

# Cottage Grove Sentinel

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## Local non-profit sues former employee

### More than \$20,000 missing

BY CAITLYN MAY  
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Former administrative coordinator, Dante Layton is being sued by local non-profit Aprovecho after the organization found more than \$20,000 missing and electronic financial records deleted.

Layton is accused of not paying rent during his time on the Aprovecho property, withholding tuition funds and making unauthorized money orders totaling \$33,565.

The lawsuit filed in Lane County Circuit Court alleges that Layton, along with his friend Samuel Williams, lived on the 40-acre Aprovecho campus between 2013 and 2015. During that time, Layton al-

legedly rented a house without paying rent, and misused funds. The suit alleges that Williams had knowledge of Layton's actions and may have benefited from them.

Layton resigned in July of 2015.

"For us it's just really unfortunate that we were taken advantage of in this way," director of the natural building department for Aprovecho, Chris Foraker said.

Previous reports from local media outlets noted that Aprovecho spent \$10,000 on a forensic computer analyst to recover the files. However, according to Foraker, that amount also includes the cost to recon-

struct the deleted files.

Further, reports that the Cottage Grove Police Department had no open investigation into the incident were accurate; Aprovecho is outside of the Cottage Grove jurisdiction and a complaint has been filed with the Lane County Sheriff's Office.

"We just want to emphasize that this unfortunate incident hit during a time of growth for the non-profit," Foraker said. He said the organization has taken steps to safeguard their book-keeping practices in the future and that the goal of the lawsuit was to prohibit Layton from acting in the same manner at another organization.

"We're doing great as an education and research center and we'll be able to ride this out," he said.

Executive Director Steven Braun said, "Unfortunately, we're in the same boat as a lot of non-profits. It leaves opportunity for people to take advantage of the belief that we're all here for a good reason. There's an assumption in a non-profit that everyone is invested in the mission and sometimes, unfortunately, that's not always the case."

## CGHS plans auction

BY SAM WRIGHT  
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The Cottage Grove High School Athletic Department hosting a fundraising event to help bring more money to athletic programs at the high school. The department is hosting a dinner and auction on Feb. 18 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The idea came to Athletic Director Gary Roberts when he spoke with other athletic directors.

"I was at an 'athletic directors golf tournament' and some of the other athletic directors were talking about how they were doing it and how well it helped their programs," Roberts said.

Roberts says that there are a lot of things each athletic program needs such as new softball dugouts or renovations of the baseball field. He has already bought new soccer goal nets from the athletic budget funds.

The athletic department has taken recent budget cuts in the past years, but Roberts says it isn't really a response to that.

"We don't really want it to be a Band-Aid for the those cuts," he said, "Krista Parent and the school district has done an awesome job to keep athletics going and to keep participation fees down."

The athletic department has set a goal to raise around \$20,000 on the night. One larger 5A school raised around \$100,000, but Roberts believes

Cottage Grove High School's goal is reasonable for the size of the town.

The auction will consist of a live auction and a silent auction, along with a raffle drawing every 15-20 minutes. The raffle tickets come as part of the \$35 ticket to attend, which includes dinner and a non-alcoholic beverage.

The auction items will include things such as guided hunting and fishing trips, cabin trips in McKenzie and Sun River and outdoor equipment including rifle accessories and perhaps a rifle itself. Jim's Tire Point Services has also donated a \$1,000 gift card for tire services at their shop.

Roberts says there will be around 30 items to be auctioned, though items are still being added to the list.

Roberts reports that around 100 people have confirmed attendance to the auction, but the athletic department is still trying to spread the word and get as many people into the 225-person seating they will have set up.

"About 225 tickets sold would put us at about a quarter of the way to our goal, which would be fantastic," he said.

Tickets can be purchased at Cottage Grove High School or at the following local businesses: Valley Coffee, Buster's Main Street Café, and Jim's Point S. Tire Service.

## City Hall shut down

### Electrical issues forced staff and inmates from the building

Some office re-arranging and a tripped breaker saved the city a potentially expensive repair after an employee tasked with fixing the breaker, discovered a more serious issue.

On Jan. 12, city employees and inmates being housed in the building were forced out into the street due to what city manager Richard Meyers described as a problem with the main electrical line into the building.

"A bolt had come loose," Meyers said. He went on to explain that the bolt was located on part of the mechanism that also allowed the building's generator to take over in case of a power failure.

