

Tax

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pay an average of \$3,424.

“And they saw a large increase last year because the school district passed that bond and the city passed the library bond. They get to see a little bit of a reduction in their rate this year,” Polk County Tax Assessor Valerie Patoine said.

The real market value of property in Marion County increased by 9% from a year ago.

A year ago, taxes for Salem property owners increased 11% as the newest school bond and a bond for the Salem Public Library were added to the taxes for residents.

Homeowners in Dallas will see a .5% increase.

Patoine said the city paid a bond off, but voters in the county passed a public safety levy in the May election, which replaced a prior levy.

“Their rate overall went down 38 cents per thousand,” Patoine said.

Homeowners in Santiam Canyon cities including Mill City, Gates, Detroit and Idanha will see increases between 19% and 23%.

Voters in the Santiam Canyon School District passed a school bond measure – the first bond of the type voters in the district have passed – in the



The McClaine House. CHRISTENA BROOKS / SPECIAL TO THE APPEAL TRIBUNE

May election.

The \$17.9 million bond will pay for new high and middle schools at the Mill City Campus, with construction expected to be completed in 2020.

Property owners in those cities still pay some of the lowest rates in Marion County.

Those in Detroit will pay an average of \$2,176, Gates residents will pay an average of \$1,803, Mill City residents pay \$1,656, and Idanha will pay an average of \$595.

Rohlfing said many of the taxpayers affected by the Santiam Canyon School Bond are on the Linn County side, and the overall increase will be an average of 20%.

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Prison

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Miller’s blood-alcohol content at the time of the crash was at least 0.15%, according to court records. She allegedly was under the influence of marijuana and was caught with a usable amount of methamphetamine.

During inquiries by the Statesman Journal in April 2018, Salem police declined to comment further on the crash, citing the ongoing investigation.

Prosecutors did not file charges until 2019. A grand jury indicted Miller on charges of recklessly causing her daughter’s death under “circumstances manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life.”

She was also accused of putting four people at risk of serious injury during the incident, including occupants of

the other vehicle. The 2018 crash was not the first time Miller drove while intoxicated.

In 2009, she was convicted of driving under the influence of intoxicants and sentenced to 18 months probation.

If convicted of manslaughter, Miller would have faced a minimum prison sentence of 10 years. Instead, she was given the Measure II mandatory minimum sentence of five years and 10 months in prison for causing injury to Ellie.

In her plea petition, Miller admitted to driving while intoxicated, recklessly and — with indifference to human life — causing serious injury to her daughter and reckless endangering the four people in the other car.

For questions, comments and news tips, email reporter Whitney Woodworth at wmwoodworth@statesmanjournal.com, call 503-399-6884 or follow on Twitter @wmwoodworth

Appeal Tribune

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Deadlines
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Monday-Friday: \$17.50, \$16 with EZ Pay
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Sunday only: \$14, \$12 with EZ Pay

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Published every Wednesday by the Statesman Journal, P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309.
USPS 469-860, Postmaster: Send address changes to Appeal Tribune, P.O. Box 13009, Salem, OR 97309.
PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID: Salem, OR and additional offices.
Send letters to the editor and news releases to sanews@salem.gannett.com.



Fire departments in Stayton, Sublimity get \$680,000 grant to help attract volunteer firefighters. JUSTIN MUCH | STAYTON MAIL

Grant

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the term of the grant.

Hume said Sublimity usually had one new volunteer firefighter each year – though it already has three for next year – and Stayton typically has three.

Along with the new position, the funds will pay for marketing materials, a laptop, new recruit physicals, screenings and tests, personal protection equipment, tuition assistance for higher education and training for new recruits.

Stayton Fire Chief Jack Carriger said each new volunteer firefighter costs a department about \$5,000 in their first year for training, equipment, insurance and other costs.

“The actual training isn’t that expensive, but everything you have to give them after their training is what’s expensive,” he said.

Sublimity has a “Sleeper” program for individuals in the fire science or paramedic programs at Chemeketa, and Stayton will restart its program with the SAFER grant.

Students live at the station while attending school rent-free and receive training and experience while serving as volunteers for the department. The students also get part of their tuition paid for.

“We’ve labeled ourselves as a stepping stone department,” Hume said. “That’s what we are, and we’re going to embrace it. The fact of the matter is it’s always bittersweet when they leave because we train them up.”

What it takes to become a volunteer firefighter

Most departments require volunteers to be 18 years old during their training or just after completing it, and applicants are put through background checks, drug screening and a series of interviews.

Ten fire departments around Stayton come together to put on a regional firefighter academy for new volunteers each year.

The academy begins in January and takes six months for each volunteer to complete, and they are required to complete competency tests within 60 days.

Much of the training takes place at the Stayton Fire Department as it has a training ground, but classes also will take place at other fire departments around the area.

“Our classes have been averaging 30, 35 people,” Hume said. “It’s about six months where they go virtually every Wednesday and alternating weekends, and it’s a lot of training, a lot of hours, a lot of hands-on.”

The training for volunteer firefight-

ers is as comprehensive as it is for paid firefighters.

“You’re talking 250 hours of training before you can do anything,” Carriger said. “It’s no different. A volunteer has to have the same firefighting certificates and credentials as a paid person does.”

There are plenty of volunteers, however, who go through the program and never fight a fire.

The job is not for everybody.

“We get a lot of people who go through the academy and leave,” Carriger said. “They go do all the hard work, and then they figure it’s not for them and they just say, ‘Nah, I’m not going to do this.’”

Not every volunteer with the departments is a firefighter.

The departments also have volunteer medical professionals trained to care for the health and wellness of firefighters on the scene of a fire.

Retaining volunteers a priority

Fire departments would love to keep every volunteer firefighter they get, but it’s not realistic.

Part of the SAFER grant is aimed at retention of current volunteers.

“We’ve got some pretty high expectations of that person to come in and find us more volunteers and maintain the ones we have, keep the ones we’ve got longer,” Carriger said.

But Sublimity is starting another program aimed at retention, and it is adorable.

The department has a new volunteer, “Probie,” a Golden Retriever puppy.

Sublimity volunteer Amber Cross, who works as a division chief for the Turner Fire Department, adopted the dog and is training him as a service dog for crisis intervention and therapy.

“That’s just going to be another way of supporting our volunteers and our community,” Cross said.

Burnout among volunteers is a serious issue, as is the mental strain volunteers deal with.

Unlike paid full-time firefighters who return to a station from a call for their shifts, volunteers go home and can take the ill effects of those calls with them.

Hume said Probie may be able to sense a firefighter who needs personal help before people do.

“I’ve had Golden Retrievers all my life and there’s nothing better to just bond with,” Carriger said. “They love being petted. A lot of times just stuff like that is just enough to soothe things over and say, ‘Okay, the world’s still good, it’s not all bad.’ It’s a pretty cool thing to have that.”

“Besides, he’s just cute.”

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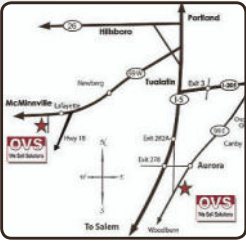
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