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WEATHER
HIGH 80S BY MID-WEEK,
CLOUDY BY THE WEEKEND



Dance studio opening soon in Bingen
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The Ale List — A14

What's new in the Gorge beer scene



Columbia Gorge News

HOOD RIVER | THE DALLES | WHITE SALMON

Wednesday, September 30, 2020 Volume 1, Issue 26

\$1.00

COVID-19

Silver Lining

COVID leads to housing for some homeless

By Neita Cecil
Columbia Gorge News

IN A SILVER LINING TO the otherwise dismal stream of news coming out of the coronavirus pandemic, a number of area homeless families and individuals found permanent housing as a result of the pandemic.

Gorge Outreach, a program of Community Action Partnership of Oregon, began during the early

See **HOUSING**, page 10

30 cases reported at senior living facility in The Dalles

Thirty cases of COVID-19 were reported Sunday among residents and staff at Flagstone Senior Living in The Dalles. Most of the cases are mild or asymptomatic, and no one has had to be hospitalized.

Tests were given to 119 residents and staff late last week and results came back Sunday, Sept. 20 from the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory. All positive cases and identified family members and close contacts have been notified.

"Reportedly most of the cases involve mild or no symptoms, but this still serves as a wake-up call for our community to take appropriate measures to protect ourselves, our families and our fellow citizens," said The

See **CASES**, page 2

Gorge receives state relief funds

By Mark Gibson
Columbia Gorge News

Columbia River Gorge cultural organizations received \$380,858 in grant funding through Oregon's Coronavirus Relief Fund Cultural Support (CRFCS) grant awards totaling \$25.7 million statewide.

Six Wasco County cultural organizations were granted a total \$209,256; eight organizations in Hood River County received \$171 thousand. Statewide, 621 organizations received grant awards.

Grants were distributed through a partnership between the Oregon Cultural Trust and its County and Tribal Cultural Coalitions.

The funds, allocated to the Cultural Trust for Oregon, are for cultural organizations facing losses due to the COVID-19 health crisis. Funds were made available through a \$50 million relief package for Oregon culture approved by the Emergency Board of the Oregon Legislature in July.

"Many cultural organizations and

See **CULTURE**, page 10



A family explores a pond at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center/Wasco County Museum in The Dalles Sept. 29. The facility has received \$123,742 in state grant funding, part of a \$25.7 million relief package for cultural organizations approved by the emergency board of the Oregon legislature in July.
Gary Elkinton photo

Hood River takes steps toward new police station, invites county to join project

Council scheduled to consider asking architects' bids for preliminary design and cost estimate

By Kirby Neumann-Rea
Columbia Gorge News

Hood River City Council was scheduled to consider in its Monday meeting whether to take the next step in developing a new police facility — and possibly a joint facility for city police and Hood River County Sheriff.

What council was set to look at was two paths forward: A city-only police station and parking lot or a joint city-county facility, both located on the Columbia Street lot. Both models would require construction of a parking garage — likely the police facility on the west side of the lot and parking to the east.

The project would require voter-approved bond approval, and

the city is targeting a ballot request for 2021, with the idea of putting the project into place in 2022. Assuming voter approval, completion of any facility is likely at least three years away.

Columbia lot is located between Fifth and Sixth streets, across from Full Sail Brewery and Hood River Cinemas.

"We need a preliminary design and get a solid cost estimate to bring to voters," said Assistant City Manager Will Norris in an interview Friday.

The council met after press deadline; see details online and in the Oct. 7 edition for details on any council decision.

"What we're asking is to do a solicitation that asks firms to bid on both projects so if county wants to chip in we'll be ready to go," Norris said.

"I think we're (the city) ready to move, but the council may want more information," Norris said.

He also briefed the County Board of Commissioners on the project in their work session Sept. 21.

Norris said Monday's action would be to get council permission

to put out a request for architectural firms to prepare two designs and cost estimates: One for the city

See **STATION**, page 3



Fifth and Columbia lot, owned by the city, is the likely location of a new police facility and parking structure, possibly with Hood River County participation. The site is also home to events including Farmers Market and, shown, Hood River Hops Fest (canceled for 2020).
File photo

Nisley reclaims District Attorney's office

DA reinstated for remainder of term

By Rodger Nichols
For Columbia Gorge News

The Oregon Supreme Court ruled Thursday, Sept. 24, that Wasco County District Attorney Eric Nisley did not lose his office following a 60-day suspension from the Oregon Bar Association and should have immediately been returned to office following his suspension and reinstatement to the bar, which took place April 15.

The same court had upheld the suspension itself in December 2019, but issued no guidance on what would occur after the suspension ended.

The Oregon Attorney General's Office had argued that the office had become vacant at the point of his suspension, and assigned a representative from the AG's office, who has been Acting District Attorney. Nisley's lawyer noted Nisley was not the first district attorney to be suspended while in office and that, in earlier cases, no vacancy in the office of district attorney had been declared. Instead, those suspended had resumed all district attorney duties at the end of the suspension period.

Today's 18-page decision affirms Nisley as the validly elected Wasco County District Attorney.

"We are persuaded that respondent's brief and transient inability to practice law was not what the legislature intended to describe with the phrase "ceases to possess" a qualification for holding office. Accordingly, the office of Wasco County District Attorney did not become "vacant" and respondent remains the rightful holder of the office until the expiration of his term of office," the decision states.

That expiration will take place in January, when Matthew Ellis, who was elected DA in the May 19 primary, will take office for the next four-year term.

Nisley was back in the District Attorney's office at the Wasco County Courthouse Thursday.

Nisley issued the following statement:

"I look forward to finishing my term as District Attorney. I also pledge to do what I can to make the transition in the office as smooth as possible. I have reached out to Mr. Ellis and we have had some preliminary discussions about what that might look like and I am sure we will have more discussions

See **TESTING**, page 2



The Gorge magazine

THE FALL 2020 EDITION of The Gorge magazine is now available at businesses throughout the Gorge. This edition features a cover photo by Mary Kleihege of Little Seven Ranch near Lyle.

Other features include Women of Cider, "Art Saves Sanity" in COVID-19 times, a turtle preservation project, and how class of 2020 graduates are preparing for their freshman year.



Kristyn Fix of Slopeswell Cidery, part of the Women of Cider feature in the Fall 2020 edition of The Gorge Magazine. The cover features a photo by Lyle rancher Mary Kleihege.
Emily Fitzgerald photo

Artistic sanity, turtles worth preserving, students navigating a pandemic: Inside the new edition

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