AWARDS **Chamber plans** strong future

Continued from page A1

engineering and mathematics.) Field was part of a team that worked to research, design, build, program and test a specialized gaming controller for a Columbia High School teen with Cerebral Palsy, and now has an internship with the STEM Hub in the Gorge. "I can't wait to see what he creates next," Farquharson said.

First Responder of the Year

Project ELFF received the First Responder of the Year award, represented by Eric Pyles, Bob Palmer, Tim McGlothlin, Captain Ray Morris and Dave Lutgens. Project ELFF began in 1986 as a two-day food drive in The Dalles organized by Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue command, and has since expanded to Dallesport and Murdock. Prior to the actual event, assigned volunteers go to local businesses seeking cash donations. During the drive itself, fire apparatus hit the streets in area neighborhoods with lights ablaze and sirens sounding. Volunteers canvass door-to-door collecting nonperishable foods for the local food banks. Assisted living facilities in the area help transport volunteers from area to area, and Meadow Outdoor Advertising provides sorting and storage space for the donated items. The program collects an average of 16 to 17,000 food items, with as many as 23,000 collected in a single drive. A total of 152 volunteer

collectors, 27 MCFR volunteers, 25 Dallesport Fire volunteers, 5 MCFR administrative staff and members of The Dalles Lions Club, Salvation Army and St. Vincent De Paul turn out for the event.

Educator of the Year

Longtime The Dalles teacher Coutney Kiser was named as Outstanding Educator of the Year. Farquharson read a number of quotes from students in introducing Kiser. "I want this teacher to hear the impact they had on our community and many familes," she said.

"He was one of the corner stones of my childhood, when I look back," wrote one. "For a lot of us, he's been one of our favorite teachers and coaches, as his compassion is incomparable," wrote another.

'You will always hold a special part in my whole family's heart, from me to all three of my children, my nieces and other families and youth you have stood behind and supported," wrote another.

"He was my inspiration to become a teacher. He makes learning fun and is engaged with each and every student. He is a terrific man and he deserves to much. He is loved by so many," wrote yet another.

Agriculture **Achievement Award**

The Outstanding Ag Achievement award was given to the wheat and cattle farms under the family operation of John and Pat Clausen, Carlton and Pam Clausen and Gary and Susan Brown.

"This family-run operation has combined six family operations to be independent of each other and yet working together. This operation has always been an early adapter

of new methods, and has worked well with the county extension agent in trying new things," said Farquharson. They have taken a lot of risks along the way.

You do what you need to do to survive and you do it just because it is the right thing to do," she told the recipients. "You have the passion to carry on the vision of your granparents and parents while instilling their values in the children so that they can continue."

Woman of the Year

Barbara Pizzola, owner of A's Sewing Shop in The Dalles, was named Outstanding Woman of the Year.

Pizzola's family started a business in The Dalles over 40 years ago, and provided an essential service to the people of the region.

'Running a small business takes dedication, hard work, endless hours, and the ability to please your customers with good service," said Farquharson. "She never turned down an opportunity to help."

Pizzola also worked as a volunteer for many events and organizations, and as a CASĂ volunteer helping foster children in the court system. Her work with the Fort Dalles Rodeo's Tough Enough to Wear Pink helped provide funding for two digital Mammography Machines at the local hospital.

This year, Pizzola closed her shop but will remain active in the community. "You will find her working in town, being an awesome granma, and a loving and supportive mom—all the while still rolling up her sleeves and getting things done for the community," Farquharson said.

Man of the Year

Named Outstanding Man of the Year was Jim Wilcox, a local Realtor. "He always puts his clients first and makes sure they are taken care of no matter what," said Farquharson. "He has been recognzied by both is region and the state for his work, leadership and service to others. He has a vision for what our community could become."

Wilcox has traveled to Salem and Washington DC to advocate for local concerns, issues and ideas, and has worked with the Columbia Gorge Regional Airport for over 27 years. He is active in the Sister City program, coached baseball for 24 years and was a referee in wrestling for 30.

"He has done it all, from making doughnuts to singing in a barbershop quartet, all in the name of The Dalles," she said.

Business of the Year

Spooky's Pizza was named the 2020 Outstanding Business of the Year. Spooky's Pizza was established at the west end of The

Dalles in 1966, and is currently owned and operated by the Stanek Family.

"After 50 years, the original recipes continue to satisfy customers with their unique flavors. This family's passion is to ensure that the restaurant, and its recipes, grow with its community and customers," said Farquharson. "As a family they thrive on their ability to provide the community and beyond with high quality ingredients, superior customer service and consistency," she said.

Title sponsor was The Stratton Agency. Nineteen tables were sponsored; Catering was by Cherry City



Courtney Kiser, right, gives Katie Ortega, the 2019 Outstanding Teacher of the Year recipient, a hug as he receives this year's award at the Distinguished Citizens Awards Banquet Jan. 16.

Catering; and 27 businesses contributed to the auction.

