

North Coast

CITIZEN

Serving North Tillamook County since 1996

Thursday, January 8, 2026 | Vol. 33, Issue 1

www.northcoastcitizen.com

\$2.00



Manzanita City Hall cut- (Left to right) City Councilors Tom Campbell, Linda Kozlowski and Jerry Spegman, City Manager Leila Aman, City Councilor Brad Hart and (far left) John Handler, hold the ribbon as Mayor Kathryn Stock and Velda Handler, whose family previously owned the city hall and police station property, cut it to open the new Manzanita city hall and police station.



NBHD Board Chair Marc Johnson addressing the crowd gathered for the grand opening of the district's new clinic and pharmacy.

Projects completed across Tillamook County in 2025

Tillamook County saw a year of grand openings, as projects large and small across the county were completed, highlighted by the North County Recreation District's new natatorium, the Nehalem Bay Health District's new pharmacy and clinic, and the new Manzanita city hall.

The year also saw the transient lodging tax (TLT) become a hot political issue, as county voters rejected a 4% increase to the county's rate and a push by State Representative Cyrus Javadi to change the allocation criteria for TLT revenues fell short in Salem, ultimately contributing to Javadi's September decision to switch parties.

Facing a budget crunch, Tillamook County commissioners decided to seek an increase in the county's TLT rate from 10% to 14% on May's ballot, but the proposal ultimately failed, with a recount confirming that just 12 more voters opposed the increase than supported it in early June.

That was around the same time Javadi's efforts to change the percentage of TLT funds that could be used without restriction by counties sputtered out in a senate committee amid political machinations. Javadi's decision to switch parties, from Republican to Democrat, came later,

See PROJECTS, Page A3



The pools at the new natatorium at the North County Recreation District underwent commissioning this summer ahead of a grand opening in September.

Bell prepares for TLT discussions

WILL CHAPPELL
Citizen Editor

With potential changes to state restrictions on transient lodging tax dollars and a change in leadership at the Tillamook Coast Visitors Association appearing likely, Tillamook County Commissioner Mary Faith Bell is preparing to lead a working group to evaluate the county's use of those dollars moving forward.

In a recent interview with the Headlight Herald, Bell said that the potential changes to transient lodging tax (TLT) legislation at the state level could prove a critical piece in securing the county's finances. However, that potential change comes at the same time as Bell and her fellow commissioners are looking at ways to use TLT dollars to improve county facilities to grow revenues and as a list of projects across the county has grown that would benefit from those funds.

That led commissioners to decide to convene a working group, with Bell at the helm, to holistically evaluate the county's ap-

proach to its TLT dollars moving forward.

"The pot of TLT that we'll have to spend will be smaller because we need to move more of it into the general fund and yet the things we want to invest in are growing," Bell said. "So, we need more direction figuring out the balance between all that."

The subject of TLT reform has been a hot topic for several years in Salem, as Tillamook and other counties with high numbers of visitors have advocated for a change in the requirement that 70% of TLT revenues be spent on tourism marketing or tourist-related facilities. County leaders have contended that high numbers of visitors have burdened their emergency services and infrastructure and that the current split does not allow the funds they generate to be used to address that burden.

Last year, State Representative Cyrus Javadi proposed legislation that would have reduced the percentage of TLT revenues restricted to tourist related expenditures from 70% to 40%, but it ultimately fizzled out in a senate committee after passing through the house of representatives.

However, Javadi plans to bring a similar bill forward again in this year's short session, and State Senator Suzanne Weber plans to sponsor a partner bill in the senate. Both have said they are optimistic they will pass, though have noted

that the final percentage allocation of restricted and unrestricted funds may change.

For Tillamook County, an increase from 30% to 60% in unrestricted funds would represent an increase from around \$2.4 million to \$4.8 million.

Currently, the county's unrestricted funds are allocated to the county's public works department for road maintenance expenses, while the \$5.6 million in restricted funds are split between a roughly \$2.1-million contract with the Tillamook Coast Visitors Association (TCVA) for destination management services, tourism facilities and marketing grants managed by TCVA, and a county run tourism facilities grant program.

The potential change to allowed TLT revenue uses comes as the county's contract with TCVA is set to expire at the end of 2026, and as the association's Executive Director Nan Devlin is set to step down at the end of February. Several other factors would further complicate discussions about reallocating the funds, including a desire by county leaders to increase investments in parks facilities to boost revenues, as well as an outstanding list of existing or envisioned tourist facilities across the county that would qualify for restricted TLT funding.

Altogether, Bell said that this had led commissioners to decide it was a good time to convene a working group with community mem-

bers and industry representatives to evaluate priorities moving forward. Bell said that the TCVA board, of which she is a member, had agreed to hold off on recruitment of a new executive director until the work group process is complete.

"We need some cohesive sense that involves people from the community, that involves people from TCVA but also from the industry to brainstorm about prioritizing those expenses," Bell said.

Dovetailing with that work, Bell said that she also wants to develop a strategic plan for the parks department to create a roadmap for upgrades across their facilities, mentioning possible expansions at the Barview Jetty, Webb and Kilchis River County Campgrounds.

Bell said that she expected most or all of any newly unrestricted funds would be used to fill a multimillion-dollar shortfall in the county's general fund, which is being covered this year by transfers from the parks department and reserve fund.

Despite the draw on the reserve fund, Bell said that she felt a lot of progress had been made in 2025 on moving the county toward financial stability, citing improved communication as a driving factor. Over the past year, county commissioners and members of the county's budget committee have met quarterly for updates on the county's bud-

Skaar steps into AOC presidency

WILL CHAPPELL
Citizen Editor

In late November, at the group's annual conference, Tillamook County Commissioner Erin Skaar assumed the presidency of the Association of Oregon Counties, a post she will hold for a year.

In the role, Skaar will advocate for the interests of Oregon counties at the state and national level and lead the organization in conducting a comprehensive study of county finances across the state to better inform the association's conversations with state leaders moving forward.

