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SEISMIC REHABILITATION



Spectators stand in a doorway to avoid the rain while racers near the finish of the Cascade Half Marathon at Cascade Junior High School in Turner. The building, built in the 1940s, will receive a \$2 million seismic retrofit with a grant from the state. STATESMAN JOURNAL FILE

4 Valley schools receive millions in safety grants

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Like many school buildings of its type, Cascade Junior High was never intended to last 70 years.

Constructed on rural land outside Turner in the 1940s to house the middle and high school students of Turner and Aumsville, it was built of brick and wood in a time before seismic issues were a consideration.

Over the following decades, additional buildings were added to the campus for the expanding student population – including a new gym a decade ago – but the original building has remained, receiving some updates to remain in use.

Like many older school buildings in Oregon, if an earthquake hit, it would likely collapse.

But the Cascade School District has received a \$2.1 million grant for seismic improvements on the building, one of several school districts and public safety institu-

tions in the Willamette Valley to receive millions of dollars this year through a grant program through the state, which handed out \$74 million this year through Business Oregon, to provide seismic rehabilitation for older publicly owned buildings.

The school districts from Cascade, Dallas, Perrydale and Scio and the Sheridan Fire District were among 35 recipients in Oregon this year.

“We’re excited,” Cascade Superintendent Darin Drill said. “We hope to be able to do it next summer.”

The grant money comes with no matching funds, meaning Cascade and the other schools will be able to make significant improvements at no cost.

The district previously received money from the grant for work on Turner Elementary School, constructed in the 1920s, and Cloverdale Elementary School, constructed in the 1930s.

“I remember they yanked off

some of the siding and there was burned wood,” Drill said. “We looked at it and what we figured out was there was a fire at some point in the boiler room. It was World War II so they looked at it and it looked fine so they sided over it.”

At the junior high, they will use the \$2,139,400 to make improvements to the foundation, the brick walls and the roof.

In Dallas, the district received a grant for \$2,046,735 that will be used to upgrade the gymnasium at LaCreole Middle School, which was constructed in 1965.

“We are just beginning to plan for the project and have up to 24 months to see it completed,” said Andy Bellando, Interim Superintendent for the Dallas School District. “While I am uncertain of the construction timeline right now, I am hopeful the project can be completed during the summer of 2021.”

“We are very excited about re-

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Mt. Angel’s ‘virtual’ city manager comes to life

Christena Brooks
Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

July 1 was all about firsts for new Mt. Angel City Manager Kevin Cronin. On his first day of work, he met the mayor, city staff and councilors for the first time.

This spring, Cronin went through an entirely virtual hiring process to become the Bavarian-themed town’s top administrator. His first face-to-face meetings with everyone in Mt. Angel came on his inaugural day in the office.

“I’m going to sleep well tonight,” he said, laughing.

Cronin, 50, comes to Mt. Angel from the Oregon Coast city of Warrenton, near Astoria, where he was assistant city manager. Before that, he was a private consultant for Warrenton and a community development director for Astoria. He also has two decades of other public sector experience, working for the cities of Talent and Sherwood, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, and a community development agency in Portland.

“I’m excited to share what I know and empower my staff to do the best they can to create an action plan for Mt. Angel,” he said.

Mt. Angel hired Cronin on a two-year contract; he’ll be paid \$95,000 per year and be evaluated annually by the council. After that, his contract will be up for annual renewals, said Council President Pete Wall.

“He has a strong background,” Wall said. “He’s got a lot of planning and community development experience. He’s very enthusiastic, very engaging. He just clicked with me as someone who will integrate well into the community and be very community-oriented.”

Wall has never hired a manager like this without in-person interviews, but the coronavirus pandemic left little choice. He and Councilors Ray Eder and Matt Donohue kicked off the search for a city manager in Janu-

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Multiple trees have fallen into the North Santiam River between Greens Bridge and Jefferson, making it a dangerous place to float. ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Santiam float from Greens Bridge to Jefferson remains dangerous

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

One of Oregon’s more popular floats will remain dangerous and choked full of logs, at least for the foreseeable future, officials with the Oregon State Marine Board said Wednesday.

The float on the North Santiam and Santiam River, from Greens Bridge to Jefferson, is typically packed with inner tubers during hot summer days, but after numerous trees fell into the river this spring, it has become a dangerous trap that’s required the rescue of more than 20 people.

State and local officials examined the area for possible log removal last Thursday, but decided that for now, the sheer number of logs in different locations, difficulty in reaching them with heavy equipment, total cost, lack of access and impact to fish habitat was too much to overcome.

“For now, our message is clear: Don’t float from Greens Bridge to Jefferson. Just don’t,” said Randy Henry, boating safety program manager for the Marine Board.

The issue, Henry said, is not about removing one or two problem trees that have fallen across the river, but rather an entire forest of snags that are difficult for inner tubers to avoid.

Higher-than-normal water levels, caused by the wettest June since 2012 in the Mid-Willamette Valley, has swept countless tubers into dangerous trees known as “strainers,” because the water goes through, but people often don’t, getting stuck and sometimes drowning.

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A GREATER OUTDOORS

Oregon pushes ideas to improve outdoor recreation

Zach Urness Salem Statesman Journal |
USA TODAY NETWORK

In a COVID-19 world, Oregon’s outdoors is more important than ever.

The ability to escape in the open air, to distance into spaces where the virus is far less likely to spread, while also coming up with new jobs, will be crucial in coming years, said Cailin O’Brien-Feeney, the director of Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation.

The report includes 30 suggestions for ways to move Oregon forward, from an online store to purchase every recreation pass, to better funding search and rescue, to bolstering recreation near urban centers and improving the economy in rural areas.

“What’s become clear over the past few months is that the outdoors is an absolute priority for people’s well-being,” O’Brien-Feeney said. “It’s literally safer out-



A report on how to improve outdoor recreation in Oregon came out this past week. Here, visitors paddle out on Sparks Lake in the Central Oregon Cascades. ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

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