

Festival

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Additionally, there were two gas stations in town, and those were the only public restrooms – at a beer fest populated with that many folks!

Adjustments pulled the gala through, and learning began immediately following as the first Oktoberfest in this region was off the ground. That planning process became standard.

“Not only does Oktoberfest have a history of great attendance, there’s a history of great problem solving,” Bochsler said.

That attendance mark has grown over the decades, hitting a crescendo in 2015 when Oktoberfest celebrated its 50-year anniversary and drew an estimated 400,000. For a city with a current population in the area of 3,500, hosting that many visitors is a well-planned ordeal.

Chris Bischoff, a construction business owner and operator by day, is at the crux of that planning as he is the current Oktoberfest board president. The fest begins on a Thursday, runs through Sunday, and the following Thursday there is a meeting for evaluation of what worked well, what went not so well, and planning begins anew.

“Basically, we start



DANIELLE PETERSON | STATESMAN JOURNAL

Kathryn Beyer and her brother, Brian Beyer, dance in front of a crowd at the 50th celebration of the Mount Angel Oktoberfest on Sept. 20, 2015, in Mount Angel.

setting a path for the next year,” Bischoff said.

By August’s end, Bischoff, Lauzon and Bochsler, whose day job involves health-care planning, were all hitting stride in planning for the 2017 Oktoberfest, which takes place Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 14-17. The event schedule also includes affiliated events, like the Saturday, Sept. 9 peddle-tractor race and a kickoff party, along with a Wednesday,

Sept. 13, cross country race at Silver Falls State Park.

To muster up the energy for this celebration of German culture, a slew of volunteers is necessary, generally to the tune of 7,500, according to Lauzon.

“You can’t find a festival half our size that doesn’t have some paid staff,” Lauzon asserted.

It’s a testimonial to the thousands who step up to serve in roles as varied as

organizing food vendors, orchestrating the 30-plus musical combos, staffing security or simply shucking corn.

There are many beneficial spinoffs as well, such as the 50 non-profit food booths that benefit a variety of causes, and the \$3.2 million in grants awarded by the Oktoberfest Board of Directors over the years.

While Lauzon applauds the “giant charitable impact,” his festive enthusi-

Oktoberfest Facts

- 39,000:** 1966 Attendance
- 400,00:** 2015 Attendance
- 7,500:** Volunteers needed
- 262:** Events Scheduled in 2017
- 12:** members of Board of Directors in 1966
- 25:** members and associates of Board of Directors 2017
- 1967:** Year Marlene Meissner started playing her accordion (she hasn’t missed a year)
- \$100:** Amount borrowed to start
- \$14,240:** Charitable giving in 1969
- \$130,200:** Largest charitable giving (2003)
- \$70,000:** Charitable giving 2016
- \$3,198,406.75:** Cumulative charitable giving in 51 years
- 7-10:** food booths 1966
- 50:** food booths 2017

style of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, perhaps the most notable icon throughout that region of the mid-Willamette Valley.

From the lederhosen and Alpine fedoras to the fondue and schnitzel to the nuanced polka styles, the event is rife with German traditions. But there are also some new elements each year, such as this year’s official event beverage, Volksbier brewed by Hopworks Urban Brewery (HUB) in Portland. The fest organizers said that brew began selling in local Roth’s market by Sept. 1.

“The last several years we’ve teamed up with a lot of different breweries,” Bischoff said.

That is one key element to the cultural event pivoting on food, music and merriment. All those elements come together as the community awaits the waning summer days to bring its usual crowds.

“Labor Day weekend is when the whole community comes together and works toward (hosting) Oktoberfest,” Bochsler said. “The Wednesday before, (the festival) literally takes over the streets.”

And the next day Mt. Angel opens its doors.

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asm radiates most when the conversation broaches German traditions. He spent many of his military years stationed in Germany, and a fair amount of his stateside duties training Germans.

“This wonderful event brings people together to celebrate the folk traditions of Germany,” he said. “There is more German culture here in Mt. Angel that weekend than in any one concentrated area of Germany.”

He further illustrates the German environs pointing to architectural icons, such as the Glockenspiel and the late gothic

Fire

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Elkhorns or Wallows.

Cascade Crest

There’s no way around it: there are a ton of wildfires burning between Mount Jefferson and the Three Sisters.

Any trip in this area, including Santiam Pass or the Cascade Lakes near Bend, will be impacted by smoke and places closed to outdoor adventure.

There are at least 20 fires actively burning in the Cascade Crest. The largest includes Milli and Whitewater.

But even the small fires are causing trouble, such as Scorpion, which spurred Breitenbush Hot Springs to close, and Potato Hill, which has slowed traffic over U.S. Highway 20.

As a result, there is no shortage of closures.

