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**WEATHER**

**MID-90S IN HOOD RIVER,  
HIGH-90S IN THE DALLES**



**Portable cabins made in Cascade Locks**  
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**Mosier Creek Fire coverage**  
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# Columbia Gorge News

HOOD RIVER | THE DALLES | WHITE SALMON

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\$1.00

## Mosier Creek Fire burns 985 acres

**Wildfire burns 36 structures, threatens more**

By Emily Fitzgerald  
Columbia Gorge News

July Maus was driving home from work around 4:20 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 12, when she noticed smoke rising roughly 500 yards below her family's home on in Mosier.

"I got there and screamed at everybody to get into the car," said Maus, who lived on Carroll Road with her brother, his wife, her parents, her 88-year-old grandmother, and the family's seven dogs. Family members were able to collect their birth certificates and the dogs, and "that was all we had time for," said Maus. "We were out of there in under four minutes."

At 4:28 p.m., 911 received the first reports of a fire in Mosier, and local fire departments, as well as the Wasco County Sheriff's Office, were dispatched.

In less than 24-hours, the fire had burned nearly 800 acres, destroyed two structures, endangered nearly 300 more, and caused roughly 900 people to be evacuated.

As of 9 a.m. on Aug. 17 (latest update as of press time), the Incident Management Team calculated the fire to be 985 acres in size and 65

See **FIRE**, page 2



The remains of the Maus' homes on Carroll Road in Mosier is pictured above. "Pretty much nothing was saved," said July Maus.  
Contributed photo



The Mosier Creek Fire burned and estimated 500 acres by Wednesday evening, Aug. 8. At right, the sun glows red behind a cross on St. Peters Landmark in downtown The Dalles, shining through a towering pillar of smoke.  
Mark B. Gibson photo

Mark B. Gibson photo

## 'The Grove' decision appealed

**TD City Council to review decision**

By Emily Fitzgerald  
Columbia Gorge News

The Dalles City Council will review the arguments for and against a proposed subdivision at 2845 East 12th St., commonly referred to as "The Grove," during an appeal hearing on Monday, Aug. 24.

The appeal hearing centers around The Dalles Community Development Department's decision to approve Legacy Development Group LLC's subdivision application, where the company proposed to divide one 6.92 acre parcel that is zoned for high-density housing into 73 parcels — 72 "dwelling parcels" between 2,122 square-feet and 6,095 square-feet each, and one 5,654 square-foot parcel that would be "dedicated to a 'community park' for the development." The proposal has since been modified to 69 "dwelling parcels," and an 11,724 square-foot community park.

The appellants argue that because the parcel in question is

See **GROVE**, page 9

## 'There is pain coming down the pike'

**City of HR looks at how to spend two sources of COVID relief funding**

By Kirby Neumann-Rea  
Columbia Gorge News

Hood River City officials are taking a longer look at two sources of funding for community COVID relief — one local, one federal — before determining where and how to spend the money.

The funds derive from a portion of the federal CARES Act money the city received this spring but has

not yet spent, and a new pot of money, \$250,000 in deferred local Urban Renewal revenue (agencies including the city can only get the money on a cost reimbursement basis, meaning it is first spent and then the agency requests the funds be repaid).

City Finance Director Will Norton addressed the issue in the city council's Aug. 10 regular meeting. City council is expected to consider formal action in either its Aug. 24 or Sept. 14 meeting. In April, with community COVID effects in mind, city council had approved a proposal to essentially set aside property

tax assessments on businesses and agencies located in the three Urban Renewal (UR) districts for one year, enabling the revenue to be used as COVID relief funding for the agencies and on local needs.

In the UR system, property owners in the city's three UR districts — Columbia-Cascade downtown, waterfront, and Heights — are assessed taxes that go into funds for street and sidewalk improvements and other capital needs, with projects determined by the Urban Renewal Agency (URA); the Heights UR district will receive yet-undetermined improvements in

the next few years, following a planning process that is now early stages.

(See related story, page A13.)

The city's UR portion is \$250,000, and city council initially set out a plan to divide those funds in three main ways: aid to non-profits, aid to individuals, and aid to businesses. The city has worked with Hood River fundraising consultant Paul Lindberg, its liaison to United Way of the Columbia Gorge, as conduit for non-profit aid. For individual aid, the liaison has been Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, and for

assistance to business, the city has worked with Chamber of Commerce and Mid-Columbia Economic Development Council.

"We are in contact with Paul Lindberg, and I told him council wants more specificity on proposals for how that money can be used," said Norris, who also serves as assistant city manager.

The other funding source is \$200,000 in federal CARES Act money the city has yet to spend out of its original \$300,000 allotment. This spring, the city spent \$100,000 in direct

See **FUNDING**, page 13

## Klickitat County to remain in 'phase 2'

By Jacob Bertram  
Columbia Gorge News

After weeks of uncertainty, state health officials confirmed Klickitat County will remain in Phase 2 for the foreseeable future.

County officials had submitted the paperwork required for approval to move forward with Phase 3 much earlier in the month of July, but that was returned to them after Gov. Jay Inslee first announced a pause in the state's "Safe Start" reopening plan. Originally, that pause was meant to last until Aug. 6.

All hopes of a quick turnaround to Phase 3 were shot after the governor announced an extension "indefinitely" of the state's reopening program last week. Klickitat County, along with 15 other counties in the state of Washington remain at Phase 2 for the time being. No county thus far has made it to Phase 4, the final stage, of the state's reopening plan.

"This has been very frustrating for

See **PHASE 2**, page 10

## Leading the COVID response

**Wasco health officer on front lines of pandemic**

By Neita Cecil  
Columbia Gorge News

IF SHE'S NOT ON A PHONE call, Dr. Mimi McDonell is running out the door to administer a COVID-19 test, or virtually providing an update to elected officials and the public about local response to the pandemic.

McDonell, the health officer for North Central Public Health District, is, in the words of Wasco County Commissioner Kathy Schwartz, "clearly in charge of this pandemic locally. She is leading the response in every way."

"She is really the epicenter of all the information, the guidance, the planning. She's the conduit with the state and the feds," Schwartz said. "I think I can speak for the whole board, we are really looking to her to guide us."

Indeed, after hearing a recent update from McDonell, Wasco County Commissioner Scott Hege said, "As always, an amazing job."

See **COVID**, page 11



Dr. Mimi McDonell is part of the local response to the COVID-19 pandemic as the health officer for North Central Public Health District. The day the newspaper took this picture, she'd been up at 5 a.m. to transport a person from the hospital to a local motel for quarantine.  
Mark B. Gibson photo

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