

2015,

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The question thus becomes what will happen with these projects: if they will be done soon or if they are still years away.

Development around Keizer Station

More businesses keep coming to Keizer Station, at least in Area A, the current retail section. Taco Bell and Carhartt have recently opened, while more businesses such as Chipotle Grill, Maurices and Gustav's are currently under construction. Chipotle Grill and Maurices are going in next to Old Navy, while the Portland-based German restaurant Gustav's is progressing quickly in the area between Men's Warehouse and McDonald's.

While the main part of Keizer Station continues to grow, there is also talk of more development in other areas. Area B (the part of Lockhaven between the Keizer Transit Station and McLeod Lane) has been quiet for quite a while, but revised plans were submitted for Area C last fall, consisting of a new retirement center and apartments.

There has also been talk recently of possible action in the Area D part of Keizer Station, which is between I-5 and the railroad tracks, south of Chemawa Road at the I-5 intersection. Looking ahead, will anything come of Areas C or D in 2015?

In addition, the Rawlins property behind Lowe's is sitting untouched, as is the hotel lot property near Panera Bread.

Needing more space/filling old space

When it comes to bringing new businesses into Keizer, a common theme is how there isn't enough room or buildings in Keizer. Christopher and Taylor both point to the expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary as being critical to Keizer's future expansion. Many of the high-profile openings in the past

few years, including medical offices for Silverton Health and Kaiser Permanente last year, have been in new buildings.

At the same time, there has been ongoing concern about the number of empty buildings in Keizer, particularly along River Road. The debate between new growth at Keizer Station vs. shuttered buildings on River Road has been waged for years, with the idea being floated last year of having a tour of the vacant buildings. Two different committees are looking at economic development issues.

Impact of marijuana in Keizer

Recreational marijuana will become legal in Oregon in mid-2015, as long as certain rules are followed. The question is what kind of impact the new law will have on cities around the state, including Keizer.

Then there is the question of what recreational marijuana dispensaries there might be. Guidelines such as necessary distance from schools have been set but it remains to be seen how many dispensaries there will be.

The first permit for a medical marijuana dispensary in Keizer was recently applied for, on River Road.

At the same time, there are enforcement questions regarding both types of marijuana, to say nothing of lingering concerns about other drugs in Keizer such as heroin.

So those are a few predictions of what the top stories of 2015 will be. Here is a look at how some of the predicted top stories from 2014 turned out.

Political season is upon us:

The year began with the question of who would step up to take over as Keizer mayor from longtime mayor Lore Christopher. As it turned out, only current councilor Cathy Clark threw her hat into the ring for the position. There was low turnout in three council races, with only one contested race. Of more interest were races for two state

races, in both House District 25 (Bill Post beat Chuck Lee) and state Senate District 13 (Kim Thatcher beat Ryan Howard).

Play structure highlights progress at KRP:

As indicated above, the construction of the Big Toy should be one of the top stories in 2015. It was one of the most high-profile stories in Keizer the past 12 months, due in no small part to how it interacted with the overall issue of changes at Keizer Rapids Park, most particularly the revised master plan for the park.

More growth on horizon at Keizer Station:

The expansion of Keizer Station indeed continued, as noted above. REI opened in the Futsal Center, while the Kaiser Permanente medical office — highly visible from the interstate — opened next to Pfc. Ryan J. Hill Memorial Park, which was dedicated in 2013 in honor of Keizer's only soldier to die in recent Middle East conflicts.

Growth elsewhere in Keizer:

Growing industries in Keizer including medical facilities and retirement communities. Two medical facilities opened in Keizer in 2014, as did another retirement community. Another one is currently under construction at Hawk's Point on the north edge of city limits while plans have been submitted for one in Keizer Station Area C. St. Edward Catholic Church opened its new facility with an elaborate ceremony last February, while a couple of new subdivisions opened.

Infrastructure updates to handle growth:

The delayed Chemawa Road reconstruction project was finally completed late in 2014, bringing a number of improvements to the busy road. Among the highlights: a new intersection at Celtic Way, the entrance to McNary High School, complete with a signal and sidewalks. Bidding for a roundabout at Chemawa and Verda Lane got pushed back until this spring.

GOALS: 'Let's bring them together to talk.'

(Continued from pg. 1)

Under terms of the deal agreed to between the city and the Rawlins family last year, the Rawlins family can purchase the land back from the city between 13 and 16 months after the sale at a cost of \$3 million. The purchase price increases \$500,000 approximately every year, topping out at \$5 million after 50 to 60 months. The total still owed on the properties is \$7 million, though the real market value was assessed at \$2.2 million.

City officials were the only ones to bid on the properties during the public oral auction last April.

Eppley suggested reviewing the old RRR plan.

"A lot of what hadn't occurred was beyond our work platform," Eppley said. "Our work was done when we developed the grant program (for River Road businesses). There was a whole slew of items the Keizer Chamber was to do but didn't occur. There was a downtown business group to oversee the marketing of the River Road area. Those things didn't occur. We could encourage the chamber to do that and provide funding for it."

Mayor-elect Cathy Clark is chair of the new Economic Development Commission.

"One charge of the EDC is to dig into the River Road development plan," Clark said. "My intention is to have them take a hard look at where we can make strategic investments. We need to make sure they are a good return on investments. It will be up to the council to review those recommendations."

In terms of public safety funding, Eppley noted some police positions have been unfrozen and he feels the situation will be resolved in the coming years.

