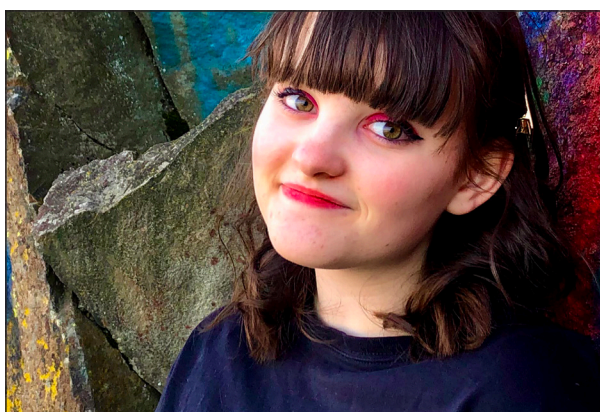


INDEX

Classifieds	B7-8
History	B6
Kid Scoop	B14
Obituaries	A7,9
Opinion	A4-5
Police Logs	B5
Public Notices	B9-11
Senior Living	B3
Sports	A8-9, 12-15
What's Happening	B5

Weather
Still surfing the heat wave - stay hydrated. Daytime temps expected to stay around 100, with nights in the high 60s.



TD grad headed to film school
— B12

Home and Garden — Inside

Glenwood, Lyle news — B2-3

Gorge economy recovering from pandemic — A10

Columbia Gorge News

HOOD RIVER | THE DALLES | WHITE SALMON

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Sheriff's threats of arrest raise concerns in Klickitat County

Commissioners, government employees fire back at Sheriff Songer's statements

By Jacob Bertram
Columbia Gorge News

WHITE SALMON — A statement released by Klickitat County Sheriff Bob Songer — which called for the arrest, detention and recommendation for prosecution of governmental officials he unilaterally believes are acting outside the bounds of the constitution — drew pushback from county commissioners, who said they and county employees felt threatened and intimidated by the messaging.

Posted on the Klickitat County Sheriff's Office Facebook page and forwarded to local media

organizations, Songer's June 17 statement sent ripples in county circles.

It impacted the day-to-day operations of the county health department and weakened the feelings of security of many county residents who work in local government, said county commissioners, leaving the Board of County Commissioners to respond officially with a letter to the sheriff on the constitutionality and the impacts his outspoken politics has had on elected officials and county staff.

The Board of County Commissioners responded to the sheriff following a candid discussion last Tuesday by approving a written response condemning Songer's public statement for invalidly interpreting laws, a duty not prescribed to him in his official role as sheriff, and for putting county

staff's safety and security at risk.

During the discussion, Board Chair Dave Sauter said upon examining the letter over and over, he concluded that the letter is not limited to focusing on the governor's mandates on the COVID-19 emergency. "The more I read it, it upsets me more, because... that is a general statement about any bureaucrat or government official, mayor, commissioner, whoever, that is perceived by a single individual, namely the sheriff, to be violating somebody's constitutional rights, (and) is subject to arrest and detention."

"That is a chilling thing to say," Sauter said. "That is the path to authoritarian regimes."

The letter from the board reads: "While we truly appreciate you and your dedication to the citizens of our great county and for your love

and respect for the Constitution, we cannot sit by and say nothing regarding your statements that the board, county residents and county employees find threatening and intimidating.

"Your statements were construed as threatening and intimidating to elected officials and county employees," the county staff-prepared letter read, which was signed by all three commissioners and sent to the sheriff. "Your comments implied the arrest, detention and recommended prosecution for following state mandates and laws that you may disagree with, without going through the court process and judicial system as deemed by the Constitution.

"We do live in a nation of laws bound by the Constitution;

See **LETTER**, page 2



Fireworks display at Fort Dalles Fourth. CGN photo/file

Gorge gets ready to celebrate Fourth of July

By Trisha Walker
Columbia Gorge News

Sunday is the Fourth of July holiday, celebrating the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States in 1776.

Most events are back after last year's COVID-19 shutdowns, including parades, fireworks and a fun run.

Hood River

The Hood River Fourth of July parade begins at 10 a.m. at Pacific Avenue and 12th Street on the Heights and ends at the Hood River Aquatic Center. There is a \$10 entry fee for those wishing to participate in the parade. A "bring your own picnic" event is happening at Jackson Park afterwards that will include music. For more information or to register for a parade entry, visit hoodriverfireworks.

See **FOURTH**, page 2

Talks continue on Google deal

By Mark Gibson
Columbia Gorge News

THE DALLES — Wasco County and the city of The Dalles continue to work on a tax abatement agreement for new Google server facilities in The Dalles.

"I'm still confident this will happen," said The Dalles Mayor Richard Mays when asked of the ongoing pause in public discussions.

He said early timelines on the SIP agreement process were optimistic, and lawyers on both sides have been working with the broad agreement proposal, "crossing the T's and dotting the I's," Mays said. The city is continuing to work with developers regarding water service to the facilities as well, and that

See **GOOGLE**, page 6

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Old Dee Mill site for sale

By Gail Oberst
For Columbia Gorge News

Mill land that once supported the small community of Dee for more than 80 years is for sale, according to a listing with real estate broker Maui Meyer of Cooper West, in Hood River.

