

Hall provides RARE opportunity for IDA

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Imani Hall has spent the last month learning everything he can about Independence. The Philadelphia native is a volunteer with Americorps Resource Assistance for Rural Environments and will serve as downtown manager for the Independence Downtown Association through next July 31. Since arriving three weeks ago, he has immersed himself in the area's history.

"There are nuggets of history here that you can't get anywhere else," Hall said. "That's what makes any community unique. ... I'm very interested in city planning, and I was attracted to this, being a small community and being close to Salem was a really big draw for me."

Hall is here to accomplish four main goals during his tenure: create a new event, help IDA improve itself, help with the group's social media presence, and assist in promoting Independence as a destination for the 2017 solar eclipse.

IDA is a group focused on economic development and the beautification of downtown Independence, and Hall wants to reflect the city's heritage in everything he does for the city.

"I want to listen to the community about what aspects of their history they want to highlight," Hall said.

Feedback from the community will be vital and affect everything he does —



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Imani Hall will assist Independence Downtown Association as a downtown manager thanks to Americorps Resource Assistance for Rural Environments.

from helping start an event to using social media to show the world what Independence is all about.

"I hope to get Independence's name and identity out there," Hall said. "There are a lot of things that are happening that we haven't had the opportunity to showcase. We want to show the growth and beauty of this community. This isn't about creating an image for Independence, but showcasing what Independence already is."

Hall also expects to have a

hand in planning for the solar eclipse next year.

"For instance in 2012, there was an eclipse in Australia," Hall said. "That brought probably over 40,000 to 50,000 people to a small community. To have another event that has that kind of magnitude for the city can be really beneficial. We want to bring the businesses together, not only to talk about how we can control and manage that many people, but also how this can be a spring board for the community

to grow and develop for years to come."

All of these goals can help serve a greater purpose.

"With RARE being here, we want to help jump start IDA overall to the next level of economic development and prosperity," Hall said.

To be successful, Hall knows this will require cooperation from the city, but he's excited to see what can be accomplished together.

"I have a lot of faith in the community," Hall said. "I think it will be a very beneficial relationship."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Grand jury indicts Myrold

DALLAS — A Polk County grand jury agreed with the charges prosecutors brought against Dallas High School teacher and coach Kirk Myrold, indicting him on two counts of second-degree sex abuse and one count of luring a minor.

Myrold pleaded not guilty to the charges in the Oct. 5 indictment — the same as he was arraigned on Sept. 27 — in Polk County Circuit Court on Friday.

The indictment states the alleged crimes occurred between the dates of June 1 and Sept. 12, the day Myrold was arrested.

The case is set for a pretrial conference on Nov. 10 at 11 a.m.

Deputy crashes with car Friday

DALLAS — At about 8:48 p.m. on Friday, Polk County Sheriff's Deputy Terry Brown collided with Jared Daniel Blake, 32, of Albany.

Brown had his lights and sirens on, responding to an accident on Highway 22 when he collided with Blake at the intersection of Washington and Main streets, according to Oregon State Police.

Sheriff Mark Garton said he responded to the scene, but immediately called OSP troopers to investigate the accident, according to policy.

"My deputy was responding to an injury crash on Highway 22 near milepost 20 with sirens and lights," Garton said. "The deputy was heading east on Washington Street, and the other vehicle was heading south on Main Street when the crash occurred."

An OSP trooper spoke with the involved drivers and witnesses, and arranged a tow for Blake's vehicle.

Pacific Power warns against scam

POLK COUNTY — Pacific Power is warning its customers and the public of a phone scam targeting utility customers in the Willamette Valley.

According to a press release from Pacific Power, criminals are posing as utility customer service agents, trying to get money and steal personal information.

The fraud calls are pestering people nationwide, but recent weeks have seen an upsurge, the release states.

The scammer demands payment for overdue bills from a residential or business customer. The thief advises the customer to make a payment in one of two ways: either immediately on the phone via credit card, or by going to a local store to purchase a pre-paid card and calling back on a special toll-free number.

Pacific Power states in the release that this is a scam: Pacific Power does not use these methods.

If such a call is received, hang up and call 1-888-221-7070 to inquire about and report the call. Also, report the incident to local police.

Some Things to celebrate birthday

DALLAS — Some Things, 857 Main St., Dallas, will celebrate its seventh birthday on Saturday. The store will offer 20 percent off everything beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Activities will run from noon to 3 p.m. and include caricature portraits, music from The Salem Soundwaves and art from Kelsey Ensz.

For more information: 503-831-3100.

Chamber: New CEO ready

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In a joint statement, Chamber President Joel Giusti and Visitors Center President Susan Morrill said they were pleased to have Shinn on board.

"Having considered many options, the boards of both organizations feel this strategic restructuring will position them to better ac-



complish their respective missions," they said in the statement. "JD is uniquely qualified to take the helm as

we redefine the roles the chamber and visitors Center take in the Dallas community"

Shinn will work closely with Metcalfe and Bonnie Dreier, with the visitors center, to learn about the organizations with an eye toward im-

proving the value of chamber membership.

"I couldn't be more excited about JD joining the team," Metcalfe said. "We have worked together in different capacities over the years on special projects, and I believe he will be a catalyst in leading both organizations to new success levels."

Close knit community needs it's local paper

In Chelsea Metcalfe's opinion, the Polk County Itemizer-Observer is "the best place to get the word out about our events and programs."

Metcalfe, Event Planner with the Dallas Area Visitors Center, recommends the I-O to chamber member businesses.

"Pricing is reasonable ... especially when it comes to some of the special projects (the I-O) does, like Explore Polk County, Who's Who, the phone book, and then specific guides like the medical directory," she said.

Reasonably priced and effective advertising isn't the only reason Metcalfe likes her local newspaper.

Of the I-O's special sections, the annual Summerfest preview is her favorite, naturally. She added Explore Polk County — an annual tourism guide published each May — is high on her list, too. She said it "has been fantastically put together over the last couple of years in particular."

Metcalfe said she always finds time to read the weekly edition to keep up with what is going on in her community.

"The local 'heart' stories are fantastic," she said. "Being a very close knit community, it is always fun to read about someone doing something extraordinary."

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