

City Beat — 5A

New machine for hospital— 3A

Police dept. lot break-in— 6A

# Cottage Grove Sentinel

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

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New laws coming in 2017 Pg. 11

Holiday clean-up Pg. 3

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Full interview with new Mayor Jeff Gowling inside

### Cottage Grove Sentinel

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## Drain Mayor Resigns

BY CAITLYN MAY  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Drain Mayor Suzanne Anderson is leaving her post after being re-elected in November.

Her resignation was effective December 31.

"For health reasons, she resigned," Drain City Manager, Carl Patenod confirmed.

The city rang in the New Year without a mayor but Drain City charter allows the city council to fill the position.

According to Patenod, that process will begin sometime in January.

Reportedly, two individuals from the area stepped forward for consideration, including a former mayor.

"It's not Eugene. It's a typical small town, it doesn't become a political issue. We have trouble finding someone who wants to do it," Patenod said of the position.

Anderson won the Oregon Mayors Association's merit award in 2012 and previously helmed the city's newspaper the Drain Enterprise, which has since shuttered its doors.

when they rezoned on S. 6<sup>th</sup>, the old drive-in. When that developed into housing, it developed a lot of houses but we don't have that property anymore because we filled it. Hayden Homes was a vacant lot until they developed that into 100-plus homes.

**What is working in Cottage Grove, what are we doing right?**

We're attracting businesses. Paktech is coming into town, that's going to be a major thing. Paktech is going to have a lot of skilled labor jobs and it's going to pay higher than what people are looking at for wages. King Estates is continuing to develop out in the industrial park, that's a good positive feature they're adding to the community. I think we're looking at our goals and sticking to them pretty good. We're doing another goal setting session in January.

**What are some of the things on your list for that session?**

I'm one voice out of seven, so it's what the group does but my biggest ones would be the public safety. We have a lot of speeders in town and running red lights and talking on cell phones. We had a fatality a few years ago, two cars hit a lady in the crosswalk there. It was an accident that could have been avoided. I think if we start addressing those things, those petty crimes with the breaking and entering in vehicles to get things to quick sell for drugs, I think you would start impacting that if you had the atmosphere where you enforce the laws we have and hold people accountable.

Please see Mayor pg. 8

## A Year in Review:2016

A look back at the stories that impacted the community

As we head into 2017, the staff of The Sentinel has compiled a list of the year's top stories from bridge troubles on Main St. to a fire that captured the city's attention.

### THE NEW SCHOOL

Voters' first contact with the decision to build a new elementary school came on the May 17 primary election ballots. The question was put forth on whether or not to approve Bond Measure 20-249, which would replace Harrison Elementary School, fund deferred maintenance and upgrade security and technology around the district.

Initial estimates placed construction of the new building at \$18,921,100; just slightly higher than the cost of renovating the existing structure.

In July, officials from the South Lane School District traveled to Portland to sell a group of bonds that would furnish the district with the funds approved by the voters earlier in the year. The district secured an interest rate of just under three percent.

December proved a difficult month for the construction process after the planning commission continued an agenda item concerning the conditional use permit for the new school. An oversight of the height restrictions in the area according to code forced the project to request a height variance before moving forward with construction. It was expected to be readdressed by the commission in mid-January.

### BRIDGE TROUBLES

The Sentinel reported on March 23 that city officials had warned a Main St. bridge could, "collapse any day." The bridge in question, connecting the eastern and western halves of Cottage Grove, was deemed unsafe after the city received a report from OBEC Consult-

See Year in Review pg. 8

### Honorable Mentions

May 11  
Every 15 Minutes vist  
CGHS  
The "Every 15 Minutes" program coordinated with the Lane County Sheriff's Office to give a highly realistic simulation of a drunk driving incident involving an extreme amount of detail to highlight the horrors of the consequences of intoxicated driving.

July 6  
Legendary track coach dies

Sam Bell passed away on June 27, 2016. Bell replaced the famed Wally Ciochetti at Cottage Grove High School, where he coached Olympian Dyrrol Bursleson.

## Q&A with the new City Mayor

BY CAITLYN MAY  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Jeff Gowling was born and raised in Cottage Grove. Before he embarks on his new role as mayor, The Sentinel asked him what challenges the community was facing and what he hopes to accomplish during his term. The following is a transcript of that interview.

**Why make the jump from councilman to mayor?**

My term was up and I got on city council to learn and my goal was, ultimately, to be mayor. When Monroe ran last time I didn't feel I was ready at that point so I just sat in my position and learned more. When he decided not to run again it was a good opportunity to make the transition.

**What are the biggest challenges Cottage Grove is facing?**

There's several because in the next two years we're going to hit the 10,000 population mark and that puts more government regulations on us and that's going to be an issue. The infrastructure is definitely needing to be addressed. How are we going to fix the roads, the housing developments? The other thing I see is we're running out of land inside the city limits. We're not going to have that growth like



Photos submitted by Joe Ross



Douglas County resident Jeff Havener, left, joined a rally in late November concerning the possible closure of several library branches in Douglas County. County Commissioners are set to meet today, January 4, to fulfill their legal obligation to hold two public meetings before shutting down the library system. Several community groups have spoken out against the move after a ballot measure designed to create a library district failed in November. With out a viable financial solution, branches will begin to close.

## Douglas libraries may close

BY CAITLYN MAY  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A fight over access to public libraries is brewing in Douglas County after voters denied a ballot measure that would form a tax district to continue offering library services. As a result, several area libraries may cease operation.

"Right now there is no plan," Douglas County Commissioner Chris Boice said.

"The measure was voted down by a vote of the people and the county will not be able to continue to fund it," he said.

Ballot Measure 10-145 would have formed a tax district with a permanent rate limit for operating taxes of 44 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. However, voters defeated the measure by just over 50 percent.

Several libraries would be effected by the change including Roseburg and Drain.

Joe Ross lives in Roseburg and said he voted for Measure 10-145.

"I believe libraries are good for the community. They're a meeting place but right now in Douglas County there's a 'no new taxes' sentiment," he said.

According to Boice, the library system will run out of money by the end of the fiscal year but not before cutting back services drastically. In order to maintain services, the library's budget was front-loaded through the first half of the fiscal year, leaving a smaller operating budget for the last six months of the year.

"Two public hearings scheduled to talk about closure or transition of the libraries. We don't have a different organization to run it by the time we get to the fiscal year in July and the libraries will most likely close

but that I think would be temporary," Boice said.

The county commission will meet during a public hearing on January 4 to discuss the matter. They are required by Oregon Revised Statute to hold two public meetings before transitioning to a non-existent library system.

"I think they thought they would put the notices about the public hearings in the paper and no one would notice," Ross said. "People noticed."

Ross attended a rally in November with dozens of other residents to show their support for the library system in Douglas County.

"Hopefully it doesn't come to closing the libraries because they really are an important part of the community," he said.

See Library pg.11A

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### WEATHER



Some showers

HIGH

30

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