Surrounded by orchards, farms and forest and with East Fork Hood River frontage, the former Dee Mill's 21 acres of industrial-zoned land is on Highway 281, about 10 miles southwest of Hood River.

The land has been a source of land-use controversy for the past eight years as the current owners had proposed, in varying applications and configurations, to build an event venue and hotel on the rural site. The would-be developers are a collection of local investors including some Dee natives operating as Apollo Land Trust, LLC. After filing five contested building permit extensions, the owners failed to begin construction at the site before permits expired. The owners have withdrawn their applications and are selling the land. The lengthy process inspired recent changes in Hood River County's permitting process, limiting extensions.

The owners are asking \$1.5 million for the 21-acre parcel, and \$136,000 for a separate 1.04-acre parcel, both at the same 4661 Lost Lake Road, Parkdale, address.

An unrelated small craft mill now operates as Dee Lumber nearby. It



The old Dee Mill site, above, is for sale. Find a picture of the old mill on the history page, B6.

is not for sale. The small mill's website, www.thedeemill.com, includes a history of the land, summarized from the Oregon Encyclopedia.

The original Dee Mill was established in 1906 by the Oregon Lumber Company. The name "Dee" was a nod to Thomas Dee, a stockholder and company officer.

The lumber company logged in

the region and operated the mill until 1959, adding a hard-board facility in 1951. During its heyday in the first 20 years, up to 250 people lived in Dee, working at the mill. The company town once included a two-story hotel, a store, and small houses. Hines Lumber Company purchased the mill and town property in 1958, dismantling the

houses. The post office closed in 1960, but wood products operations continued at the site under Champion Lumber and then Dee Forest Products. In 1996, a fire destroyed most of the buildings. More than 300 people continue to live in the vicinity of Dee Mill and the adjacent Dee Flats.

Panel discusses reality of recycling

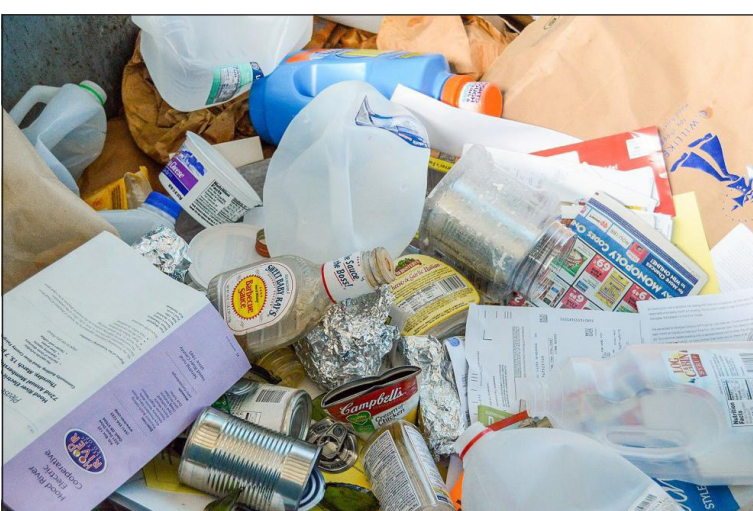
By Trisha Walker
Columbia Gorge News

What are today's recycling realities?

That was the question posed at the April 29 virtual panel discussion co-hosted by Columbia Gorge Climate Action Network and Mt. View Grange and emceed by Peter Cornelison and Ruth Olin.

Three local recycling experts shared their perspectives and insights with the 28 participants who logged in to listen to the presentation: David Skakel, program coordinator for the Tri-County Hazardous Waste & Recycling Program; Ruby Irving, Solid Waste director for Klickitat County; and Julie Tucker, founder and owner of the sustainable materials management company Emerald Systems LLC.

Skakel said that recycling today is confusing because there is such a myriad of packaging. During World War II, recycling was a matter of national defense, and everyone took



Trisha Walker file photo

part — but there were only three types of packaging at that time: Glass, tin and cardboard.

"Fast forward to today, where we have an unbelievable diversity of packaging," Skakel said. "I'm a

recycling professional and I'm confused because it's complicated."

And whereas that glass, tin and cardboard were historically separated from each other, today we rely on co-mingling — that is, tossing

everything into one bin and relying on material recycling facilities (MRFs) to sort it out.

"That has really carried some inherent flaws in contamination, when you take all that tin and paper and all this increasing array of plastics, and just bundle them all together," he said. "And throw on top of that what we call the 'realm of the wishful recycler' — put it in a bin and we'll figure it out."

Compounding the problem was the 2018 enactment of China Sword, which limited the amount of contaminants allowed in each bale of recyclables to .5%.

"It's a very strict, almost ban, on import of most recyclables to China that has sent massive ripples globally creating great disruptions in the past couple of years," he said. "That's the background on how we came to be today."

Irving said she sees China Sword as an opportunity for the Gorge to

See **RECYCLING**, page 3