

Appeal Tribune

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Farmhouse seen as site for museum

Christena Brooks

Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Could the little white farmhouse on the corner of College and East Garfield streets become Mt. Angel's own history museum?

Local historians are close to deciding whether to turn the Saalfeld House into a history hotspot open to visitors. The outcome depends on the cost of upgrading the quaint structure's foundation and floor, as well as other major repairs.

"The idea of turning the house into a museum is by no means dead, but it's taking time," said Bill Predeek, Mt. Angel Historical Society president. "Now contractors are going to evaluate what has to happen under the house and how much it'll cost."

The late Henrietta Saalfeld donated her family home to the City of Mt. Angel in 2010, stipulating that the yard become a public park.

Two years later, volunteers turned the tidy little yard into usable patio and park space. At the same time, the Mt. Angel Historical Society was being formed.

Almost immediately, the society's board was cautiously optimistic about asking the city to use the house to store photographs, documents and artifacts – and to possibly convert it into a museum someday.

As the nonprofit grew to its current size – a seven-person board serving 109 members – it successfully negotiated a one-year lease with city council, followed by a 15-year lease that began in February.

For \$1 per year, the organization is now using the house as a home base for small meetings and archiving.

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Friends E.J. Rubesh, 8, left, and Colin Cordle, 9, both of Albany, try to carry a pumpkin during the Harvest Festival at Greens Bridge Gardens in Jefferson. ANNA REED/STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

Agritourism helps boost farm income

Abby Luschei

Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A good workout wasn't the only thing that Dee Malone got while picking fruit at Beilke Family Farm.

The trunk of her car now contained more than three buckets of fresh produce, which she got for less than \$40.

Malone, of Keizer, rarely goes to the grocery store for her produce after discovering U-Pick farms last year. Instead, she picks her own fruit and vegetables about every other week.

Knowing where her family's food comes from makes Malone feel like a more conscious consumer.

"Those are right off the tree, so you know they are fresh," she said pointing at her buckets of apples. "(U-Pick farms) are wonderful, they really are."

Businesses like Beilke Family Farm are a part of agritourism, a growing industry in Oregon that's connecting operators and consumers.

And most Oregonians have tried it, possibly without even knowing it.

Browsing a local harvest festival, eating at a farm to table dinner or sipping rosé while painting with your best friend in a tulip field – it's all agritourism.

In Marion and Polk counties, 115 of more than 3,500 farms in the area are involved in agritourism, said Mary Stewart, the agriculture business development and marketing leader for the OSU Extension Service.

Agritourism provides farm operators with an additional stream of income while providing farmers and the public opportunities to get to know and learn from each other.



Isabella (from right), Penelope and Hazel MacPherson take to the slides at Bauman's Harvest Festival in Gervais. MOLLY J. SMITH/STATESMAN JOURNAL

And becoming familiar with how food gets from the farm to the store helps educate consumers about locally-grown products and land-use choices.

Enhancing the on-farm experience

Agricultural diversification – the introduction of a new product or experience, usually at a farm – has to consider many factors, including land use laws and neighboring farms.

"Whenever agritourism is added to a farm, it has to be done thoughtfully and carefully," Stewart said. "It is not for everyone, but we are seeing more do it."

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Marion County will conduct audit after sex bias claim

Jonathan Bach

Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Marion County officials will hire an outside company to conduct a "cultural audit" after a public works employee accused her manager of sexual discrimination.

The audit may cover more than 1,650 county workers, including part-time and temporary hires.

"My understanding is that we will try to get that contract for a consultant completed as soon as we can," said Jolene Kelley, spokeswoman for the county.

"A lot will depend on what we think the cost of that will be," Kelley said. Another factor is the procurement process they'll need to follow.

"The goal is to get this in place as soon as possible," Kelley said.

Meantime, preliminary results from a Marion County Employees Association survey shared with the Statesman Journal show additional county workers say they have experienced unwanted sexual attention in the course of their jobs.

Jamie Namitz, who has worked for the county for 16 years, went public last week with an accusation that Don Newell, public works operations division manager, sexually discriminated against her during a recent job interview, calling her "biggest strength" her "sexuality."

Newell declined to comment Wednesday.

Findings from a county human resources investigation showed Newell violated Marion County administrative policy four times for verbal harassment, discriminate treatment, discrimination and disparate treatment.

Newell also violated Marion County personnel standard of conduct rules twice, according to the findings. Human resources recommended termination.

Kelley declined to say what, if any, action has been taken, except that Newell remains employed.

The Marion County Employees Association started circulating a survey on Oct. 1 about unwanted sexual attention at the workplace, said Bob Hopkinson, SEIU Local 503 communications organizer. "The survey is still open and data is still being collected."

Of the association's estimated 757 members, only 79 have responded so far. Early results show:

- 10 respondents said they experienced unwanted sexual attention while working at the county by a co-worker, colleague, business partner or contractor, or person in a supervisory position/supervisor, or someone with perceived power/influence over their career.

- 19 respondents said they witnessed or knew of a county colleague having experienced unwanted sexual attention.

- 35 respondents said human resources did not address their concerns. (Only 62 people responded to that question).

MCEA President Trish Straw told commissioners at Wednesday's Marion County Board of Commissioners meeting that she sat in on about 20 inter-

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Oregon wildfire costs hit record high

Zach Urness

Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The cost of fighting wildfires in Oregon reached an all-time high \$514.6 million in 2018, according to data from Northwest Interagency Coordination Center.

Fueled by wildfires that started early and threatened communities all summer, Oregon's costs skyrocketed past last year's record-setting total of \$447 million.

"The difference this year – what made it so expensive – was having so many large wildfires that lasted not just weeks but months," said Carol Connolly, in-

formation officer for NWCC. "We also had a lot of large fires close to populated areas."

All totaled, Oregon had 1,880 fires that burned 846,411 acres or 1,322 square miles – an area larger than Rhode Island.

Humans were blamed for 1,217 wildfires, while lightning caused 664 fires but also burned a much larger area.

The number of acres burned isn't a record, but it's well above historic averages and continues a trend of more extreme fire seasons.

"We've reached a point where people have stopped

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