"We're actually going to do a study with AOC (Association of Oregon Counties) to determine where we are so that we can then be able to have a cohesive conversation, one voice, with the state to say, here's where we are," Skaar said.

The AOC is a membership organization comprised of elected leaders from each of Oregon's counties that represents counties' interests at the state and federal levels. The organization has a professional staff, including an executive director and team of lobbyists in Salem, offers training for newly elected county leaders and has a division that oversees the distribution of road maintenance funds to counties.

Skaar was elected to the association's board in 2023, and served as second vice president in 2024, before moving into the first vice presidency last year.

As president, Skaar will chair the association's monthly meetings, meet bimonthly with Governor Tina Kotek, travel to Salem frequently during the legislative session to advocate on counties' behalf and attend several regional and national conferences representing AOC.

During the short legislative session, Skaar said that members have identified increasing state

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Fournier sounds optimistic note on budget situation

WILL CHAPPELL
Citizen Editor

One year into his tenure as Tillamook County commissioner, Paul Fournier said that he feels that he has played a role in an ongoing culture shift at the county that he believes promises a strong financial future.

In a series of recent interviews, Fournier said that the county's new strategy of placing a portion of parks revenues into the general fund, along with delaying hirings and increasing the county's share of revenues from justice court will meet budgetary needs. Fournier also remains committed to

realizing new projects across the county to boost revenues and has identified increased code enforcement efforts as a further revenue generator, saying that he believes they can help the county begin replenishing its reserve funds in the medium term.

"We have a couple of years not to wait to figure it out, we have a couple years to actively figure it out, which is what I think we're

See BELL, Page A2

See FOURNIER, Page A5



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Members of the Tillamook County Board of Elections counting ballots in the race for Measure 29-183 on June 12, with Tillamook County Clerk Christy Nyseth overseeing.



Ben Salo won 2025's championship Pig n' Ford race thanks to three perfect cranks and two smooth pig exchanges.

Projects

From Page A1

in September, after he broke with his former party to vote in favor of a gas tax increase and as Javadi said he felt a lack of interest in working on issues among Republicans.

North county saw its major string of project completions begin in late July, with the completion of a \$10.6-million overhaul to Highway 101 through Garibaldi. The Oregon Department of Transportation Project began in fall 2024 and saw new ADA accessible crossings added and the road repaved between 1st and 12th Streets in the city.

That was followed quickly by the opening of Manzanita's new \$4.6 million city hall and police station in early August, after substantial completion in early May.

The North County Recreation District's \$18-million natatorium project, featuring a six-lane lap pool and therapy pool, was completed in September and celebrated with a ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony in mid-November.

Rounding out the trio of north county projects, the Nehalem Bay Health District's new \$12.2-million pharmacy and clinic opened with a ribbon cutting on October 4.

Tillamook's dialysis clinic also reopened in the summer under the management of Dialysis Clinics Inc., after a year-plus closure, as did Nehalem Bay State Park, following upgrades to its campground amenities.

Work is substantially complete on Tillamook Bay Community College's new healthcare education building, set for an April grand opening, and the rehabilitation of the south jetty at the mouth of

vices, and as our expenses have, frankly, outpaced our revenues, we've gotten leaner and leaner," Skaar said. "And now, we're at the point where many counties don't have a lot more leaning out we can do if we're going to continue to provide services to our residents."

To facilitate a better-informed conversation, Skaar decided to use her presidential initiative to commission a study of the general fund of each county. Skaar said that this study would be used to determine ways that the state government can help alleviate the crunch, with an eye on services counties are mandated to provide by state law but do not receive funds to support.

Skaar said that she would also use the study as a jumping-off point to facilitate conversations amongst members about different approaches that were working for different counties, mentioning Tillamook's success with a transient lodging tax (TLT) and several east Oregon counties' leasing of land for energy generation. "What we're going to do is spend this year learning from each other. The other thing we're going to do is learn from each other what you do when you're just flat out of



Tillamook County Commissioner Erin Skaar (right center) and CARE Interim Executive Director Marie Miller (left center) cut a ribbon to celebrate the opening of CARE's new shelters flanked by CARE staff and board members.

Tillamook Bay will continue once better weather arrives and be completed by the fall.

August's county fair saw the only-in-Tillamook

Pig-n-Ford races turn 100, with Ben Salo winning the centennial championship.

There was also a turnover in leadership at both the Til-

lamook and Nestucca Valley School Districts, with Matt Ellis resigning as superintendent of the former in June, and Misty Wharton resign-

"I'm not bullish on any one thing at this point," Skaar said of the options for revenue generation. "I am interested in all of the things, and I think no matter what it is, it's going to take a conversation with our community."

Skaar said that a reform to the percentage of TLT dollars counties can spend without restriction being pushed by representatives of Tillamook County in Salem represented a potential solution. "Otherwise," Skaar said, "we are going to have to get into conversation with our community about what's important to them and what they are willing to potentially pay more for because we have very few options to raise more money that do not require a vote of the people."

While a study by Tiberius Solutions identified a list of potential new revenue generating ideas for the county including a utility fee or vacant home tax, Skaar said that questions remained about the feasibility of those ideas and that she did not have strong preferences among the proposals. She said that if commissioners decide to pursue any of the ideas, she believes it will be necessary to inform the public about the need for new revenue and gather their feedback on the best way to generate it.

"I think it's just a great time for me to take a step back and acknowledge that we've done some really good things and we continue to do good things, and I'm excited for someone else to bring their fresh eyes and perspective to what good things we can do," Skaar said.

Skaar said she was also feeling good about the county's position vis-à-vis timber as she prepares to step into the vice chair role on the Forest Trust Lands Advisory Committee.

ing as superintendent of the latter in August. Tillamook's board of directors selected Jennifer Guarcello to serve as interim superintendent for the current school year, while Nestucca's selected Ken Richwine.