There is a lot to look forward to from the Chamber in the coming year, said Farquharson, who invited Chamber staff to share their vision for the upcoming year: Katie McClintock joined

the Chamber staff as events coordinator in November. The banquet was her first big event. "In 2020 my goal is to build up our events even more, from our small events such as Coffee Connections and Business After Hours to big ones like the Cherry Festival, and work more with our community partners in the process," she said.

Jim Mejias, who works with tourism and media relations fo the chamber, said he is proudest of the commercial shoot with Sam Pyke of Hill Shadow Pictures this past year. "It was an amazing

opportunity over 48 hours to connect with tons of local partners, push The Dalles into a new light, and help everyone experience the city in a brand new way, he said. He plans to "K.I.T." (Keep Improving Tourism) in the coming year, streamline processes, build networks, and help take The Dalles to the next level, he said.

Lisa Rundell, office and visitor services manager for the chamber, said her work, which includes meeting a lot of great visitors to the area, "is a job I truly enjoy." She said she hopes to "continue making the chamber a great place for visitors and local business to find direction and any help we can provide."

Jessie Lamp, who will be working as communications coordinator with the chamber, will be joining the team at the end of the month.

LANGUAGE Spanish speaking teachers required

Continued from page A1

from each elementary, and Jonathan Fost, director of the **Migrant Education Program** at the Columbia Gorge Education Service District.

Teachers from Colonel Wright said in December they tried to get on the committee, but couldn't.

Fost said everybody who expressed interest was invited to a meeting last August, but it had to be canceled, and when there was a reboot of

The school board last January gave the go-ahead for program planning to begin, with an expected start date of fall 2020.

At that meeting a year ago, then-board member Bethani Frantz-Studebaker lauded the proposal, saying dual language immersion "is not a new idea. It's been highly effective, highly researched and highly implemented, globally.

Dual language programs benefit both native and non-native speakers, and by the upper years of elementary school, students enrolled in such programs academically outperform students not enrolled in them, according to in them, said the committee would grow once the school site was announced.

Board member David Jones was critical of that timing, saying, "You're going to decide on the site before you talk to the community?

Colonel Wright teachers in December told the board they felt Chenowith Elementary, with its much higher population of English Language Learners, made more sense as home for the program.

Colonel Wright is the smallest of the three elementaries, with two kindergarten classes compared to four at the other two schools.

Since the program requires

of Colonel Wright's classes, since they only have two at each grade level.

"That is the entire school changing, and that's huge and does bring a lot of anxiety for" teachers at Colonel Wright who want to finish their career there, but don't qualify to teach dual language, she said.

The district can't do the program without someone having to move schools, she said.

Fost has helped start four other dual language programs, and he said even in districts that already have one dual language program at one campus, people still resist the idea of starting it at

Fost agreed, saying other programs that waited a year after encountering resistance still had resistance the following year.

Darnall said she's been in the situation of starting a new program, and "it starts just like this. Just scared, white knuckle.

Kabakov said, "I don't hear fear, I hear exclusion."

Board member Dawn Rasmussen, who supports the program but feels the effort is being rushed and isn't inclusive, did some quick polling at the meeting and learned that of the 14 teachers present, just two were happy with the process.

One teacher said, "It's not

it proved too divisive, with animosities developing between teachers in the program and those not in the program.

A survey last spring of staff heard from just 55 teachers. At the last school board meeting, some teachers from Colonel Wright said their responses would've been different if they'd known their school would be the site.

Board Vice Chair Jose Aparicio said staff surveying should continue, even if questions have to be revamped, since they had become out of date, according to Fost.

Fost said he's already heard from teachers outside

the committee the money anticipated for a larger committee wasn't available.

The idea for a dual immersion program was recommended by ELL teachers after the school district learned four year ago it was one of the 15 lowest-performing districts in the state in terms of outcomes for English Language Learners, and it was required to change its instruction method.

Currently, ELL students are pulled out of classes for extra instruction.

a four-year federal study done in Portland Public Schools.

In a staff survey taken last year, one staff member wrote, 'I have worked in many districts where we had dual language programs. I have witnessed second language learners making greater academic progress as well as English only students becoming fluent in a second language." Chenowith Elementary

Principal Monica "Mo" Darnall, who started a dual immersion program in Hillsboro, and has also taught Spanish-speaking teachers, those teachers who don't know Spanish would be moved to other classrooms or buildings as the program progressed up the grades.

No teacher would lose their job, but they could be relocated, said District Human Resources Director Brian Schimel.

Superintendent Candy Armstrong said the reality, especially for Colonel Wright, was that a program with two classrooms at each grade level would mean it involved all

another campus.

Darnall said dual immersion programs always meet resistance, because change is scary

Board member Rebecca Thistlethwaite said the focus should be on students, and the program would help students, both the native Spanish speakers and the students who would learn Spanish. While some board members suggested waiting a year, she said the same objections would still be there a vear later.

that I'm in support or not in support. I don't have enough information."

