

Rabid bat bites tourist in Marion Co.

Visitor bitten in Breitenbush area

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Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Public health officials are warning residents to be careful after a person was bitten by a rabid bat in the Breitenbush area of Marion County on Saturday. Health officials declined to say exactly where the incident happened, or whether the victim, an out-of-state visitor, was an adult or child. Breitenbush, an unincorporated community about 10 miles east of Detroit, includes the Breitenbush Hot Springs Retreat and Conference Center, and a group of privately owned vacation homes.

The victim captured the bat and brought it to the Marion County Health Department, Alisa Zastoupil, a program supervisor there, said. The bat was sent to Oregon State University for testing, which confirmed it was infected with rabies. The Marion County Health Department recommended the victim receive rabies prophylaxis. Officials are warning against approaching bats, wildlife or other mammals flopping around on the ground or acting unusual. They recommend making sure pets are vaccinated and avoiding contact with stray animals or wildlife. In the event of a bat bite or scratch, try to safely capture the bat for testing without destroying the head, they said. “Our recommendation is they should not touch or handle bats. Particularly if they’re out during daylight hours or on

the ground, they’re probably sick,” Zastoupil said. The bat involved was a silver-haired bat, one of 15 species found in Oregon. It has a wingspan of about 10 inches. Rabies, a viral disease affecting the central nervous system, is usually fatal once symptoms appear. It is almost always contracted through exposure to a rabid animal. Bats are the most common carrier of rabies in Oregon, according to the Oregon Health Authority. About 8% to 10% of bats tested for rabies are positive. So far this year, three other bats have tested positive for rabies in Oregon — in Linn, Jackson and Washington counties.

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Public health officials are warning residents to be careful after a rabid bat was found in the Breitenbush area of Marion County. HENRY MILLER / SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

Corn Festival

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The festival foundation’s entirely new board isn’t trying to reinvent the festival but is making steps towards making the August 17 and 18 gathering relevant to a larger audience with new attractions like a beer garden and live music. “I think this year is going to be the year that shows everyone what the corn fest could end up being,” Aumsville mayor Derek Clevenger said.

Turning a corn festival into something more

News that the entire board of the Corn Festival Foundation resigned late last year was published in the city newsletter, and without volunteers, the festival was going to be discontinued. Among those to step forward were Walter Wick and Ed Blakesley. For much of the festival’s history it was a one-day gathering centered around a city park with typical attractions: a parade, a three-legged race, and the firefighter’s pancake breakfast. But after the free ears of cooked corn were handed out to each person – sometimes after an hour-long line in a hot parking lot – those in attendance left by early in the afternoon. “It was a picnic in the park,” said Blakesley, the new festival president. The board of directors decided to give the Aumsville Corn Festival a shot of life. One of the first undertakings of the new board was to devise attractions that would resonate with a new audience, such as bringing in bands to perform live music, a car show and a barbecue contest. To do so, the festival was expanded from its previous home of Porter-Boone Park to also include Mill Creek Park. And the festival is extended to two days for the first time. But one new idea took more work. A beer garden as part of the festival had been floated for years without gaining much traction. Aumsville has an ordinance prohibiting alcohol consumption in the city’s parks. The city council in April voted to support the beer garden and in July approved the variance to the ordinance that will allow alcohol for the two-day festival at Mill Creek Park. “Even just getting the beer garden



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

was a huge hurdle,” Clevenger said. “The way the community reacted to it shows that it’s something that they’ve wanted for a long time.”

How festivals can become a city’s identity

In similar smaller communities around Marion County – such as Mt. Angel, Sublimity and St. Paul – the summer festivals bring an influx of thousands of people for a few days each summer. The Mt. Angel Oktoberfest has become a major part of the identity of that city, so much so it has become the defining style of architecture of the buildings in the city core. But there are not a lot of tourist attractions in Aumsville. Outside of the corn festival, the largest community gathering each year is the Christmas Tree lighting. “There is nothing in Aumsville right now that gets people off of (Highway) 22 and into Aumsville,” Clevenger said. “Maybe they’ve heard of the Pizza Peddler, maybe they’ve gone to the skate park. “That’s why people know what Mt. Angel is, is because of Oktoberfest.”

Raising funds for community organizations

Traeger, daughter of Brian and Stephanie Traeger, grew up in Silverton playing basketball and volleyball. Now going into her senior year, she’s a stand-out on both teams. But javelin, her newest sport, is fast becoming a specialty. Assistant Coach Craig Porter recruited Traeger to throw for the Foxes after he saw her play volleyball her freshman year. She was a natural, but had plenty of work ahead. After a self-described “plateau” her sophomore year, she secured some private coaching from Scott Halley of Gresham and doubled down mentally in practice and at meets this last year. “I’ve tried to come up with different strategies to figure out what I have to do to throw farther,” she said. In javelin, she threw her personal best – 154’1” – in May at Nike Jesuit Twilight Relays. At her coaches’ suggestion, she’s also tried discus and shot put, qualifying for state in shot put while winning first-place in javelin. She and classmate Justice McBride-Steiger, 2019 state champion in the 400, are both returning this year to a young but talented girls track team. “I just love that Riley brings her competitiveness to the team,” Cross said. “She’s very competitive and, as we can see from last season, she didn’t mind trying some new things that really helped our team. I’m really proud of her.”

vendors go to fund causes in the communities. Aumsville wants to do more, but that will only come with the festival’s growth. “Last year they gave away \$2,000 to charity,” Blakesley said. “The purpose of it was to raise money to help. They donated to the volunteer fire department, the police department, the clothing closet, a fund to help people pay their water bill. “If we’re going to make some money, let’s try to make some money to help people.” bpoebler@StatesmanJournal.com or [Twitter.com/bpoebler](https://twitter.com/bpoebler)

Aumsville Corn Festival

When: August 17 and 18
Where: Porter-Boone and Mill Creek Parks.
Attractions: Youth talent show, kids games, car show, beer garden, barbecue contest, parade at 11 a.m. Saturday.
Live music: Phoenix, 1 p.m. Saturday; Gabriel Cox Band, 4:30 p.m. Saturday; Briana Renea, 7 p.m. Saturday; Joe Stoddard 11 a.m. Sunday.
Corn: Each person is given two free ears of cooked corn and will be available for purchase for 10 ears for \$3.
Parking: \$3 per car.



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