At the time of the incident, employees had been moving furniture in one of the offices which caused a breaker to trip. The unrelated power bump sent an employee down to where the electrical line was located where the smell of burning electrical and metal alerted staff to the larger problem.

"The bolt had gotten to 300 degrees. When the electrician came he thought there was a light on in the back of the box but it was actually the bolt glowing," Meyers said.

The electrician cleared the building to address the repair and city hall was closed early.

Normally, city hall has a generator that could keep the building running in the event of an electrical outage. However, the bolt was located in an area that was related to the generator, prohibiting the back-up system from taking over and powering the building. Further, on the electrician's advice, staff was cleared from the building and all electronics were turned off.

Had the problem gone unattended, the city's computers and overall building structure could have been affected.

The surprise incident apparently has no other cause than a loose bolt and is not cause for alarm in the community.

"It's something that can happen. When it was installed, the bolt wasn't tightened enough and when it gets hot it expands and contracts which loosens it as well," Meyers said.

Meyers said the city would be making a note to have the bolt be serviced and tightened on a regular basis from now on to avoid any further incidents of the same nature.



City manager Richard Meyers holds the bolt that melted and shut down city hall on Jan. 12.

## State of the City: A word from the Mayor

On Jan. 9 Mayor Jeff Gowing gave his state of the city address. Here, the Sentinel provides the speech in its entirety.

I'd like to start by thanking the citizens of Cottage Grove for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Mayor. It has been a long time goal of mine and I am honored to have been selected.

I'd like to thank Mayor Tom Monroe for his years of service to the city and the guidance he has given me.

I'd also like to welcome Bob Ehler to the council, he has been involved with community service here in town for almost 30 years and I'm confident he'll

put his heart and soul into the success of Cottage Grove.

We've had several accomplishments in the past year, yet we still face many challenges. Our most notable accomplishments include:

Two annexations- one that included properties on west main and brought the rest of Pam's Sunnyside into the city limits. The other was the Cottage Grove Airport. The City and State Aviation Department have been working on that annexation for a while and hope that

it will improve the ability of the State Aviation Department to develop and improve the airport increasing economic development opportunities.

Pak Tech will begin operations this spring. They are continuing to make improvements to the property at 230 Davidson. It will be exciting to see them begin and we are very excited to welcome them to our community.

Hayden Homes has broken ground on the development of their 32 units adjacent to Riv-

erwalk. The new rentals are desperately needed in the community. The innovative cottages will be an example of what can be done to address the needed housing in the community.

Online bill paying was made available for city utility accounts in 2016 and we already have over 15% of the accounts using the system to pay their water/sewer bills.

Great exhibits at the library-Human Origins Exhibits from the Smithsonian

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## Local theatre readies for new season

BY SAM WRIGHT  
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The Cottage Theatre is now entering its 2017 season which will boast six new plays, including several musicals.

All of the plays bare no familiarity with the theatre except for one, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which the Cottage Theatre presented once before in 1994.

The theatre will kick off its first production in early February with *Peter and the Star Catcher*, which will run from Feb. 3 to Feb. 19. The play is based off of a series of novels which document the fantastical backstory of Peter Pan. The play revolves around a nameless boy (guess who), who is shipped off from England to a distant island. Upon the ship, the boy befriends a girl who is a Starcatcher-in-training and finds a mysterious and celestial substance within a trunk in the Captain's cabin. The journey takes a turn when the ship is taken over by the fearsome "Black Stache" (Hook?).

In April, the theatre will move on to *Curtains*, a musical set in Boston in the late 1950s.

A poorly talented leading

lady mysteriously dies on stage during the opening night curtain call and a detective is brought in to solve the murder and save the musical. Expect a variety of exciting numbers from this play in the spring.

In June comes *The Importance of Being Earnest*, a local adaptation of the Oscar Wilde comedy. There are few that could be called more masterful in language arts and theatre arts than Mr. Wilde.

In the play, a spry young man from rural England invents a fictitious brother, Earnest, which provides him an excuse to take wile trips to London. Comedy, drama and a love story ensues in this theatrical classic.

In August, *The Good Doctor* comes to the stage which is originally a Broadway play based off of several short stories from Russian author Anton Chekhov.

October will feature *Jekyll and Hyde*, based off of the popular story by Robert Louis Stevenson. The good vs. evil flick will be fit for the Halloween month.

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### WEATHER



Some showers

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## Coffee with the Editor Every Tuesday 10 am

### @ Backstage Bakery

## Come chat about the community!

