



Cascade Amusements has begun prepping their carnival rides for the 2015 Hood River County Fair, which opens today, July 22. Ride bracelets can be purchased in advanced for \$17 — \$22 at the fair — at locations around the Gorge, including fair office, Mid Valley Market, Hood River Supply, and G.G.'s in Odell; at Mclsaac's in Parkdale; at Juanita's Market in The Dalles; and at Juanita's Market, Hood River Supply, and Columbia State Bank in Hood River, and must be purchased by 5:00 p.m. on July 22. Each bracelet ticket purchased may be used on any one day of the fair, and is good for rides all day long. Carnival rides begin at 1 p.m. each day and continue until closing.

FAIR

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Griffith Motors and Les Schwab Tires donated the vehicles to the Fair, and they will make the rounds between the fair office and parking and animal barns and other far-flung areas of the fair.

In the park, the "Walk on the Wild Side" exotic animal show displays a wide range of exotic animals and reptiles in a jungle atmosphere, and Godfrey the Magician serves up award-winning comedy and levitation tricks. Professor Bamboozle's Road Show brings laughs and fun — and balloons — to the park and fairgrounds. And look for Dr. Solar's Good Time, Traveling Medicine Show's unique magical and educa-

tional family-friendly entertainment.

"Wool Busting!" is back. Kids up to 55 pounds and younger than 12 can try their hand at riding sheep. It's a start for the next generation of rodeo stars. Shows daily! There's fun for bigger kids, too, including the Buck-A-Ewe mechanical sheep, and "Just for Fun" Roping Clinics. Kids can also enjoy more sedate pony rides in the park.

'It's dry out there:' Parkdale, Wy'east firefighters respond to pair of challenging fires

BY KIRBY NEUMANN-REA
News editor

Two fires, each hard to get to in their own ways, challenged local firefighters in the past week.

Parkdale Fire Department responded to a report of a column of smoke near Miller Road Sunday, and on Thursday, Wy'east Fire District doused a grassfire on a steep embankment leading to the Hood River.

Fire officials from both departments stressed the high fire danger in the Gorge.

"We are really asking people to be careful, things are so dry," said Wy'east chief Greg Borton.

"I'd like to reiterate the high fire danger, the fuels are dry," said Parkdale fire chief Mike McCafferty. "Please be cautious. There are too many odds against us," he said, referring to the high temperatures and tinder dry fuels on the ground.

McCafferty said that on Sunday, firefighters received multiple calls from residents of Miller Road reporting a column of smoke in the tree-line above the homes.

"It appeared to be growing, and we headed toward the Pinemont area and once on scene the smoke went away," McCafferty said.

An ODFW helicopter was dispatched and operators did not initially see any smoke, but they found two loggers doing fuels reduction in the area, and officials learned that logging equipment had apparently thrown a spark off a rock, starting a 10-by-15

fire. "They had self-extinguished on site when we arrived," McCafferty said.

The spark had flown into the highly flammable layer of packed fine materials, known as duff, McCafferty said.

"It was lucky. He was being cautious, and was well aware of his surroundings and caught it in time," McCafferty said. U.S. Forest Service investigators visited the site on Monday and McCafferty said the loggers were in compliance.

But seeing a column of smoke from afar, and heading that way only to lose sight of the smoke, "felt like a snipe hunt," McCafferty said. "It was definitely a good column of smoke, and fortunately they were able to put it out before we arrived."

National Scenic Area and US Forest Service firefighters also responded.

On Thursday, Wy'east Fire District were called to a mysterious fire down a steep bank off Highway 35 south of Hood River.

Firefighters had to descend the hillside, reeling out 400 feet of hose to get to the half-acre grass and brush fire along a fishing trail that goes down the slope and across the Mt. Hood Railroad tracks toward the Hood River. Borton said the fire was about a quarter-mile south of the lower viewpoint on Highway 35.

"It was an intense fire, and had the potential to spread," Borton said.

"All of Wy'east responded and we put out a first alarm and got wildland backup from Gorge Scenic Area (personnel) and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife," Borton said, adding that McCafferty also assisted, and ODOT provided traffic direction given the degree of heavy smoke crossing the highway.

"It was climbing the hill and at one point we were concerned it might jump the highway," Borton said.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, but two visits to the site by ODFW and Borton have so far yielded no specific evidence, according to Borton.

"It was definitely suspicious," Borton said. "We do know that it was not started by the railroad."

ELDERLY

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Certified Ombudsman — or COs — "advocate for the rights of the resident — even if it may be against the wishes of the facility, or family, because residents don't lose any of their rights — educate staff and family about those rights, and investigate and resolve issues," she said.

Volunteers don't investigate neglect or abuse — that's a responsibility of Adult Protective Services — but they are often the first person who sees and reports it.

"An ombudsman comes out and finds out what's real-

ly going on, what's the resident's wish, what that person's rights are, if there's an issue they can resolve or investigate," she said.

Eighty percent of the cases that volunteers investigate are solved within one or two days. For the cases that prove more complicated, "there's staff support," Jordan stressed. "We want them to work independently, but not in a vacuum ... There's lots of support — they're always welcome to call into the office. People are not on their own."

The biggest role volunteers have is simply to check in with their residents twice a month — or more, if they wish. While a facility usually has between 75 and 80 resi-

dents, an ombudsman visits just three or four.