The year's last quarter saw several damaging incidents occur, starting with a fire on a railroad trestle on Tillamook's east side in October, and followed by severe damage to Hangar B at the Port of Tillamook Bay and Highway 6 and other roadways during December winter storms. Port leaders are considering possible repairs for the hangar as the new year begins.

For this issue, the Headlight Herald sat down with each of Tillamook County's commissioners and discussed developments in the county over the past year and what they are looking forward to in the year ahead.

Skaar said that she felt the committee's member counties were more in accord with Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) staff now than when she had become chair following Commissioner David Yamamoto's retirement in mid-2024.

Finally, Skaar said she was looking forward to the sunsetting of the Salmonberry Trail Intergovernmental Agency (STIA), which is set for its final meeting in January before becoming an advisory committee at the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The department will take over the lease for the 82 miles of railway between Tillamook and Banks, and a staff member will work part time helping to manage the trail.

"By having STIA go away and by having there be a parks employee, that will give the Salmonberry Trail Foundation a person to work with and we'll figure out the structure by which the tough questions that need to be brought to the steering committee, there'll be a staff person at parks to make that happen and to really move things forward without these difficult questions landing in the way of everybody," Skaar said.

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SKAAR

From Page A1

grants to counties to defray the cost of property tax assessment as a top priority. Those grants haven't increased since the 1980s and have gone from paying for around half the cost of property assessment to less than 10%, placing a heavier burden on county budgets.

Otherwise, Skaar said that she planned to work with lobbyists to respond to proposed bills that would impact counties before shifting her attention to preparing the association for next year's legislative session for the remainder of the year.

That preparation will revolve primarily around county finances, which Skaar said are in distress across much of the state, including in Tillamook County. Three decades after voters passes Measures 5 and 50 capping property tax rates and limiting increases in assessed property value to 3% annually, Skaar said that around 60% of counties are facing potential service cuts in the next couple years.

"Over time, counties used to be able to do more things, they used to provide more ser-

vices, and as our expenses have, frankly, outpaced our revenues, we've gotten leaner and leaner," Skaar said. "And now, we're at the point where many counties don't have a lot more leaning out we can do if we're going to continue to provide services to our residents."

To facilitate a better-informed conversation, Skaar decided to use her presidential initiative to commission a study of the general fund of each county. Skaar said that this study would be used to determine ways that the state government can help alleviate the crunch, with an eye on services counties are mandated to provide by state law but do not receive funds to support.

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"It's been fabulous to engage with all of the directors across the county and to have everybody's brain working on this," Skaar said, "and I will be nervous until we define and

find funding sources that are good for today and to cover our growth into the future. At that point, I'll feel like we did it; we're not there yet."

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Staff Report

On October 28, Gina Marie Wilson, 47, pled guilty to two counts of burglary in the second degree, a class C felony, committed on or about October 16. Wilson was sentenced to time served in jail and 18 months' probation.

On November 7, Kyle Anthony Clark-Cisneros, 33, pled no contest to one count of driving under the influence of intoxicants, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about December 16, 2024. Clark-Cisneros was sentenced to 30 days in jail and three years' probation, his driver's license was suspended for three years, and he was ordered to pay \$1,999 in fines and fees.

On November 10, Ariadna J Orozco, 28, pled guilty to one count of assault in the fourth degree, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about June 21. Orozco was sentenced to eighteen months' probation and ordered to pay a \$600 fine.

On November 13, Steven L Klahn, 61, pled no contest to one count of failure to register as an outfitter or guide and one count of violation of wildlife law with culpable mental state-taking, hunting or trapping in violation of wildlife law or rule,

both class A misdemeanors, committed on or about October 22, 2024. Klahn was sentenced to 180 days in jail and five years' probation and ordered to pay a \$100 fine. On the same day, Klahn pled no contest to a further count of failure to register as an outfitter or guide, committed on or about February 20, 2024, for which he was assessed an additional \$600 in fines.

On November 14, Jonathan Ray Stevens, 40, pled no contest to two counts of harassment, class B misdemeanors, committed on or about June 17, and August 15, and one count of failure to appear in the second degree, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about October 6. Stevens was sentenced to 50 days in jail.

On November 17, Joseph Paul Larsen, 35, pled no contest to one count of unlawful possession of methamphetamine, a class C felony, committed on or about June 21. Larsen was sentenced to three years' probation and a drug treatment program.

On November 17, the Oregon Coast Clam Company pled guilty to one count of violating commercial fishing laws with a culpable mental state, a class A misdemeanor.

The company was placed on probation for three years and assessed a \$20,000 fine.

On November 17, Lilly Eugene Alder, 20, pled guilty to one count of harassment, a class B misdemeanor, committed on or about February 28. Alder was sentenced to ten days in jail.

On November 19, Jesse Lee Stinnett, 39, pled guilty to one count of theft in the third degree, a class C misdemeanor, committed on or about October 6. Stinnett was sentenced to time served in jail and ordered to pay \$17.11 in restitution.

On November 21, Christopher Troy McKinney, 37, pled no contest to two counts of harassment, class A misdemeanors, committed on or about May 14 and 15. McKinney was sentenced to 30 days in jail.

On November 24, Sherman James Gossett, 64, pled no contest to one count of criminal driving while suspended or revoked, a class B felony, and one count of driving under the influence of intoxicants, a class C felony, both committed on or about June 19. Gossett was sentenced to eight months in prison and two years of post-prison supervision, his driver's license was revoked for life, and he was ordered to pay

the second degree, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about May 26. Sheppard was sentenced to five days in jail.

On November 24, Debbie Carolyn Donaldson, 65, was

See CONVICTIONS, Page A5

Tillamook County criminal convictions



2026 COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANT PROGRAM

The 2026 Community Support Grant program is currently open and accepting applications until 5:30 p.m. on Monday, February 23, 2026. Local not-for-profit organizations with community projects that promote community livability and economic development are eligible to apply. Application forms, procedures, and additional information are available now at www.tpub.org/news-community/community-support-grants/.

