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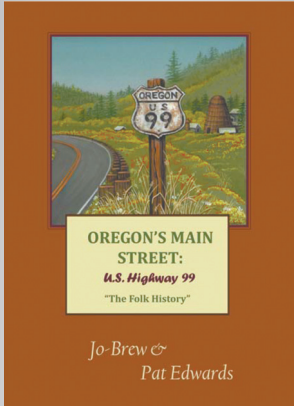
Cottage Grove Sentinel

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SOUTH LANE COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889

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Councilors sworn in, talk tobacco

State of the City highlights a wacky year

BY MATT HOLLANDER
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council was in agreement on many items on the Jan. 26 meeting agenda. However, one topic that will likely take several more rounds of discussion to resolve is a potential licensure program for tobacco/nicotine products.

In December, the Lane County Board of Commissioners and the Lane County Board of Health adopted an ordinance that requires stores that sell tobacco and e-cigarettes to obtain a license within the unincorporated areas of the County and prohibits the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. Until the County adopted the ordinance, there was no regulation on the sale, possession or use of e-cigarette products in unincorporated Lane County. There are currently no such laws in Cottage Grove.

Assistant Director of Lane County Health and Human Services Karen Gaffaney and senior health officer Dr. Patrick Luedtke from Lane County Public Health gave a brief



photo by Matt Hollander

From left, City Councilors Jake Boone, Mike Fleck and Garland Burback are sworn in at the Council's Monday meeting. Boone and Burback ran unopposed last fall, while Fleck replaces outgoing Councilor Victoria Doyle.

presentation on their work with county's Tobacco Retail Licensing Ordinance.

The presenters touched on a variety of topics including current smoking rates, the danger of e-cigarette chemicals in the hands of children and the lack of support for e-cigarettes as a healthy product — even though they may be less harmful than cigarettes. These findings have helped Lane County to conclude that e-cigarettes need to be subject to laws, especially when it comes to youth.

The key component of the ordinance is the licensing program. Retailers would pay a fee to sell tobacco/nicotine products, which

would support the administrative costs of enforcing guidelines on how the products are marketed and sold. If a retailer habitually ran afoul of these guidelines, he could be subject to fines or lose the retail license. The presenters made the case that this system would have more "teeth" for enforcement than the status quo.

While the Council agreed that nicotine/tobacco products harmful to children and should be banned for them, there was debate on whether or not a licensure program would be the most appropriate measure.

Councilor Jake Boone expressed concerns for levying fees on local

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Opt-out clause sought for student drug-testing policy

School Board to hear proposal at Feb. 2 meeting

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A policy implemented last fall by the South Lane School District Board of Directors mandates a drug test for high-school students who wish to participate in extracurricular activities.

The policy, passed by the Board at an Aug. 11, 2014 meeting, has thus far only been used to drug-test student athletes and has not been extended to apply to those who participate in other extracurriculars such as band, choir or the chess team. Still, some parents and other community members have taken issue with the new policy, and some have put forth a plan that would allow students to opt out of the testing with parental consent. At its Monday, Feb. 2 meeting, the School Board will hear details of their proposal.

The Board has fielded a request for an opt-out clause regarding the drug-testing policy before; at its Dec. 1 meeting, concerned parent Patricia Noe put the idea before the Board, but the group requested that the issue be placed on the agenda at a subsequent meeting so planning and outreach could be conducted. The Board's Jan. 12 meeting was cancelled due to the Oregon Duck football team's appearance in the National Championship game.

"We believe the procedures from the original vote were flawed," Noe told the Board. "We would like the agenda item to be moved to next month when we've had time to inform the public of the agenda item and can be sure it's properly placed."

It's unclear what reception the notion of an opt-out clause might receive from the Board, with some board members appearing to favor the expansion of drug testing to other extracurricular activities and the middle-school level and others claiming to be leery about that expansion. In earlier comments to the Eugene Register-Guard, Superintendent Krista Parent stated that the students most likely to seek the ability to opt out of the tests may be those who are not likely

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Details of Jan. 15 shooting trickle in

The Lane County Sheriff's Office has released the identity of the man shot and killed following an altercation southeast of Cottage Grove, though details of the incident that led to his death remained scant at the Sentinel's press time Monday evening.

On Thursday, Jan. 15 at about 7:30 p.m., the Sheriff's Office received a report of a gunshot wound at a residence on Lower Brice Creek Road. The male subject, later identified as

Mitchell Demopoulos, a 49-year old Culp Creek resident, was transported to the hospital, where he later died from his wound.

The Sheriff's Office stated that the incident in question involved a physical altercation between Demopoulos and a female at a Dorena-area residence. They say that, at one point in the argument, a third party fired the weapon that fatally wounded Demopoulos.

Police have declined to name the female or the third-party shooter, citing an ongoing investigation into the incident, and they have yet to release any further information. Sgt. Carrie Carver said the case is expected to be forwarded to the Lane County District Attorney's Office for review, which had yet to happen by press time Monday. Carver added that no related charges had yet been filed.

Local logger honored by his peers

Wilbur Heath recognized for work on behalf of Oregon's contract loggers

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A Cottage Grove logger who has spent decades working to improve conditions and knowledge among those in his profession was recently honored by his peers for his efforts.

Representatives from the Associated Oregon Loggers, which bestowed an award of special recognition upon Cottage Grove's Wilbur Heath at its 45th annual convention on Saturday, Jan. 17 in Eugene, heaped praise on Heath, one of the association's founding members.

According to the AOL's Jim Geisinger, the Association was formed in 1969 to

represent the community of contract loggers, to lobby to the state legislature and Congress on issues pertaining to the group and gain a greater knowledge of forest regulatory issues, policies and insurance programs.

Heath, who joined his father working at Heath Logging in 1950, has been with AOL "almost from the beginning."

"Nobody in the history of Associated Oregon Loggers has fought harder or cared more for the welfare of contract loggers than Wilbur Heath," according to a recent AOL press release. "He has won every award we have ever offered."

At the AOL banquet, Brad Haga, the Association's president, cited several reasons behind Heath's recognition. Haga stated that Heath was one of the Association's earliest members; he was its first president and the only member to serve as president for two separate terms; he has

been recognized as Logger of the Year; he was featured in "Time" magazine in an iconic photo featuring a Spotted Owl and has served his country in both World War II and Korea.

Geisinger later elaborated that the AOL hopes to help loggers "be successful any way they can." He said that timber giant Weyerhaeuser is the only company that employs its own loggers, and that most other logging is done by contract loggers, perhaps known more commonly in the past as "gyppo" loggers, to use a phrase that carries some hint of condescension.

"We used to call them gyppos," Geisinger said. "Almost all of these companies are family owned and have between 12 and 100 employees. They're small businesses that have many of the issues related to small businesses."

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photo by Jon Stinnett

Wilbur Heath with wife, Catherine, stopped by the Sentinel to talk about his work with the AOL.

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