

Appeal Tribune

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80 restaurants opened despite COVID-19 in 2020

Emily Teel
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The year 2020 was so excruciating, so keenly difficult for those in the hospitality industry. Casualties of the pandemic included many notable restaurants in the Salem-area dining scene, and even the survivors are barely hanging on, hopeful that resuming indoor dining even on a limited basis will offer a lifeline to the suffering restaurant industry.

It seems insane and somehow impossible, but in the Salem area 2020 was also a banner year for food business openings. More than 80 food businesses opened in the Salem area in 2020, far more new eateries than the year prior.

It's important to note that many of the eateries opened in 2020 were already well in the works before the pandemic. Leases had already been signed and deposits

paid on equipment, which meant even the restaurants that opened in late summer and into the fall of 2020 were often products of pre-pandemic promises made.

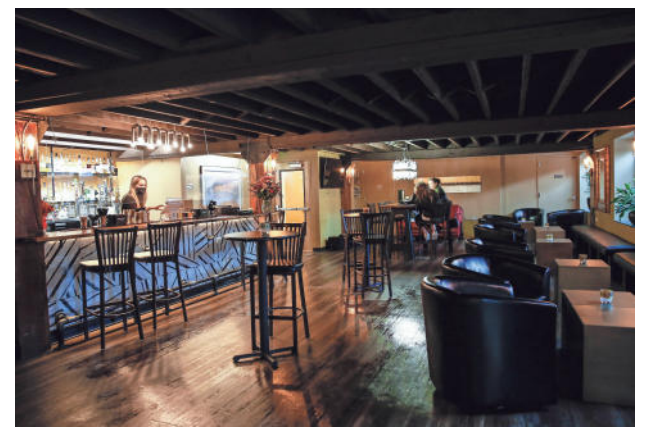
It remains to be seen whether food entrepreneurs in the Salem area will keep up this pace of openings through 2021, whether they'll slow in the wake of a difficult year or, alternatively, whether the hope of vaccines on the way and a return to normalcy will spur more confidence in dining-focused business endeavors.

Perhaps it's the strange way time has passed in the pandemic, but some on the list below might feel as though they've been here forever. Others may be entirely unknown.

Alleycat Bar

A new bar next to Masonry Grill from Diana Ramallo,

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Alleycat Bar, a new bar in downtown Salem, serves customers after opening Nov. 12. The space is located behind Masonry Grill.

ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL



The Signature Oak sustains some damage from the recent ice storm at The Oregon Garden in Silverton. The tree is over 400 years old. ABIGAIL DOLLINS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

400-year-old Signature Oak is showing its age

Capi Lynn
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

SILVERTON – A steel cable support system runs through the crown of the Signature Oak, barely noticeable through its dense branches even when the tree has no leaves.

It was installed about five years ago to help fortify the more than 400-year-old tree.

At nearly 100 feet tall, it is one of the largest and oldest Oregon white oaks in the state – if not *the* largest and oldest.

The cable system is used to help maintain the tree's structural integrity during high winds or snow and ice accumulation, and it was put to the test last month.

"That is maybe one of the reasons it didn't suffer more damage," said Delen Kitchen, director of operations at The Oregon Garden.

The massive tree with tentacle-like branches

looms on the southern edge of an oak grove along the pathway through the 80-acre botanical garden. It has been referred to as the Signature Oak since the garden was created in the late 1990s, because of its distinction as the dominant tree in the grove.

At that time, the 25-acre grove consisted of more than 100 other native Oregon white oak trees estimated to be between 250 and 300 years old. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde awarded a \$266,000 grant to The Oregon Garden in 1999 to help restore and preserve the grove on what is their ancestral land.

The money was used to clear out invasive plants and provide care and maintenance for the grove for about five years, according to Statesman Journal archives.

No one has done an oak inventory in recent years, but we know the grove has at least 10 fewer trees after the February ice storm.

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Pandemic takes toll on DMV service

Claire Withycombe
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

It's taking longer than normal to process vehicle titles and new registrations at the state's Driver & Motor Vehicle Services because of staff shortages and closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the agency.

Right now, the longest time someone has had to wait for an Oregon title is 18 weeks – over four months.

The title is the document confirming your ownership of the car. You need to apply for a title when you buy a car or relocate to Oregon from another state. You also need to register the car with the state. Since you register the car at the same time you apply for a title, you should expect that same delay for a new regis-

tration.

However, if your car is already registered in Oregon and you just need to renew it – registration needs to be renewed every two years – you can do that online at <https://dmv2u.oregon.gov/eServices>.

The 18-week estimate is the longest time it has taken to process a transaction – not an average wait time, said Sally Ridenour, a spokesperson for the Department of Transportation. You likely won't need to wait quite that long if you just need to replace an existing title – at most three weeks according to the DMV – but the estimate is longer than that for titles in most other circumstances.

Ridenour said the DMV wants to "under-promise," so it provides a conservative estimate of how long it

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Six months after historic Labor Day wildfires ...

Santiam Canyon residents begin recovery

Tracy Loew, Capi Lynn, Bill Poehler and Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

It's been six months since one of the worst wildfire events in Oregon history turned life upside down for residents in Lyons, Detroit, Gates and Mill City

Ever so slowly, the Santiam Canyon is rebuilding. New homes are being erected. Destroyed water systems are being reconnected. Some forests are being replanted

But it's a long path to recovery, with many still living in trailers on charred property, and iconic campgrounds and trails likely closed for years.

Extreme winds Labor Day night fueled a historic firestorm that killed five people, destroyed 700 homes and incinerated ancient forests in the span of about 12 hours. The combination Beachie Creek and Lionshead fires burned 400,000 acres – the third-largest fire since 1900 in Oregon.

"One thing we learned this year is that we have a new frame of reference for what's possible," said Dave Warnack, Willamette National Forest supervisor who oversaw firefighting.

The spirit of "Canyon Strong" is alive and well. But it's clear that it's going to take time.

Housing

Dennis and Denise Schlies imagine sitting on their covered porch or in the window-filled living room of their new home, gazing at Rocky Top and Green Mountain.

"We'll have a panoramic view of the mountains," Denise said. "It will be beautiful."

They're just weeks away from what was once unimaginable after the Beachie Creek Fire destroyed their house, barn and just about everything else on their 23-acre property in Gates.

The manufactured home they ordered is scheduled to leave the factory floor in mid-March and if all goes well with delivery and installation, they hope to move in sometime in April.

Some of their canyon neighbors are living on their properties in RVs while they attempt to rebuild. Others are living in temporary housing, such as Salem-area hotels and the FEMA trailer park on the edge of nearby Mill City.

More than 700 primary homes in the canyon were destroyed, and those with insurance had more options.

Dennis and Denise Schlies were covered, and site work is underway on their property, including finish work on the new septic system. Once that's approved, work will begin on the electric system, some of which will be installed underground by Pacific Power.

Then, the concrete slab will be poured.

Their neighbors were glad to hear they're coming

See **FIRES**, Page 2B



Six months after the Labor Day wildfires, cleanup efforts continue in Detroit.

BRIAN HAYES / STATESMAN JOURNAL

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