Here’s a list of the most up-to-date numbers on areas closed as of Aug. 30, keeping in mind this could change any time.

Milli Fire / Three Sisters fires (Bend / Sisters area): 183,646 acres

Whitewater Fire (Mount Jefferson area): 116,228 acres

Rebel Fire (Cougar Reservoir area): 67,392 acres

Jones Fire (Eugene / Lowell area): 57,120 acres

Staley Closure (Oakridge area): 51, 680 acres

Headed to Crater Lake? Expect smoke

Crater Lake has been blanketed in smoke, making it a challenge to see or photograph the lake’s



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK

Smoke covers Crater Lake National Park on Aug. 3.

famously blue waters at Oregon’s only national park.

“Look, we’re open and excited to welcome people to Crater Lake,” park spokeswoman Marsha McCabe said. “And there are times when you can get a decent view of the lake. It just depends on how the wind is blowing and what the fires are doing.”

Crater Lake has been surrounded by fires this summer. The Spruce Lake Fire is burning just west of the park’s West Rim Road — you often see flames and smoke from the road, McCabe said.

To the south, the Blanket Creek Fire is about four miles from the park’s campground, cabins, restaurant, and store. That area, called Mazama Village, is under a precautionary level 1 evacuation warning.

Even so, it’s mostly business as usual at Crater Lake. The trolley and boat tours are still running. Most of the park’s most popular trails remain open.

It’s just a matter of

what you’ll see, and whether you’re sensitive to smoke.

“If you have a medical condition, you should probably consider coming another time,” McCabe said. “But if you’re coming from a long distance, we’re open.”

North Umpqua River canyon

Bill Blodgett’s clients on the North Umpqua River have looked a bit different than normal.

Instead of welcoming families clad in shorts and sunglasses, the owner of North Umpqua Outfitters has filled his rafts with firefighters wearing no-mex and hardhats while wielding Pulaskis.

Such is life in this summer recreation paradise east of Roseburg that’s been transformed by 14 wildfires burning as part of the 23,501-acre Umpqua North Complex.

Ever since the fires broke out in early August, a place that would normally be filled with hikers, rafters and anglers has been dominated by the

1,000-plus firefighters attacking multiple blazes along State Highway 138.

The highway is closed for 7 miles from milepost 47 to 54, and numerous trails and campgrounds have been shuttered as well.

Most importantly to Blodgett, the North Umpqua River has also been closed to rafts due to fires dropping burned-over logs into the typically idyllic stream.

“I was on pace for a record-setting season,” Blodgett said. “We had an outstanding July and it looked like that would continue in August.”

But instead of being stuck on the sidelines, Blodgett was drafted into action ferrying firefighters across the river and providing emergency evacuation capabilities to those on the line.

“We’ve become a ferry service for the firefighters, to get them across the river so they could access the fire by foot,” he said. “They also needed a safety plan to mitigate danger to the firefighters, by having a way to get them out and across the river quickly.”

The jobs have allowed Blodgett, who’s been running trips on the North Umpqua since 1992, a way to keep his guides employed during the river shutdown.

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Amazon

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Ness Commercial Advisors, agreed. “The land is generating nothing right now, and has generated nothing for years, so I look at something like enterprise zone benefits as a great recruitment tool that genuinely costs us nothing,” he said in an email.

“It takes nothing out of our pockets as a city or a county because we don’t receive any revenue from it, and haven’t for decades,” Arthur said. “It simply delays the timing on when the benefits begin to come in.”

Arthur estimated the center’s annual payroll could exceed \$30 million. That’s figuring that, with 1,000 full-time employees, 900 of them could earn average wages of \$13.75 an hour, 50 supervisors could make \$20 hourly and 50 in

management could make \$35 an hour.

“That’s a lot of tax revenue,” he said.

Employees will then buy homes, pay property taxes, shop, buy insurance, groceries, need doctors and dentists, and so forth, Arthur said.

“It’s a trickle-down effect that has substantial benefits for the entire business community,” he said.

Amazon coming to Salem won’t likely entice a bunch of residents to shop online more than they already do, “so I think the overall impact throughout our community by adding 1,000 jobs far outweighs three years of property tax abatement or any threat against existing businesses,” Arthur said.

It is “bombarding the radio waves with advertisements for labor,” said Michael of the University of the Pacific.

Amazon’s shipping centers in northern Cali-

fornia have created more jobs than what the company first announced, he said.

There’s a significant impact on the market for labor, and local businesses might see new sales because of Amazon employees. Some could see themselves competing with Amazon for workers, Michael said.

E-commerce and Amazon are affecting traditional retailers all over, wiping out retail positions, he said.

“The fulfillment center will probably displace a lot more retail jobs in Portland than around Salem, so it is most likely a net employment gain in Salem,” Michael said.

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