

Pollen

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double-edged sword, according to Travis Knudsen, the public affairs manager for Lane Regional Air Protection Agency. The rain is beneficial for the local forests that have endured a drought so far this year, but it also will encourage plant growth and can lead to higher pollen counts, he said.

“It could be great now, but then in a couple of days it will sort of double down and see the pollen everywhere again,” he said, noting that grass pollen season tends to start around late May or early June.

One basic tip for those who suffer from allergies mentioned by Knudsen was to make sure all doors and windows are closed to prevent pollen or other particles from getting in. He also suggested using a HEPA air purifier to improve indoor air quality, and noted having a HEPA filter on vacuum cleaners helps prevent sending harmful particles airborne inside homes.

“With any sort of dust or pollen that can be aggravating to people that gets

into the carpet, the moment you vacuum, if it doesn’t have one of those filters on it, it sort of throws it all back up in the air,” Knudsen said.

To measure the pollen count, Oregon Allergy Associates uses a vacuum pump that pulls air through a small port on a measurement device, which is directed into the wind. The air hits a greased microscope slide, and afterwards Moran and others use a microscope and count how many pollen grains there were over a 24-hour period to calculate the amount of pollen period per cubic meter.

Moran noted that grass pollen tends to be more harmful to people in the area with allergies than tree pollen, given the amount of grass seed harvesting in the Willamette Valley. Oregon has some of the highest grass pollen counts in the world, she said, typically reaching its peak in late May and June.

“When some of these fields pollinate and you know it’s actually visible to the naked eye,” she said.

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Lane County is experiencing some of the highest pollen counts in the nation. DREAMSTIME/TNS

Resignations

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the condition he takes domestic violence classes and doesn’t enter a bar or use alcohol or controlled substances.

Ewing said he left the job because of a dispute over the terms of his employment, which he said included being paid \$3,600 for 20 hours of work per week,; concerns about the district’s contract with a design studio to build a new fire station due to ties with a firm his son works for; and a rumor he was trying to end the district’s paramedic response.

The district named Chad LaVallee, a volunteer firefighter, as its acting fire chief immediately after.

At its board meeting on Jan. 18, board member Walt Collier resigned. On Feb. 23, the board chose Don Tesdal to replace him, but he wasn’t sworn in.

According to the draft minutes of the Feb. 23 board meeting, LaVallee said the board was not going to allow public

comment, then proceeded to discuss how the district could eliminate one of the two part-time positions, the one held by Lt. Laura Harris, at the end of the fiscal year in June.

After community member Vicki Spier objected during the meeting to eliminating the position, she said upsetting comments were made following the January meeting.

Spier said she wanted the fire district to move forward and the way to do that is not to call the community members “A**holes,” according to the minutes.

LaVallee apologized, according to the draft minutes.

Board member Linda Stice said she felt like she was being attacked at the prior meeting, according to the draft minutes.

Eric Page, also a Detroit city councilor, then asked for board member Lyn Schultz, who did not return a call for comment, to step down.

On Feb. 24, board members Schultz, Stice, Charene Ziebert and Jeff Skeeters resigned. LaVallee said he resigned the

same day. Reached by phone, LaVallee said a reporter needed to contact the district for more information.

No one left

With no board members in office, someone had to appoint new members. According to state law, it fell on the Marion County commissioners to determine who would fill out the board.

One at a time at the county’s office in Salem on Wednesday, the three county commissioners gave the names of their four choices from among the five candidates for positions on the Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District board of directors.

There were some well-credentialed candidates: two fire chiefs, a mechanic who volunteers to work on the cars and trucks for the district and an accountant who serves in the fire corps.

The commissioners gave their reasoning for their choices. They eventually decided to appoint former Aurora fire chief Gregory Dyke, former Sublimity

city councilor and career fire chief Brandon Hamilton, mechanic Matthew Lofton and accountant Serena Morones.

The department is still without a fire chief.

“There’s just been this (butting heads) up there, and I think they’re going to get the support of community members around them,” Marion County commissioner and Detroit resident Kevin Cameron said.

Cameron said he received a message from state fire marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple that she was aware of the situation at Idanha-Detroit. The message said she had gotten support for nearby districts to back up Idanha-Detroit if help was needed.

All four of the new board members will serve terms to June 30, 2023, when the positions will be up for election.

The next board meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m. April 15 at the Idanha City Hall.

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Dairy

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Taylor. It was in the middle of the week, and the diner was closed during regular business hours.

An employee let him in, informing him there was a water leak and Taylor was out of town.

While there, Miller noticed a Point of Sale (POS) system on an iPad at the counter — not the same system Blanchard had used — and snapped a photo of the screen with his cell phone.

The screenshot, which he shared with the Statesman Journal, shows gross sales of more than \$53,000 for May 12 to Aug. 25. Sales for those three months were about what the restaurant averaged during normal times, according to Blanchard, and would have been enough to pay the bills.

Miller went down to the basement that day and said there were so many boxes of empty beer cans it looked like a frat house. He also saw a bed and mattresses. Next to a couch was a five-gallon bucket full of mail, most of it unopened. Miller showed the Statesman Journal photos on his cell phone.

It looked like people lived in the basement, which the building manager said was not allowed by fire code.

Miller said he inspected the walk-in freezer and saw food and produce improperly stored. He also saw black mold on the wall. He couldn’t believe food from that freezer had been served to customers.

He said he called Taylor, who had no idea he was standing inside the restaurant, informing him that he planned to change the locks. Taylor didn’t argue much, but Miller said he mentioned something about an attorney and that he was in Mexico.

Miller told him he’d be happy to talk to his attorney.

The next day, Taylor sent Blanchard back-to-back texts, which the Statesman Journal saw on her phone.

