

# The Nugget

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## Tree falls on electrical line, sparks fire



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Firefighters quickly contained a brushfire sparked by a downed electrical line on Friday. The fire was near homes east of Sisters. It took some time to get it completely out as it was burning in large log pile.

Firefighters from the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District doused a brush fire at 16305 Riata Ct. east of Sisters on Friday morning, July 17. The blaze was uncomfortably close to homes in the area.

The fire was sparked when a tree fell on a power line, and the downed line ignited flammable vegetation. The fire burned approximately

one-quarter of an acre of brush and logs. According to fire officials, the fire was quickly contained, but full extinguishment took several hours due to the quantity of logs and large debris on the property.

The Oregon Department of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service and Central Electric Cooperative also responded to the incident.

“We were fortunate that the fire occurred in the morning and the winds were calm,” said Fire Chief Roger Johnson.

The area where the fire occurred is mixed trees, brush and residential structures.

The incident caused a momentary power outage in some parts of Sisters.

## Cold weather shelter a victim of pandemic

By Sue Stafford  
Correspondent

The Sisters Cold Weather Shelter is yet another victim of the coronavirus pandemic. Local churches that have offered space for the shelter for the past four winters are unable to open their doors to offer shelter to those in the community who are unhoused. Two of the churches have congregations with a large percentage of older members, one of the high-risk populations. Another may be involved in a remodel project of the space the shelter normally uses.

WellHouse Church (formerly Westside Church) has offered to be available during the coldest month if temperatures drop to

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## District planning for challenging school year

By Jim Cornelius  
Editor in Chief

Planning school schedules is always a challenge for a small district: How can you ensure that all students have the best possible access to limited numbers of electives, etc.? The coronavirus pandemic has thrown a massive spanner into the works.

Sisters schools are each crafting plans for the 2020-21 school year that must revolve around mitigating the risk of contagion from the COVID-19 virus. These plans are being created in a shifting environment of increasing COVID-19 cases in Deschutes County, including a few in the 97759 zip code — and shifting and

evolving guidance from the state.

Sisters School District Superintendent Curt Scholl offered a status report on planning to *The Nugget*:

“We have skeletons. We’re planning right now K-6 in-person; we have the capacity for that.”

Middle and high school planning is more complicated and Scholl said that schools are looking at a “hybrid” plan that includes a modified schedule and a mix of in-person and distance learning.

Schools are being asked to maintain separate “cohorts” of students, so that any outbreak of COVID-19

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## Cougars active in Sisters Country

By Jim Cornelius  
Editor in Chief

Several residents have reported cougar sightings, or sign of cougars present in the local area.

Corey Heath, Supervising Fish and Wildlife Biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) office in Bend told *The Nugget* that there have been reports — some direct and many of them second- or third-hand — of cougar presence in the Panoramic subdivision northeast of town, and on both sides of Whychus Creek in the canyonlands to the north of Sisters.

The potential for a problem encounter is always present when cougars are around residential neighborhoods with pets and livestock.



PHOTO BY KRIS KRISTOVICH

Cougars periodically make their presence known in Sisters Country. They usually move on on their own.

“It’s not desirable, certainly, where they are,” Heath said. “We’ve got signs up letting people know what

to do if they encounter one.” (See sidebar, page 18.)

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