PO Box 433 • 1115 Pacific Ave • Tillamook, OR 97141

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CLASSIFIEDS**MAGIC MAZE ● BAD GUY**

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: THE BAD GUY IN A PLAY

Bandit	Fiend	Hooligan	Swindl
Bully	Forger	Mobster	Thug
Burglar	Gangster	Rogue	Vanda
Crook	Hoodlum	Scoundrel	

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church Services by the Sea

Cannon Beach to Nehalem

Nehalem**Nehalem Bay****United Methodist Church**

36050 10th Street, Nehalem, OR
(503) 368-5612

Pastor Celeste Deveney +
Sunday service 11 a.m.

Food Pantry

Open Friday, Saturday & Monday
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wednesday

March - October 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
November - February noon to 4 p.m.
Nehalem Senior Lunches
Tuesday & Thursday served at noon
email: nbumcnsl2020@gmail.com

To feature your spiritual
organization on this panel:
Contact Katherine at
(503) 842-7535,
headlightads@countrymedia.net.

CITIZEN

Serving North Tillamook County since 1996

**Deadline: FRIDAYS at Noon for Advertising, News, Letters,
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Graphic Design: Steph Baumgart

Office Phone: 503-842-7535

Website: northcoastcitizen.com

The North Coast Citizen (15503909) is published
biweekly by Country Media, Inc.

1906 Second Street, P.O. Box 444, Tillamook, OR 97141

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$60.00 annually in-county; \$72.00 annually out-of-county.

\$50.00 for online only.

Periodicals Postage paid at Tillamook, OR.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to P.O. Box 444, Tillamook, OR 97141

Member Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association (ONPA)

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LETTER POLICY

The Citizen welcomes letters that express readers' opinions on current topics. Letters may be submitted by email only, no longer than 300 words, and must be signed and include the writer's full name, address (including city) and telephone number for verification of the writer's identity. We will print the writer's name and town of residence only. Letters without the requisite identifying information will not be published. Letters are published in the order received and may be edited for length, grammar, spelling, punctuation or clarity. We do not publish group emails, open letters, form letters, third-party letters, letters attacking private individuals or businesses, or letters containing advertising.

Deadline for letters is noon Fridays.

The date of publication will depend on space.

Obituaries

The North Coast Citizen has several options for submitting obituaries.

• **Basic Obituary:** Includes the person's name, age, town of residency, and information about any funeral services. No cost.

• **Custom Obituary:** You choose the length and wording of the announcement. The cost is \$100 for the first 200 words, \$75 for each additional 200 words. Includes a small photo at no additional cost.

• **Premium Obituary:** Often used by families who wish to include multiple photos with a longer announcement, or who wish to run a thank-you. Cost varies based on the length of the announcement.

All obituary announcements are placed on the North Coast Citizen website at no cost.

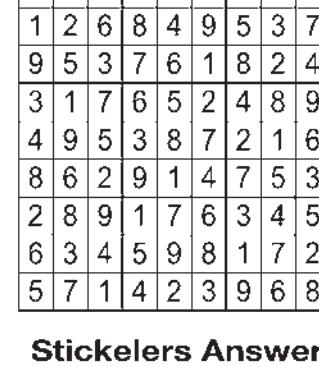
CryptoQuip

answer

Because my lobe-attached
jewelry falls off all
the time, I always just
wear an earring aid.

Weekly SUDOKU

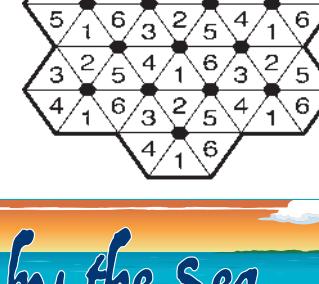
Answer

**Stickelers Answer**

Word 5. The correct
spelling is supercilious.

Snowflakes

solution



ACROSS	50	Blow it when success is very close	109	La-to-Mich. dir.	6	With	43	1982-2005	89	Actor Estrada	
1	Dish list	57	Seize forcibly	110	Dick Tracy's	32-Down,	Saudi king	90	Poor grades		
5	Attorney —	58	Fizzle out, as	111	cover-up	48 — the word"	92	Road goo			
10	Tidies up with	59	an endeavor	116	New word	50 "Likely story"	93	An Aleutian			
a broom	60	Bitter conflicts	121	Bullfight cry	51	Cries of	island	94	scale		
16	Even score	61	"Ararat" actor	122	View with	52	Perjurer, e.g.	95	(mineral hardness gauge)		
19	Salt Lake City	62	Koteas	123	astonishment	53	Former U.N.	96	Executes a		
team	63	Indian queen	124	Autumn	head Kofi	54	"Page Up,"	97	"Costello		
20	Stock market	64	Escargot	125	foliage ...	55	on a farm	98	e.g.		
disaster	65	Poking tools	126	or what	56	Jungle den	100	Sri Lanka,			
21	Audrey of	71	Stop being	127	happens at	57	"En-	formerly	101	formerly	
"Amélie"	72	noticed	128	the starts of	58	chanted"	102	Certify (to)	103	Red-tagged	
22	Hostelry	73	75 Spyro —	129	eight answers	59	Xanadu"	104	Part of USA		
23	Arrive like	74	(jazz group)	130	in this	60	band, in brief	105	H.S.		
rain	75	Pipeline	131	puzzle?	61	1990	106	proficiency	107	exam	
25	Goof-ups	76	problems	132	Set —	62	101 Certify (to)	108	"The Father		
26	Many a	77	78 Boat deck	133	(sharp fights)	63	102 Red-tagged	109	of Geometry"		
pro bono	78	TV ad	102	protector	64	103 Jungle	110	Safe robbers,	111	Capital of	
27	Enclose,	79	wood	103	great Buck	65	104 Part of USA	112	in slang		
as a yard	80	Suddenly	104	Surprise	66	105 H.S.	113	Suffix with	114	Give a whoop	
28	Fail to	81	bright stars	105	Attackers	67	106 Proficiency	115	effort		
complete a	82	Stray	106	Out of killer	68	107 Get an —	116	exam	117	effort	
task	83	Say a Hail	107	Flag sewer	69	108 Safe robbers,	118	certify	118	Apollo's org.	
31	Brand of	84	Mary, say	Ross	70	109 Red-tagged	119	bluntly	119	State bluntly	
candy wafers	85	Considered	71	Opposite of	71	110 Jungle	120	Apparatus	120	Apparatus	
34	Lose power	86	comparable	72	Opposite of	72	111 Glimpse	121	Gasteyer		
35	Considering	87	collapse	73	Opposite of	73	112 Luau	122	Luau handout		
everything	88	95	Fierce look	74	Opposite of	74	113 Capital of	123			
36	Become a	96	Holy city of	75	Opposite of	75	114 Give a whoop	124			
responsibility	97	Islam	76	Opposite of	76	115 Get an —	125		125		
for	77	98 — Z (totally)	77	Opposite of	77	116 Safe robbers,	126		126		
44	Grove growth	99	98 — Mae (loan	78	Opposite of	78	117 Apollo's org.	127		127	
45	1965-69 veep	100	offerer)	79	Opposite of	79	118 State bluntly	128		128	
Humphrey	101	50	99 "Superfood"	80	Opposite of	80	119 Apparatus	129		129	
46	Simile center	102	berry	81	Opposite of	81	120 Glimpse	130		130	
47	"Veni," in	103	102 Be	82	Opposite of	82	121 Comedian	131		131	
English	104	overlooked	104	103	Opposite of	83	122 Gasteyer	132		132	
49	Home of the	105	Flag sewer	105	Opposite of	84	123 Luau handout	133		133	
Dolphins	106	Ross	106	106	Opposite of	85	124	134		134	

