

# Appeal Tribune

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## Stayton will no longer charge athletes to play

**Bill Poehler**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

About five times each year, a teacher or coach approached Stayton High School athletic director Darren Shryock and told him they suspected a student needed assistance to pay the school's \$115 fee to play a sport.

Shryock, also the school's girls basketball coach, helped all the students he could by giving them a discount or by letting them work at other sporting events such as track and field meets to make up the fee.

But it was always an awkward conversation. "They didn't come to me, I would have to come to those kids," Shryock said. "Who knows how many more there were through the years that I didn't know about."

That potential hurdle to a student participating in a sport or activity at Stayton High School won't exist anymore.

The North Santiam School District has eliminated participation fees for all classes and sports at Stayton High School and the district's three middle schools, Stayton Middle School, Sublimity School and Mar-Linn School starting this school year, except golf and swimming.

Along with those participating in sports such as basketball and football, students in classes such as fabrications, woods and art will no longer be charged fees, nor will students in activities such as dance, band and choir.

Superintendent Andy Gardner said it's taken three years for the district to get to the point where it could make it financially feasible to eliminate the fee, which brought in approximately \$75,000 each school year.

Among Stayton's four schools, about 500 students participate in at least one activity.

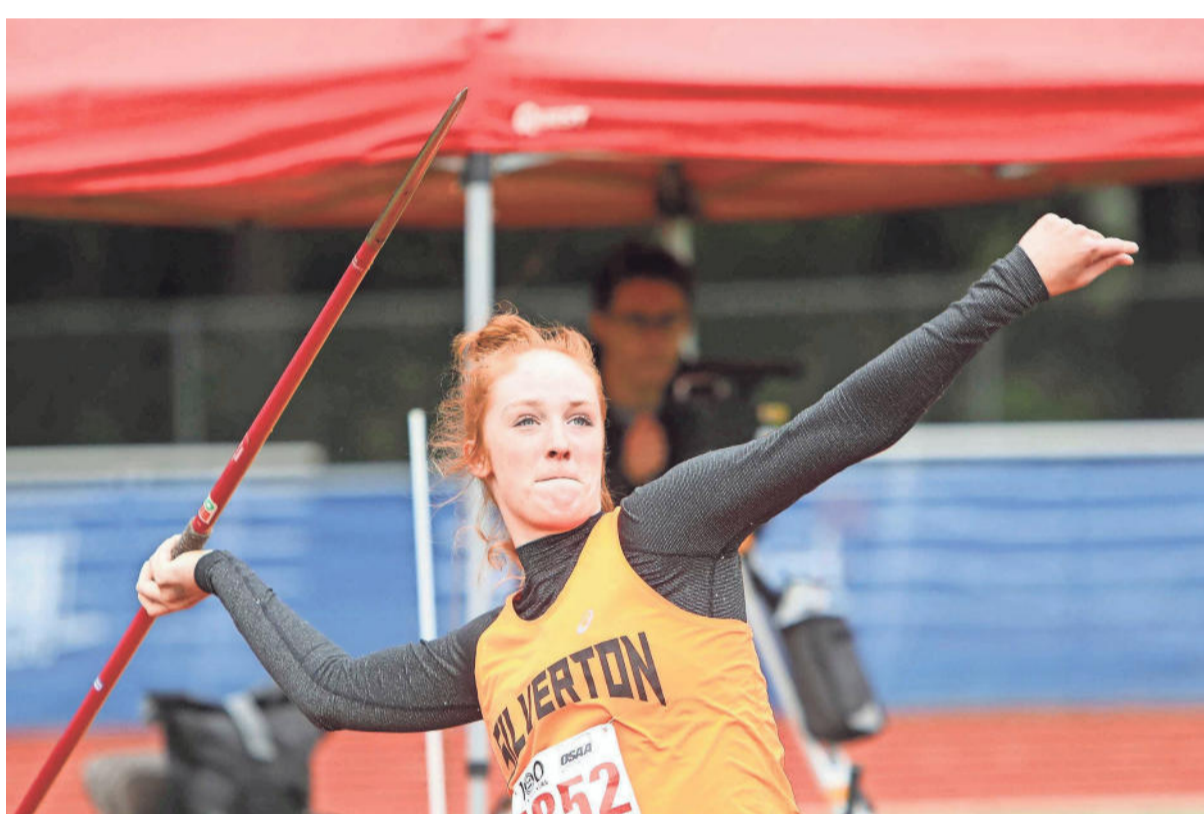
Tillamook was the first school district in Oregon to eliminate activity fees when they did it in prior to the

