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# 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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## Meet Harrison Elementary-AGAIN

School board choose a familiar moniker for the new school



BY SAM WRIGHT  
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The people have spoken and the South Lane School Board of Directors has heeded the voices of the people and chosen a name for the new elementary school.

But it turns out that it will only be the school that is new and not the name. Yes, with overwhelming results from the polls opened online, the school board felt compelled to vote for Harrison Elementary to be the name of the new school.

The school district posted an online poll on their website that allowed people to cast votes among several options. Among

other contenders were names like Covered Bridge Elementary, Bridges School, Headwaters Elementary School and Krista Parent Elementary School. Here are the statistics that were condensed by Communications Director Garrett Bridgens: Harrison Elementary, 1,621, all other names combined, 509. Combining all the other votes for all the other names didn't even come close to the amount of votes for Harrison.

But board member Taylor Withour made a point that people were able to vote more than once, however Bridgens said that fact didn't make much of a difference.

"We could see the IP address-like Covered Bridge Elementary, and even excluding those that voted multiple times, [Harrison] would still be heavily favored," Bridgens said.

Though the vote passed unanimously by the school board to with Harrison Elementary as the new name, it doesn't mean every member was wanting that selection.

"We're elected by the people to support a certain social contract," board member Alan Baas added.

Many other members had the same thought process.

"I don't necessarily support naming it Harrison but I do support the decision of the people

and I think it's pretty clear," Tammy Hodgkins said. Jerry Settelmeier pointed out that while the whole building will be named Harrison that the other names (which despite the lack of votes, still got positive feedback) could be used for different parts of the building.

Other board members, such as Sherry Deurst-Higgins, shared support of carrying over the tradition.

"I like Harrison and I think we should choose it," Higgins said. And thus, with no opposing votes, the name passed.

The new elementary school was given the green light on development following the pass-

See School pg.9

## Homelessness: What's happening in Cottage Grove?

The introductory installment of a series on the issues facing low-income and homeless individuals in Cottage Grove.

BY CAITLYN MAY  
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In the years following the Great Recession, states like Oregon have seen continued struggles of those categorized as low-income. Several factors contribute to homelessness including mental health and affordable housing inventories.

Over the next few weeks, the Sentinel will explore several factors locally, reporting on local resources and efforts to stem the number of those that would qualify as homeless.

Currently, under the McKinney-Vento definition, 100 students in the South Lane School District qualify as homeless; 3.75 percent of the students enrolled in the district. The count began in September and will continue until May 15. Last year's number for the same time period was 105. According to the McKinney-Vento representative for the area, Brandi Baker-Rudicel, the number can go up by May but she does serve students beyond the deadline for the count. This year, she's served 300 families with school supplies.

Data determining if the num-

ber of homeless individuals has gone up or down since last year will not be available until the conclusion of the point-in-time count set to be conducted within the next few weeks. Volunteers visit homeless shelters, parks and other areas that may house homeless individuals and ask them a series of questions including the state of their homelessness, how long they've been in the situation and other health-related questions. Individuals self-report and are not required to show proof of any illnesses or other claims.

"Homelessness definitions vary for different programs," said Mike Fleck of Community Sharing; an organization in Cottage Grove that works with low-income and homeless individuals providing meal boxes, clothes, laundry, housing assistance and other necessities. "McKinney-Vento, from my understanding, counts teenagers couch surfing but other programs, it's only if they are truly on the street."

The McKinney-Vento Act classifies students as homeless if children are sharing a house due to loss of housing, economic hardship or are living in hotels, motels, trailer parks

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## Chamber celebrates local businesses

For the 68th time, local businesses take home awards for service



BY CAITLYN MAY  
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When Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel and Crematorium joined the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, yearly dues totaled \$16. It was 1967. Fifty years later, the company joined several other local businesses and movers and shakers at the 68th Annual Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce Awards and Installation Banquet on Saturday Night. Smith-Lund-Mills, which was credited with serving over 15,000 families in the local area, picked up an award for its 50 years with the chamber; a feat no other local business has achieved. When accepting the award, Doug Lund told the crowd, "The Cottage Grove

Chamber of Commerce to me, is a philanthropic octopus with arms reaching out everywhere. God bless Cottage Grove and the chamber."

The message was received to a standing ovation with the crowd decked out to the nines to celebrate the event and its red carpet theme. The army was transformed into a Hollywood ballroom while Master of Ceremonies Diana Knous of Pacific Power, lamented her inability to tell a joke but kept the crowd engaged throughout the four-hour banquet.

While the majority of the event was dedicated to the presentation of awards, it began with a transition from the current chamber board president to the 2017 president, Candy Solsby. Chamber Executive Director

Travis Palmer presided over 2016 president Joe Raade's exit saying, that while the chamber traditionally gifts the outgoing president with a clock to mark the time spent in the position, it wasn't the case for Raade. "Anyone who's ever been in Joe's office, the thing they will notice is, it's full of clocks," Palmer said. "So we mounted his gavel on the plaque instead."

New president Solsby took to the podium just before dinner, stepping into her new position and graciously accepting a faux gavel decorated in glitter and rhinestones. She told the crowd of her Cottage Grove roots; her mother a bank teller in the city and her father the former fire chief. "I'm grateful they were my parents," she said. "They

taught me courage. The taught me kindness but growing up with a fire chief had its challenges. Nothing stayed plugged in and we couldn't have candles in the house." Now, married to the fire marshal, Solsby drew the audience's attention to the battery-operated candles on the table.

"Cottage Grove is a friendly city," she concluded. "I'm going to ask you to go against everything your parents told you and talk to strangers." Solsby's speech earned applause that continued throughout the night as awards were presented and organization after organization made their case, laying out their service to the city.

Teacher of the Year went to Kerry Clauson who thanked her

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## Sentinel named Business of the Year



The Cottage Grove Sentinel took home Business of the Year at the 68th Annual Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce Awards and Installations Banquet on Saturday, Jan. 21. General Manager Gary Manly accepted the award on behalf of the staff saying the honor was a surprise and the Sentinel staff wouldn't let the community down. The Sentinel was one

of four businesses up for the honor and one of 22 businesses that served as a table sponsor for the event.

The Cottage Grove Sentinel has been in operation under different banners since 1889. Manly said, "We are truly honored to be chosen as 2016 Business of the Year from a list of extraordinary nominees who are equally deserving."

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### WEATHER



Partly cloudy

HIGH 48 LOW 35

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1 Dollar

Coffee with the Editor  
Every Tuesday 10 am

@ Backstage Bakery

Come chat about the community!