Rasmussen wanted to "put the brakes" on the plan and revise the timeline. She said the teachers who would be in charge of executing the plan felt they needed more time.

Thistlethwaite argued the program was starting small. "It's not changing an entire school, it's one grade."

Darnall said Hood River tried to implement a program in an entire elementary at once, but had to stop because

the district interested in jobs in the program, and teachers within the district have also expressed interest.

Asked if the process could be pushed back a year, Darnall said starting in the fall was the best timing to begin it.

There are grant monies to begin it, and the state's Student Success Act, passed last year, will also put about \$2 million a year into the district and is aimed at closing the "achievement gap" between minority students and other students.

TEACHERS **Program location** undecided

Continued from page A1

Each elementary is a community school, Vaught said, and adding a dual immersion program to one of them would represent "a fundamental shift in the way we onboard kids into our education system."

A year ago the school board authorized staff to prepare for establishing a dual language immersion program, which would start at one school at the kindergarten level and then expand one grade level each year as the students progressed through school. Students would be chosen by lottery for the program, which would have 50 percent native Spanish speakers and 50 percent non-native Spanish speakers. The classes

would be taught 90 percent in Spanish initially, and by fourth grade, would be equally in English and Spanish.

The proposal is to start it next fall, at a school yet to be determined (although Colonel Wright teachers heard a rumor last fall that the program could go at their school).

District Superintendent Candy Armstrong said the location of the program had not been decided yet. The current timeline calls for that decision to come by Feb. 27.

Vaught said he didn't think the dual language program was a bad idea. He said it could be a "gold star" for the community if implemented thoughtfully with an understanding of community needs.

He said staff and community engagement was needed to get buy-in and support. Instead, the dual language committee "has sown seeds of discord, distrust and disrespect with those most deeply affected by this change."

He said "the fruits of this

labor will most certainly yield disenfranchised staff and underserved students."

He encouraged the school board to slow the process down, publicly present the problems that need to be addressed and the solutions for them, and to do so in a way that fosters community engagement and full transparency.

Deocelen Munoz, an English Language Learner (ELL) assistant at Colonel Wright, said at a recent state conference for dual language programs she got to see non-native Spanish speaking students read, speak and have a conversation in Spanish. "It was amazing," she said. "I do feel that the kids of D21 will benefit from such a great program."

She talked to a principal with a program at her school, and she said getting it started was a lot of work, including informing parents about how the program would benefit students, and staff meetings

to help teachers have an easier transition.

Munoz said when Trost Elementary in Canby first implemented dual language it didn't work, and they tried again the next year and it was a success.

A teacher from Gresham told her the same thing: they also didn't have success the first time they started the program, and they had to get the community involved to have a successful start.

Munoz said she talked to people from three different schools who implemented dual language immersion programs, and all three had commonalities: "They talked to the community, they had staff meetings, they went door to door to speak to both parents, both Spanish and non-Spanish, they understood and acknowledged the teachers' feelings."

She said all the dual language teachers she saw were native Spanish speakers with years of teaching experience.

She said that only after the committees at those schools had talked to the community and teaching staff did they go to their school boards with implementation plans.

She asked if the D21 committee had talked to the community in depth about the pros and cons of having the program. "Have they explained to all three elementary schools how much this program will impact all the elementary school communities? Do they have qualified teachers and assistants with experience lined up? Not just for this year, but for the following years?'

We need to have an open communication for this to work," Munoz said. "If we rush, and we don't stop and think and plan as a team, this will not work."

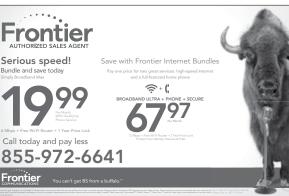
She said it didn't matter where the program was housed, what mattered was "are we ready to start, to have a successful DLI program in our district?'

Chenowith Elementary teacher Mary Tyree told the board, "While I see the point of a DLI program I can tell you we are not ready and you can't afford it! We also get a new superintendent in seven months who may feel getting a balanced budget would be the priority?

She said before thinking of housing the dual language program at Chenowith, "Can we get a PTA (Parent Teacher Association) please! We have chronic absenteeism, high trauma, high poverty and we have already been in turmoil for three years going on four.'

Teachers at Colonel Wright spoke to the school board last month, saying Chenowith made the most sense to house the dual language program because the school has by far the most native Spanish speakers. It has more than 50 percent native Spanish speakers, more than twice the rate of the other two elementaries, a teacher said earlier.





GRAND ALASKAN **CRUISE & TOUR** 12 days, departs May - Sep, 2020





-877-840-6119 Promo code N7017

Prices are per person based on double occupancy plus \$299 taxes & fees. Sinale supplement and seasona uncharges may apply. Add-on airfare available. Offers apply to new bookings only, made by 3/31/20. Other erms and conditions may apply. Ask your Travel Consultant for details.