had some hard losses. They lost all three games against #3 Marist Catholic and suffered a tough 0-7 loss to Junction City.

See game results at osaa.org for the May 8 scheduled game against Junction City and the May 12 contest with Tillamook. Cottage Grove is scheduled to wrap up regular season play May 18 hosting North Bend and traveling to North Bend May 21.

Social media connections unlikely to make you less lonely

STEVE LUNDEBERG

Cottage Grove

Sentinel Guest Article

A first-of-its-kind study of U.S. adults suggests that all of those strangers you're friends with on social media are not helping you to feel less lonely.

On the contrary, social media connection with people you don't know in person is associated with increased loneliness, according to scientists at Oregon State University.

In a nationally representative study of more than 1,500 adults ages 30-70, connecting online with people you actually do know was not linked with greater loneliness, but neither was it associated with decreased loneliness.

The findings suggest that "people experiencing loneliness may wish to examine critically their interactions with strangers on social media and to prioritize in-person connections over social media ones, even when those social media connections are considered close," study leader Brian Primack said.

The research was published today in *Public Health Reports*, the official journal of the U.S. Public Health Service. The agency developed a deep interest in loneliness following the 2023 report on the nation's loneliness epidemic by then

Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, said Primack, a professor in OSU's College of Health.

The surgeon general's report notes that even before COVID-19, about half of American adults reported measurable levels of loneliness, and that lacking connection brings health risks on par with smoking.

People who often feel lonely are more than twice as likely to develop depression. They also face a 29% increased risk of heart disease; 32% increased risk of stroke; 50% increased risk of developing dementia (for older adults); and greater than 60% chance of premature death.

The research by Primack, two OSU faculty colleagues and two graduate students represents a step toward filling a knowledge hole regarding social media's role in loneliness. Most prior studies, Primack said, have looked at teens and young adults, whereas this study examines adults in midlife and later adulthood.

"This gap in the literature is important because people who aren't teens or young adults comprise 75% of the U.S. population, these people are heavily exposed to social media, and many of the downstream health impacts of loneliness grow increasingly severe as

adulthood progresses," Primack said.

The researchers note that overall, about 35% of the study group's social media contacts were people they had never met in person. They suspect that one reason interacting with "strangers" on social media is associated with loneliness is because of social media's high potential for facilitating misinterpretation.

"We know that social media interactions can result in idealization of other people's friendships with each other, which can exacerbate the effects of social comparison," said study co-author Jessica Gorman. "This idealization is possibly stronger when those friendships involve people you've never met because there is



Courtesy photo from Oregon State University

TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and similar platforms are apparently no antidote for the global loneliness epidemic, according to Oregon State University research that linked increases in social media use with a greater likelihood of feeling alone.

no personal experience to counter that idealization."

Research assistant professor Dawn Hyosin Kim and graduate students Geethika Koneru and Memuna Aslam also contributed to the research, which took place in summer 2023 and was supported by the National Institutes of Health. Study participants reported their

personal (non-business) engagement with 10 social media platforms: Facebook, X, Reddit, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest and WhatsApp.

The project builds on earlier work by Primack and Gorman linking loneliness to the amount and frequency of social media

use and adds to a growing body of scholarship by OSU researchers exploring loneliness' link to conditions such as insomnia and nightmares.

Steve Lundeberg is a news and research writer at Oregon State University. He may be reached at Steve.Lundeberg@oregonstate.edu

OREGONIANS

From Page 6

we must close one office more than others."

Alternative ways to get DMV services

There are several ways Oregonians can get DMV services without having to go to an office in person.

The Oregon DMV last year launched 10 Fred Meyer kiosks, mostly around the Portland metro region, that let people renew their vehicle registration, print a copy of their

vehicle registration and replace vehicle registration cards and stickers.

Oregonians can also go to the agency's online platform, known as "DMV2U" to take knowledge tests, renew a license or vehicle registration, schedule appointments, update an address, file collision reports or report vehicle sales. The agency also offers informational Youtube videos explaining how to use the online platform.

"These resources are something the Oregon

DMV is really trying to pour into just because we realize and understand there needs to be different avenues to assist the communities and Oregonians," Ravell said.

<https://oregon-capitalchronicle.com/2026/05/08/oregon-dmvs-regularly-pushed-to-close-because-theres-not-enough-staff-or-positions/>

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Mia Maldonado / Oregon Capital Chronicle

A "closed" sign sits at a counter at the DMV office in Albany. Since Jan. 1, 2026, there have been 34 full day office closures across Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle division offices because of staffing shortages.

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