“I will be back home this Weekend. The restaurant is fully stocked with groceries. We need to meet with your attorney on Monday. I have worked very hard for the restaurant as you know. We have a amicable settlement. My rent check cleared a few days ago to Keith. And I just paid AutoChlor. Locking me out of the building helps no one. I need a default notice from you.

“Then legally I have 30 days to settle. Let’s not fuss. Care too much about you Marlene.”

She said she had no clue what he meant by settlement. The building manager told the Statesman Journal Taylor paid only \$500 of the \$1,500 lease in August. The diner leased its commercial dishwasher from Auto-Chlor System.



This box of business cards was discovered at Court Street Dairy Lunch by former owner Marlene Blanchard’s son in late August after the locks were changed on the restaurant. CAPI LYNN / STATESMAN JOURNAL

That weekend, Taylor arranged a time to clear out the basement and gather some personal belongings at the diner. Miller said it wound up being a three-day process. Blanchard said Taylor took several things belonging to the restaurant, including plates and a panini press.

Blanchard never was contacted by an attorney representing Taylor.

The restaurant remained closed until it sold to its current owners in September. Replinger was one of the buyers.

Unpaid bills, utilities pile up

Court Street Dairy Lunch needed some repairs and a deep cleaning before Blanchard could sell.

One side of the fryer wasn’t working. When Blanchard contacted the repair company she had used in the past it declined to do service, saying it never was paid for work done while Taylor was overseeing operations.

That was just the tip of the iceberg. The Statesman Journal saw the stack of unpaid bills and collection agency notices, including \$20,000 for the lease, \$28,500 to American Express and nearly \$19,000 to Bank of America. The latter two were accounts Blanchard used to buy produce and other groceries from regular suppliers.

She doesn’t remember the balances before her cancer diagnosis and doesn’t know if Taylor made charges to the accounts because the bills were going to the restaurant.

With no payments made for more than a year, she and her son said the balances soared because of late fees and rising interest rates. Both accounts were turned over to collection agencies.

Unpaid utilities added up, too. From what Blanchard could piece together, the restaurant was on a COVID-19 payment plan for some utilities. But months of electric, gas and garbage bills — about \$3,000 worth — still went unpaid and further depleted her proceeds from the sale of the business.

Blanchard had to settle with the building owner before the sale could go through.

She had a longtime relationship with the Morris family, which had owned and operated the diner for three generations and still owns the building.

She always paid the monthly lease on time and was current through March 2020, according to records provided to the Statesman Journal by the Morris family.

Keith Morris, 95, the son of Court Street Dairy founder Glenn Morris, is the building owner. His son, Michael Morris, had been managing the building but became ill in 2020 and died in January 2021.

Keith’s son-in-law, Clyde Tambling, took over and went to work on a forensic analysis of building finances.

Records were muddled during that time, according to Tambling.

He said he had contact with Taylor, who acted as if he were the owner or at least someone with authority. He said Taylor told him he made payments of \$500 in cash to Michael Morris when he could, but never provided proof.

Taylor told the Statesman Journal he made those payments weekly.

“The rent was only \$1,500, and we were paying \$2,000,” Taylor said during the phone call. “I have a record of it.”

When asked to provide those records to the Statesman Journal, Taylor said: “Who are you to see our records? You’re just a (expletive) newspaper. Are you kidding me?”

Tambling informed Taylor he wouldn’t accept cash payments, and Taylor wrote him a check for \$500 that day. But Tambling said that was the last he saw for two months.

Taylor intermittently made partial payments, Tambling said. But after it was all said and done, Court Street Dairy Lunch was behind \$20,000 on the lease from spring 2020 to fall 2021.

Tambling knew the restaurant had to be behind on utilities, too. The building’s water was shut off for a couple of days in September. Tambling discovered some of Court Street Dairy’s utilities had been transferred under the Salem Business Journal name.

Blanchard showed the Statesman Journal a Salem Electric bill with Salem

Business Journal listed as the account member.

Nest egg depleted by bills

Taylor and Punley sold the Salem Business Journal last fall, not long after Miller changed the locks at Court Street Dairy.

Taylor was last listed as the publisher in the masthead of the September issue.

Jonathan Castro Monroy and Jesse Lippold Peone III took over in October as co-owners. Castro Monroy is the publisher.

Castro Monroy said Taylor told him during negotiations he wanted to sell because he was retiring, had health issues and was moving out of the area.

In December, Taylor filed a new business with the Secretary of State’s office called Mark PR. Perry B. Taylor is listed as the registrant and owner, with both the Salem P.O. Box address he used for the Salem Business Journal and his most recent residential address, a condominium in Lake Oswego.

Taylor moved out of the condo in early February, according to the neighbor next door, and it recently sold. Taylor’s wife was listed as the owner.

No criminal charges or civil lawsuits have been filed against Taylor in relation to his involvement with Court Street Dairy Lunch.

Taylor maintained he owned the restaurant but never answered the Statesman Journal’s emailed questions, including why he would allow Blanchard to “repossess” it if he had legally purchased it or why the lease and utility bills were unpaid.

“I did the best I could running the restaurant,” he said during the phone call. “I owe nobody money.”

Blanchard was able to sell the business in September to Replinger and a partner. But after bills, her nest egg was gone.

Her son consulted an attorney to see if they had grounds for a civil case against Taylor. The biggest concern for the attorney, Miller said, was that Blanchard did not have a legal document that would hold Taylor accountable. Everything was based on trust.

Miller broke the news to his mom, who was embarrassed but more hurt by what had happened.

“The story has got to get out about him,” Blanchard said, “so nobody else trusts him.”

She continues to battle cancer and may face more chemo and radiation. But she recently received good news. A scan showed the tumor in her pancreas has shrunk.

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