"We're not going to be able to add cops every year," said Eppley, who noted cur-

rent police chief John Teague's need for staffing is "much less" than former chief Marc Adams. "Over the next five to eight years they should be able to get to where they are needed for the next 20 years."

Eppley also referred to park funding, a cause Smith championed the past two years while on the Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

"There's a greater interest in the parks system now than in the past," Eppley said. "There's a lot more focus on parks than was the case in 1982. There will be tough decisions, like do you float a bond or float a levy for ongoing maintenance?"

Smith noted there were many such discussions at the Parks Board level in 2013, but got the message from council at the end of the year to drop the topic.

"The Parks Board tried to ask the questions last year, but we were told now is not the time," Smith said. "Now, I think sooner rather than later should be the time to at least

have a discussion."

Clark went over some of the ideas she would like to see implemented, including expansion of the youth councilor program and having a roundtable discussion among all youth sports providers.

"Let's get people talking at the table about how they're going to connect and leverage resources," Clark said. "Let's bring them together to talk."

Ripp pointed out she and Herrera have extensive history with various youth sports and youth sports organizations in Keizer.

Eppley feels Urban Growth Boundary expansion will be "one of the biggest discussions we'll have in the next 20 years" and also noted staffing — in particular at the police department — is up for ongoing discussion.

The new council will have a work session early in the year — likely sometime around March — to come up with new long-term as well as short-term goals for the next two years.



Thank You Mayor Lore

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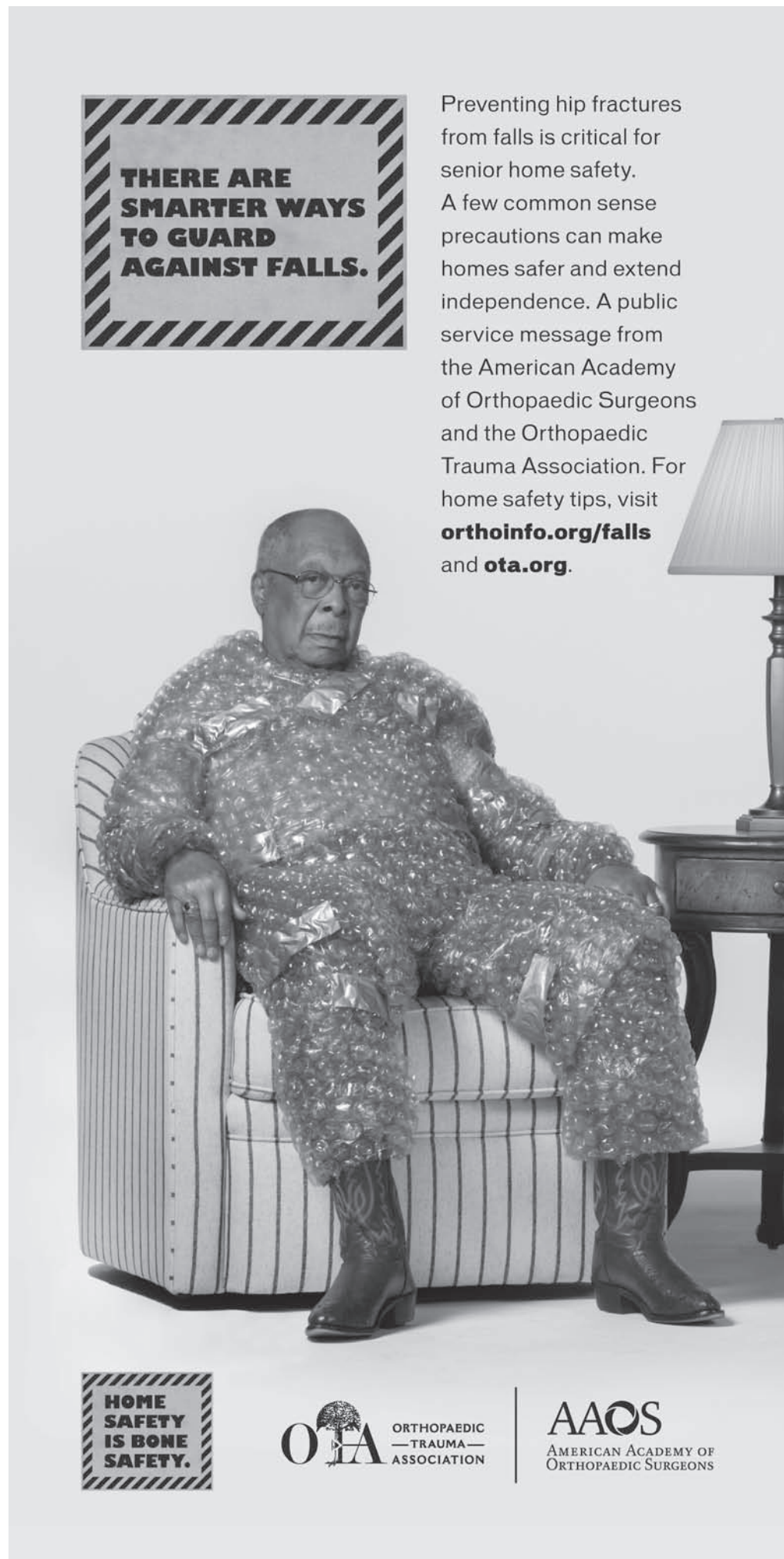
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