

From rafting —13

operate on the McKenzie and some are available year round. Booking a trip is easy, the state of Oregon monitors the river businesses very closely and responds to complaints and violations swiftly and soundly so professionalism is common throughout the industry. Levels of accommodation will vary but most McKenzie businesses work hard to provide a fun and safe trip.

A Google search of “McKenzie River Whitewater Rafting” will return you a number of McKenzie rafting businesses. I also like to look for a local guide and outfitters association in the area I want to book a trip. I find they represent some of the better

and more experienced businesses. On the McKenzie that would be The McKenzie River Guides Association. www.mckenzie-riverguides.com they have a directory guide businesses on their website.

Don't overestimate the endurance of your party the first time out. Take what many outfitters and guides call their “half day float”, generally around four hours. I find the duration just right for kids too. Some trips include lunch, some allow you to bring your own lunch and some offer a straight start to finish float trip. The prices will vary depending on the level of accommodation you desire.

Now paddle forward ...



Rafting on the McKenzie is a family friendly adventure for folks of all ages. FRANK ARMENDARIZ/OUTDOORS WRITER

From passion —13

do,” Loveall said.

The company owns and renovated most of the buildings on the north side of the 300 block of Main Street. It also purchased the large building on the south side of the street at the corner of 4th that was the former Haven boutique.

Masaka Properties derives its name from a small town in Uganda “where we do ministry work,” he said. Loveall is a pastor with Threesixteen Ministries and he and his wife Nita have planted four churches in that area of Africa over the past seven years and adopted a son from that nation.

His holdings on Main Street began with the purchase of The Washburne Café property and the salon next door. “Thirteen years ago, this was a property management office and we decided to build two large apartments upstairs,” he said.

That was “during the heyday of all

the bars and fighting and the ruckus that was going on down here,” he said. “People thought that we were crazy, but we knew there was a possibility that if we could just get people to live down here we could change the community, the area.”

There were 34 apartments on that half block with most of them not rented and many of them under-utilized, he said: “They were kind of slum-lorded. So we figured if we could change some of that we could change the block.”

About two and a half years ago they purchased the Econo Sales building and the one next to it, which is now the Cornbread Café. “There were eight apartments there that had been boarded up for 30 years, that hadn't been rented in 30 years,” he said. “And the whole Cornbread building had been boarded up for about 25 years.”

They began to work on the commercial spaces downstairs once

Econo Sales moved out and split that space in half, creating three large commercial spaces. Bartolotti's Pizza Bistro built their space out first and Cornbread Café expanded from Eugene to another of those spaces.

Loveall said they really wanted to have a grocery store in that last vacant space to add to the viability and livability of the block and contribute to the community vibe. He said he waited a year, turning down about 20 offers from companies, including several offers by marijuana companies offering five times their asking price. Then the owner of Eugene's Friendly Street Market approached them and recently opened the new Main Street Market.

There are seven apartments and an office upstairs, overlapping both upper floors of the buildings, which have gone from dilapidated to upscale with unique restoration

of architectural details, wood floors, natural light and LED lighting. “Everything is brand new. They are super nice,” he said. “They were rented about a week after we finished them. In fact, they were renting as we were finishing them, which is what we suspected. People always want to live in downtown urban areas.”

Additionally, he and his partner purchased the building across the street between Main and South A on 4th Street that used to house the Haven boutique. They spent a year renovating the two commercial properties below and four apartments upstairs, creating two live/work spaces. Previously the apartments had been run down and used for low-income housing.

Loveall said that Jenna Fribley, an architect, whose office is next door at the Campfire Collaborative, has contributed a lot to the innovation projects with her enthusi-

asm and ideas. He also credits his partner Bob for being instrumental financially and having a good construction team. He said that the city has been good to them, helping with ideas, permits, and cost-saving programs.

Loveall said downtown is different, vibrant and fresh. There is a sense of community and entrepreneurship. His hope is that Downtown Springfield will become not only a regional destination, but also a national one.

There are still a lot of opportunities for growth and development in the downtown area. Cornucopia plans to expand there, opening a third location in the Cheesesteak NW location on the 500 block of Main Street in the fall.

And all this growth is not limited to only the downtown area, according to Max Molzahn of the Springfield Chamber of Commerce: “It's been exciting to experience.”

Paving the way for safer roads Traffic officials' 2023 plans could impact driveways



BY VICTORIA STEPHENS
Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD — City leaders are partnering with county and state traffic officials to address reports that consistently show that parts of Main Street are considered “one of the most unsafe city streets in Oregon.” The specific area of focus is Main Street between 20th and 72nd streets, where data confirmed a high number of accidents, injuries and property damage related to car crashes along that stretch. The Oregon Department of Transportation and Lane

Transit District are the other agencies helping the city address the traffic issues, as part of an effort to make Main Street safer.

The project is in the planning phase, and the city is letting residents and business owners know that their driveways could be affected by the work. The city sent out 617 letters last week stating that specific changes to driveways isn't part of the plan, but “it is possible during the design and construction phases that driveways may be considered for modification, relocation or closure.” Implementation of the plan is

scheduled to start in 2023 or later, depending upon available money.

Additional safety efforts along this section of Main Street have included the installation of six Rapid Flashing Beacon Crossings on Main Street. These are located at 35th, 41st, 44th, 48th and 51st streets as well as Chapman Lane.

A seventh such crossing is being installed at the intersection of Main Street near 66th Street. These crossings were implemented as part of recommendations made by a pedestrian safety study in 2010.

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