See FEES, Page 2A



Stayton's Riley Nichol (15) passes the ball in the second half of the Woodburn vs. Stayton boys basketball game at Stayton High School in Stayton on Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019. Stayton won the game 68-51. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

## Silverton's Riley Traeger wins national title



Silverton's Riley Traeger competes in the 5A girls javelin during the OSAA 5A/6A State Track and Field Meet at Mt. Hood Community College on Friday, May 24. AMANDA LOMAN / FOR THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

**Christena Brooks**  
Special to Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

SILVERTON – Riley Traeger is returning to high school with one heck of a how-I-spent-my-summer story. She traveled to Sacramento, Calif., competed in the U.S. Track & Field Hershey National Junior Olympic Championships and won first place in women's javelin.

Traeger, 17, overcame 105-degree heat and the pressures and quirks of national-level competition, including being barred from using her own javelin, to throw 140'3" and win over all other 17-and-18-year-old girls competing at California State University, Sacramento on July 28.

See TITLE, Page 3A



Riley Traeger, center, of Silverton won the National Junior Olympics in javelin. COURTESY OF TRAEGER FAMILY

## Aumsville preps corn fest for the bigger time

**Bill Poehler**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

AUMSVILLE – A summer festival can mean a lot to a small town.

Some gatherings – such as the Mt. Angel Oktoberfest, the Sublimity Harvest Festival and the St. Paul Rodeo – have grown to annual events that bring a large influx of people into town for a few days each summer and shape a community's identity.

For 50 years, the Aumsville Corn Festival drew from a limited base of demographics of people around Aumsville, but missed wide swaths of people from throughout the rest of the Willamette Valley.

People in nearby towns didn't know it existed.

See CORN FESTIVAL, Page 3A



Parade participants make their way down Main Street during the 48th annual Aumsville Corn Festival on Saturday, Aug. 27, 2016. DANIELLE PETERSON / STATESMAN JOURNAL

## Rail crossing accidents trend upward in Oregon

**Ben Botkin**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Railroad crossing crashes in Oregon have nearly doubled since 2013.

But because such accidents are relatively rare compared to highway crashes, the increase has largely flown under the radar outside of transportation circles.

Oregon had 19 rail crossing accidents in 2018, up from 10 in 2013.

And Marion County had the most among Oregon counties, logging 28 railroad crossing crashes since 2008, according to an analysis by the Statesman Journal.

That's 18 percent of Oregon's 154 railroad crashes since 2008.

They unfold in a variety of circumstances: Drivers attempting to get around closing gates; pedestrians walking across tracks; bicyclists failing to yield.

The annual statistics may not sound like much, but the number of victims since 2008 adds up.

Thirty-five people were killed.  
Thirty-six people were injured.

There's no simple explanation for the increase. State transportation officials and safety advocates say a variety of factors are at play: Oregon's growing population; people's unfamiliarity with their new surroundings; and the popularity of pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Officials say the increase in accidents underscores the need for Oregonians to pay closer attention as they navigate the state's nearly 4,000 railroad crossings.

"The vast majority of the incidents were poor judgment and poor decisions on the road users' part," said Rick Shankle, manager of the crossing safety section at the Oregon Department of Transportation's rail division.

### Railroad crossing safety

Oregon Department of Transportation officials have put together a plan intended to address the issue and reduce the number of crossing incidents.

It's called the Oregon Highway-Railroad Crossing Safety Action Plan. The 139-page document, released this summer, lays out steps for the state to improve railroad crossing safety. It's a first for Oregon, coming because of additional federal requirements for states from the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015.

The state's plan also examines a decade's worth of railroad crossing crashes, from 2008-2017.

Oregon's transportation agency regulates railroad crossings and works with local road authorities and railroads to plan crossing configurations.

"People don't understand the risk," said Roseann O'Laughlin, a principal planner with the agency. "They're either complacent or don't understand the real risk."

See CROSSINGS, Page 2A



The railroad crossing at Main St. NE in Aurora is seen in Aurora on August 5.

KELLY JORDAN/STATESMAN JOURNAL

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