Super Crossword

DROP OUT

109 La-to-Mich. dir.

110 Seize forcibly

111 Fizzle out, as

112 an endeavor

113 New word

114 Bullfight cry

115 View with

116 astonishment

117 Autumn

118 foliage ...

119 or what

120 happens at

121 the starts of

122 eight answers



Damage to the westbound lane of travel on Highway 6 at milepost 35.

PHOTO BY CYRUS JAVADI



The landslide caused significant damage to the road's shoulder as well.

PHOTO BY CYRUS JAVADI

Highway 6 lane closed indefinitely

STAFF REPORT

A December 18 atmospheric river triggered a landslide that knocked out both lanes of traffic on

Highway 6 around milepost 35 and caused significant subsidence to the westbound lane of travel.

Crews were able to reopen the eastbound lane of traffic by

December 19, with round-the-clock flagging operations, but an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) spokesperson said that it was too soon to provide a timeline

for repairs on the westbound lane, which sank several feet during the slide.

The damage occurred as part of the same massive slide that requires

more than \$100,000 in annual maintenance and repair work and the ODOT spokesperson said that experts were studying the technical issues and developing repair plans.

TFCC welcomes new executive director

WILL CHAPPELL

CITIZEN EDITOR

With its longtime Executive Director Frank Hanna-Williams set to retire at the end of the year, the Tillamook Family Counseling Center welcomed his replacement, Amanda Bunker, in mid-November.

Bunker brings a wealth of experience to the position and said that she was drawn to Tillamook Family Counseling Center (TFCC) by the opportunity to help bring quality behavioral care to a rural population.

"I've always had a real

passion for ensuring services are of the highest quality and that individuals have access to those even if you're in a rural county," Bunker said, "even if you're far out from the main city seat, that you are still able to get high quality care."

Bunker was born and raised in Burns and attended Southern Oregon University, earning a bachelor's degree in sociology before completing a master's degree in counseling, family and human services at the University of Oregon.

Bunker's professional career began in Klamath County, where she was first the children and family pro-

gram manager with Klamath County Mental Health, before becoming the agency's executive director. Bunker continued in that position until her husband's job moved the family to the Portland area, where she found a job with CareOregon, working to support mental health agencies in Jackson, Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook Counties.

In that role, Bunker got to work closely with staff at TFCC and found that their philosophy closely aligned with hers, so when she learned that Hanna-Williams was retiring, she decided to apply for the job.

"I had the opportunity to work with a lot of the staff and so when I heard that Frank was going to retire, which is well deserved, I thought what a cool opportunity," Bunker said.

After being selected to succeed Hanna-Williams, Bunker moved to Tillamook County in mid-November and said that she has found the welcome from the community and staff at TFCC and partner organizations amazing. In her first month-plus on the job, Bunker said that she has been focusing on familiarizing herself with the nuts and bolts of TFCC's services and

day-to-day operations, praising Hanna-Williams's strong leadership of the organization for leaving her a solid foundation.

Looking forward, Bunker said that she wanted to maintain and strengthen communication with Adventist Health and work to increase TFCC's footprint in south Tillamook County. Bunker said that she would also like to work with the county's school districts to bolster outreach to their students and potentially add groups or more telehealth availability to better serve them.

Bunker said that impend-

ing changes to Medicaid and Medicare at the federal level could have impacts on TFCC, and that while it was currently difficult to forecast what they might be, the organization was committed to sustaining its care.

"What I do know is TFCC will always find a way to meet the needs of the community, whatever it might look like," Bunker said, "and so I think everything's on the table in regard to how do we serve our community best and ensure that our patients have access regardless of what might come with funding."

FOURNIER

Budget Situation

From Page A1

doing," Fournier said. "I think the big difference here is this county in the past 30 years I've been here seems to have been reactive and I feel like this current board and these current (department) directors, everybody's got the memo, everybody agrees we have to be proactive."