Volunteers need to be good listeners, relate to older people, keep confidences and put aside their own agendas.

"Sooner or later, all of us will be in that position," said Jordan. "If not us, someone we care about. And it's important."

For more information on the Oregon Long Term Care Ombudsman, visit www.oregon.gov/ltrco — Jordan puts on a monthly webinar, the next of which is scheduled for today, July 8 — or call Jordan directly at 503-983-3920. Preregistration is required to attend the training as volunteers must fill out an application and pass a background check.

BROWN

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ing that, up until August 17, we have legal counsel doing very thorough legal reviews of the bills.

So until that legal review is complete, I don't commit to signing a bill either way, which is why I think it was a surprise on SB 81. Certainly it was a surprise for legislators.

Transportation and infrastructure

For the Oregon Business Council, business plan, investing in infrastructure and modernizing was a priority for the session and, obviously for me, coming together around a bipartisan package in terms of transportation was critical.

Whether you're just talking about congestion time in metropolitan areas so people can spend more time with their families, whether you're talking about busi-

nesses getting goods around the state, you know what a quagmire the metropolitan area can be but it's not just impacting Portland.

When I was in Medford a few weeks ago, companies (said they) are shipping goods to the Port of Oakland instead of the Port of Portland because of the congestion on I-5. It's not just Portland anymore. It's impacting all of us and it's a statewide issue.

Despite the fact that we have strong Democratic majorities in both houses, we need super majorities. And I think it's really important for major policy initiatives for there to be bipartisan support.

We couldn't get there is legislation and that is certainly a disappointment for me, but I think we laid the groundwork and built a framework for future discussion about a transportation package.

Rural speed limit bill

A proposed bill would raise speed limits in rural stretches

of state highways, including I-84 and US 26.

It's still in legal review. One of the things that I heard from legislators is that on certain highways, if we can do so in a safe manner, that increasing the speed limit makes sense for their communities, so I heard that message.

I would say that the bill picks on some particular roadways and not others; that is what I will need to take a look at.

Just to kind of push back, I'm hearing from Oregonians who are concerned about increasing the speed limit, and one of the reasons that we went down to 55 (mph) and then raised it again was it increased gas mileage. So that is one of the concerns.

One of the challenges for Oregon's future is as more and more folks are driving fuel efficient or electric or hybrid vehicles, our revenue goes down in terms of the gas tax. So that is a very real challenge that we're going to need to face.

GRANT

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vancy, OPRD, Heather Staten and the Hood River Valley Residents Committee and the many supporters and volunteers who made this possible," said Meriwether.

Western Rivers Conservancy first began purchasing parcels along the Hood River in 2006, eventually assembling the 103 acres that will become Punchbowl Falls Nature Park. The total acquisition and development budget is \$1.2 million — half of that will be put up by Western Rivers, and the rest comes from the state grant and funds from the County, Hood River Parks and Rec District and local donations.

"Thanks to decades of hard work by valley residents, the Hood River is becoming a stronghold for Columbia River salmon and steelhead," said Phil Wallin, Vice President of Western

Rivers Conservancy. "Protecting the confluence of the East and West Forks at Punchbowl Falls is (a) historic step forward in that process."

At previous meetings, Hood River Valley Residents Committee, a local land use group, stressed that the park is destined as a "passive use" area, as low cost and natural as possible. The only major changes to the scenic area will be new trails, a gravel parking lot and a public restroom. The trail system — which will double in length — will demand the most labor and costs.

"Until now, the trails have consisted of an old logging road and a spider web of social trails that people have created on the bluffs above the West Fork," said Heather Staten.

Staten said a new "single sustainable trail" called Forest Loop Trail will replace the old network of pathways. The county will oversee volunteers constructing the trails, and Trail Keepers of

Oregon, a Portland non-profit, will design the trails, provide the tools and hire crew foremen. Local volunteers will provide the "trail building muscle," said Staten.

At the regular meeting Monday night, Meriwether updated commissioners on volunteer efforts for the county park, now that it has secured grant funding. Meriwether said Punchbowl proponents are working to create a Friends of Punchbowl Falls group. The Friends plan to coordinate volunteer efforts and donation funds as the nascent park comes into being. Doug's store in downtown Hood River is hosting the kick-off fundraising event for Punchbowl Park, Saturday, July 25 from 5 to 8 p.m. The street will be closed, so that guests can mingle and enjoy music by Tony Smiley, participate in a silent auction, enjoy Double Mountain beer and food by Tofurky. Teva shoes will match all sandal sales up to \$1,000 as a donation to park improvements.

COUNTY

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tracks waving pitchforks," said County Commissioner Bob Benton.

At the meeting Monday night, the Board of Commissioners also approved a reso-

lution that moves \$7,000 from the County materials and services budget to capital outlay in the 911 Center budget for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The County is moving forward on a unified security system, operated through the 911 communications center, which will tie in with the Hood River County Courthouse and Sheriff's Office.

In mid-June, Joel Harrington, an ADCOMM Engineering consultant proposed a new countywide radio system that all fire and police departments could use. This would replace the current system, which gets "poor to non-existent portable radio coverage" in remote areas of Hood River County, and even some areas within the city.

Guess who's coming to Hood River late 2015?

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Perry Stevenson, Specialist in Orthodontics, is expanding his Gresham practice to Hood River to serve the needs of those in Hood River, White Salmon, The Dalles, & other Gorge communities!

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