In a signal accomplishment of his first year, Fournier played a key role in conceiving and achieving a \$1-million transfer from the parks department to the county's general fund, with the county reimbursing the parks in full from transient lodging tax (TLT) revenues. Fournier said that in the past county leaders had not landed on the strategy in flusher financial times but that spending TLT dollars restricted to tourist facilities on parks and allowing the department's unrestricted revenues to flow to the general fund was a prudent move.

"I feel like I was a big architect of seeing that we could use that money for parks and we could pull some revenue from parks back into the general fund for operations," Fournier said. "There's nothing sneaky

about that, it's just it was never done before."

The parks department transfer was paired with a revenue stabilization fund transfer of \$1 million this year to balance the county's budget, and Fournier noted that the parks department saw around \$2 million in annual revenues, meaning the county could expand its use of the strategy.

Fournier said that he also felt optimistic about the approach that the county government is taking to financial planning and that it has already begun to pay dividends that will show during budget season. Fournier praised the work of Financial Director Debra Jacob in creating comprehensive modeling of the county's financial position that she shares with commissioners, the budget committee and department directors quarterly, and department directors for finding efficiencies that are allowing the county to operate with around 10% of positions unfilled.

Moving forward, Fournier is pursuing a number of avenues to further improve the county's finances, not least among them working to expand and upgrade county-owned facilities to provide increased revenues, a main plank of his campaign platform.

Since assuming office, Fournier said that he has become convinced that the

best way to achieve that goal is to hire a property manager for the county who will create an inventory of county-owned properties and identify projects that could help monetize them. "Tillamook County has a large inventory of properties," Fournier said, "some are campgrounds, but we have other empty property that we've purchased over the years, or we've just been holding onto that I think we can realize some revenue from rather than asking residents."

Potential examples include the Rawe property in the city of Tillamook's urban growth boundary, which Fournier suggested could be turned into an RV campground while work progresses to prepare it for housing, or Netarts Bay Drive, which he has advocated turning into a one-way road partnered with a pedestrian path that would include paid parking.

At the end of the day, Fournier said that as a commissioner, he does not have the capacity or expertise to pursue these and other projects, and that he feels a property manager will easily pay for themselves.

Another new position Fournier is working to add to the county government is a code enforcement officer, who would work with a variety of departments including the

sheriff's office, community development, public works and solid waste.

Progress towards the position began earlier this year as Fournier coordinated with those departments on the removal of abandoned RVs and cars in county rights of way, which Fournier said he was proud to have helped facilitate. "It's one of those things I get the most complaints about and so I'm excited because all I did, I'm not the one that gets credit, I just convene the people," Fournier said.

Directors from those departments are now working with Fournier to develop details for the code enforcement officer position, which is included in the county budget as two half-time positions in the community development department and solid waste program.

In addition to coordinating the removal of abandoned vehicles and working to abate concerns around nuisance properties, Fournier said that the code enforcement officer would also spend a significant portion of their time issuing parking and other citations at county-owned properties.

Fournier said that he is also working to draft new ordinances regulating parking at the county level so that the code enforcement and other law enforcement officers won't have to rely on Oregon

statutes, which require a portion of fines be sent to the state government.

In concert, increased enforcement and more direct revenues would help to offset the \$200,000-plus cost of administering the county's justice court and drive higher revenue at county parking lots and boat ramps. Fournier said that he believes the largest untapped source of potential revenue is day trippers who do not contribute TLT but still strain the county's resources, and that increasing compliance at day-use areas with fees and expanding the number of those areas is the best way to monetize those visitors.

On the other side of the equation, Fournier said that he is working on plans for a free pass for county residents to use county-owned facilities, to avoid burdening locals.

Beyond finances, Fournier said that he feels he has helped foster a more supportive and communicative relationship between the board of commissioners and county employees, culminating in the ratification of new collective bargaining agreements with the two unions representing employees late in 2025. Crediting the success to his more than two decades as a county employee, Fournier said, "I feel like I'm helping with a positive culture shift in the way the board of

commissioners interacts with its employees and prioritizes employees, and I think that's something the other two commissioners are wanting to do as well."

In the coming year, Fournier said that he looks forward to discussions around how the county spends TLT as Commissioner Mary Faith Bell leads a working group in discussions of how to spend the funds and the county renegotiates its contract with the Tillamook Coast Visitors Association. Fournier said that he would like to see TLT funds used to support activities to boost visitors in the shoulder season, mentioning a crab, mountain biking or motorsports festival.

Fournier is also set to take over from Commissioner Erin Skaar as liaison to the Tillamook County Housing Commission and said that he was excited for the role. Fournier said that he would like to find ways for the county to support more workforce and affordable housing projects with detached, single-family homes, especially one with ownership opportunities. "I think homeownership for workers in middle housing is something I'd like to try to set up if we can and I think there's an appetite for that," Fournier said.

CONVICTIONS

From Page A3

found guilty on one count of theft in the third degree, a class A violation, committed on or about October 20. Donaldson was ordered to pay a \$440 fine and \$16.35 in restitution to Fred Meyer.

On November 25, Autumn Strang, 42, pled no contest to one count of assault in the fourth degree, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about April 22. Strang was sentenced to ten days in jail and two years' probation.

On November 26, John Franklin Henry, 55, was found guilty on one count of unlawful possession of a firearm, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about April 25. Henry was sentenced to 30 days in jail and three years' probation.

On December 1, Michael Vicente Reid, 36, pled no contest to one count of driving under the influence of intoxicants, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about October 28. Reid was sentenced to two years' probation, and his driver's license was suspended for one year.

On December 1, Taylor

Zane Stoll, 37, pled no contest to one count of criminal trespass in the second degree, a class C misdemeanor, committed on or about October 18. Stoll was sentenced to one year on probation.

On December 1, Jordan Ranae Marie Aldrich, 20, pled no contest to one count of assault in the fourth degree constituting domestic violence, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about November 4. Aldrich was sentenced to 18 months' probation.

On December 1, Austin Joseph Werner Bell, 28, pled no contest to one count of manufacturing or delivery of a controlled substance in schedule II, a class B felony, committed on or about February 25. Bell was sentenced to three years' probation.

On December 2, Jason Michael Santos, 37, pled no contest to one count of criminal driving while suspended or revoked, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about April 13, one count of criminal mischief in the second degree, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about August 14, one count of harassment, a class B misdemeanor, committed on or about August 14, and

one count of menacing, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about November 7. Santos was sentenced to one year on probation.

On December 3, Javier Solis Enciso, 35, was found guilty on one count of assault in the fourth degree constituting domestic violence and one count of resisting arrest, both class A misdemeanors, committed on or about January 13. Solis Enciso was sentenced to four years' probation.

On December 5, Derek Charles Johnson, 26, pled no contest to one count of fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about September 23. Johnson was sentenced to time served in jail and fined \$1,099, and his driver's license was suspended for 90 days.

On December 8, Gabriela Esmeralda Valle Sanchez, 26, pled no contest to one count of driving under the influence of intoxicants, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about August 6. Valle Sanchez was sentenced to two days in jail and two years' probation, and her driver's license was suspended for one year.

On December 8, Bobby Allen Roberts, 50, pled no contest to one count ofrecklessly endangering another person, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about July 3, 2022. Roberts was sentenced to 30 days in jail and two years' probation.

On December 10, Austin Ray Wallace, 21, pled no con-

test to one count of menacing, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about June 8. Roberts was sentenced to two years' probation.

On December 9, Edora Likomokihana Kalaiwa Fernandez, pled no contest to one count of violating a court's stalking protective order, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about September 28, and one count of criminal mischief in the second degree, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about September 9. Fernandez was sentenced to 90 days in jail and ordered to pay \$2,172.76 in restitution.

On December 9, Brian Tierail Kvasnikoff, 20, pled guilty to one count of sexual abuse in the third degree, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about November 20, 2024. Kvasnikoff was sentenced to 90 days in an Oregon Youth Authority facility and four years' probation.

On December 10, Angela Christina Bradley, 47, pled no contest to one count of harassment, a class B misdemeanor, committed on or about November 29. Bradley was sentenced to 30 days in jail.

On December 10, Austin Ray Wallace, 21, pled no con-

test to one count of menacing, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about November 29. Wallace was sentenced to 18 months' probation.

On December 10, Draven Louis Hughes, 21, pled guilty to one count of criminal trespass in the second degree, a class C misdemeanor, committed on or about November 14. Hughes was sentenced to 30 days in jail.

On December 12, Larry Neal Baker, 58, pled no contest to one count of disorderly conduct in the second degree, a class B misdemeanor, committed on or about March 8. Baker was sentenced to time served in jail.

On December 12, Jesse Dillon Merrill, 31, pled no contest to one count of unauthorized use of a vehicle, a class C felony, committed on or about October 14. Merrill was sentenced to two years in prison.

On December 12, Mcrae Daniels Armstrong, 35, pled guilty to one count of recklessly endangering another person, a class A misdemeanor, committed on or about July 3, 2022. Armstrong was sentenced to 30 days in jail and two years' probation, and his driver's license was suspended for 90 days.

On December 15, Tyler Garrett Seals, 23, pled no contest to one count of violation of wildlife law without culpable mental state, a class A violation, committed on or about October 8. Seals was assessed a \$265 fine.

VFW awards scholarships

WILL CHAPPELL
CITIZEN EDITOR

Members of VFW Post 2848 gathered with community members and teachers from the Nestucca School District on December 21, at the Kiawanda Community Center to recognize winners of the Patriot's Pen and Voice of Democracy essay contests.

Six students, five from the Nestucca School District and one from Neah-Kah-Nie High School, were honored for their writing about how they show support for our country and patriotism.

The afternoon started with all ceremony attendees enjoying an ice cream social organized by VFW member Paul Ferris, with help from the Nesko Women's Club, many of whose members were in attendance. VFW Post 2848 Commander Donovan Goff then discussed the two scholarship contests and handed out the awards.

The Patriot's Pen contest is open to students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades and Tressa Franklin, Kate Gilas and Valjon Estrella, all students at Nestucca K-8 School, won first second and third place in the contest, respectively. According to a teacher, these students shared strong visions of what it meant to them to be patriotic, including voting, being active members of their community and knowing the country's history.

At the high school level in the Voice of Democracy competition, students wrote 400-500-word essays on the same topic and recorded themselves reading the essay, with their oratorical skills also judged. Nestucca High's Melina Christensen placed third in the local contest and Carley Wisehart second, while Zelda Hooker, of Neah-Kah-Nie High School placed first. Hooker's essay went on to take first place at the



Goff addresses the crowd at the scholarship award ceremony.

departmental level and is now being judged at the statewide level.

Nestucca Band and

Choir Director and Language Arts Teacher Kathleen Serven praised the students' efforts, saying

that Hooker's essay had been shared with students at Nestucca High on Veterans' Day, and she

could see why it had won. Serven also noted that all the scholarship winners were freshmen, meaning they had not yet studied U.S. history, making their accomplishment even more impressive.

"I just want to say I'm really proud of all of them for stepping up and doing this," Serven said, "because most freshmen don't have a whole lot of experience or knowledge about country matters or haven't taken U.S. history yet, so it really takes a bit of reflection and research and putting together that knowledge to assemble an essay and speech that's meaningful for them."

Winners of the Patriot's Pen scholarships were awarded \$50, \$100 and \$150, while Voice of Democracy winners received \$100, \$150 and \$200, with Hooker still in the running for further scholarship funds should her essay win the statewide competition.

Lady Pirates go two for three in the desert

BY MIKE WEBER
For the Citizen

Bringing 2025 to a strong finish, the Neah-Kah-Nie High School girls' basketball team won two of three games in a tournament in Arizona from December 18 to 20.

The Pirates, guided by longtime Coach Corey Douma (21 years) won 55-42 over Phoenix Christian High in their first game December 18, followed with a 36-32 loss to St. Mary's Catholic High on December 19, and bounced

back with a 41-26 win over Benjamin Franklin High on December 20.

"We're still trying to figure some things out, but I think we're right on target for where we want to be with everyone learning what their role is now," said Douma, whose squad has lost three games by four points or less. "We have a great group, they're all working hard together and we have fun every day, and that's what matters."

The No. 21-ranked Pirates (5-4) will now focus on their 12-game OSAA

Class 3A Coastal Range League schedule. They'll play their first contest Wednesday at home at 7 p.m. against the No. 4-ranked Yamhill-Carlton High Tigers (8-2). It's a matchup featuring two 2025 state playoff teams. The Pirates lost two games last year to the Tigers by double digit margins, which they will be looking to avenge.

"We're just focusing on playing good defense all around and then just get enough scoring to win some games," said Douma. "I sure hope we can win

most of our league games. Banks is going to be really good, and Yamhill has a pretty good team. We're in a pretty tough league, but we'll compete well with everyone, and I think we can get third or fourth place by the end of the season and qualify for the district playoffs."

A talented squad led by the senior trio of Payton White, Lorelai Keefauver and Ashley Perez helps provide the Pirates with leadership and they're hoping to help the team achieve their goal of mak-

ing the playoffs a second straight year. White was a key contributing member to the team last season when she earned a 2025 CRL All-League Honorable Mention Award.

Acacia Christensen has been the leading rebounder for the Pirates, with career highs in rebounding twice this season with 18 and 19 rebounds. Bianca Smith has been providing a key boost offensively as she scored a season-high of 18 points in a game recently.

The CRL has been one of the toughest leagues in

the state recently with five of the seven teams qualifying for the state playoffs a year ago. Riverdale (5-7 CRL, 13-12 overall) and Corbett (10-2, 16-7 overall) also reached the 2025 state playoffs.

The defending champion Banks High Braves (12-0 CRL, 26-4 overall last year) are considered one of the top contenders again with nine of their 13 players returning from a squad that reached the state championship game last year (a 43-41 loss to Amity on March 8, 2025).

Pirate boys start strong in nonleague schedule

BY MIKE WEBER
For the Citizen

A two-for-three desert swing from December 18 to 20 capped a strong non-league schedule for the Neah-Kah-Nie High School boys' basketball team, bringing the Pirates to 6-3 heading into the new year.

The No. 13-ranked Pirates (6-3) lost their first game 77-57 to ALA West Foothills High on December 18, despite a career-high 36 points from senior Clayton Dante scored a career-high 36, before bouncing back for wins in their next two contests. Neah-Kah-Nie,

guided by sixth-year Coach Erick White, won 46-44 over Thunderbird High on December 19 and followed by scoring a season-high 73, en route to a 40-point victory over Chandler Prep High December 20.

"We had a good trip to Arizona and winning two out of three games there was pretty good," said White. "Unfortunately, our best shooter, senior Jordan Lewis, has an ankle injury that happened in practice recently, so I'm not sure when we'll have him back. I feel like we're playing some pretty good basketball, especially considering

that we've had to deal with some other injuries too. As long as we play our game, I think we can be one of the contenders for our league title this year."

The Pirates will seek to sustain their early season momentum as they begin their 12-game OSAA Class 3A Coastal Range League schedule with a 6 p.m. Wednesday home game against the Yamhill-Carlton High Tigers (6-4). The rivals split two matchups last season, with both winning on the road.

"Dylan Sigman didn't play in Arizona because he was recovering from an

ankle injury that he sustained in a game against Knappa (a 67-42 win Dec. 16), so we've been resting him quite a while," said White. "It was kind of a bummer that Dylan couldn't play in Arizona. He's our best athlete and our leading rebounder and second leading scorer."

Neah-Kah-Nie is looking to reach the state playoffs for a fourth straight year and are on track to meet that goal. "I'm very pleased so far with the way things are going, and I think there's a lot of key things that we gained from the Arizona trip," White said.

"We learned a lot of things there that will help our team improve, and the boys felt like it was a pretty good trip."

An experienced Pirate squad includes seniors Brady Douma, Kason Fletcher, Greyson Lott and Noah Scovel. They have exceptional height with seven players six-foot or taller, including 6-foot-4 junior post Tyson Huntley and 6-3 post Sigman. Dante (6-foot) is the Pirates leading scorer who is averaging 20 points per game.

"I'm having lots of fun, especially with the senior group of guys on our team

who have been playing together for a very long time," said Douma, who recorded a season high in scoring with 12 points December 20 in Arizona. "It's fun seeing all the work that we've done as a group, which has really helped our team improve this year. We've incorporated some new people into our lineup too with sophomores Dylan, Jack Cole and Marcus Johnson, who have each really helped us out quite a bit. I think we definitely have a chance to reach the state playoffs this year and there's really no team in 3A that we can't beat."

Tillamook County treasurer resigns

BY MIKE WEBER
For the Citizen

Tillamook County Treasurer Shawn Blanchard submitted her resignation on December 2, with the move

taking effect on January 2, and Debra Jacob assuming the vacated position on January 3.

Blanchard worked in the treasurer's office for 14 years and was first elected trea-

surer in 2018, before being reelected in 2022 with her term set to expire in 2026.

In her resignation letter, Blanchard said, "This decision was not made lightly. I am proud of the work the

Treasurer's department has accomplished. It has been a privilege to work alongside a dedicated and talented team." She did not provide a reason for the resignation.

At their board meeting

on December 31, Tillamook County commissioners unanimously selected Jacob, the county's finance director, to serve as treasurer from January 3, through the end of the year.

Tillamook County Chief Administrative Officer Rachel Hagerty also said that commissioners will be evaluating the duties of the treasurer ahead of an election to fill the role this year.

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