

HOW TO HELP

VSO holds winter drive

The Veterans Service Office (VSO) in The Dalles is holding a fall/winter drive to help the homeless veterans in the community. “The cold and wet weather increases the needs of our homeless veterans,” said a VSO press release. Donations of gift cards or money are greatly appreciated to help meet these needs. Contact the VSO at 541-506-2602 or drop off at 201 Federal St., The Dalles.

Lyle School District added to giving tree

The Giving Tree is up at Mugs’ coffee shop, 221 W. Steuben, Bingen, to help area families have a happy holiday. Each tag will have information about a family, including children’s likes and sizes. Visitors can select one or more tags to take with them while shopping for the kids. Tags that begin with an “L” indicate they are for a Lyle School family. Gifts should be wrapped and returned to Mugs, along with the original tag, by Dec. 14. For those who would like to contribute but have limited time to shop, donations of cash gifts are also being accepted. “Some of Lyle’s older students in particular have very specific needs,” said a press release. “With a little financial help, they can pay for items that will help them get a job or otherwise get ahead in life.” To donate cash to this fund, contact Lyle Community Schools at 509-365-2211, extension 126.

Windermere hosts coat, blanket drive

Now through Friday, Dec. 17, Windermere brokers are collecting winter necessities for community members in need during its annual Share the Warmth campaign. In the Columbia River Gorge area, donations will benefit area warming shelters and the Washington Gorge Action Program. Donations can be dropped off on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at any of the following Windermere locations:

- Bingen: 106 W. Steuben
- Cascade Locks: 651 WaNaPa St.
- Hood River: 315 Oak St., or 504 Cascade St.
- Stevenson: 220 S.W. Second St.
- The Dalles: 122 E. Second St.
- Goldendale: 103 E. Main St.

HRVAC Meals on Wheels

Hood River Valley Adult Center’s Meals on Wheels program delivers the support that keeps seniors in their own homes, where they want to be. Are you a business looking at ways to help support Hood River Valley Meals on Wheels? Call at 541-386-2060. Hood River Valley Adult Center is a non-profit 501c3, which means your donation is tax deductible.

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Does your nonprofit or organization need help this holiday season? Email details to Trisha Walker, trishaw@gorgenews.com.

CLIMATE

Local climate action urged

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were at risk for extreme heat. Ferrer said that many of the cities and towns were at risk for two of these disasters, but only two communities in the Pacific Northwest were found to be at risk for all three: Grand Coulee, Wash., and The Dalles. The presentation went on to discuss a few potential means of combating climate change, including switching gas-powered city vehicles to electric ones. Ferrer also pointed out that a lot of other communities in the Gorge have begun to take steps, and said The Dalles could use those communities as inspiration. The innovations adopted throughout the Gorge included Hood River’s 2018 energy

plan, Mosier’s plans to build electric vehicle charging stations and a bike hub among other things, as well as White Salmon’s decision to pass a climate emergency resolution in March of this year. After presenting a list of potential changes the city could make, Ferrer told the council that what Protect Oregon’s Progress was asking for was for the city to form a climate action plan task force, provide a staff member to lead the task force, and finally include climate change action in their 2040 vision. Following Ferrer’s presentation, Councilors Dan Richardson and Darcy Long expressed support in regards to moving forward with a task force. However, Councilor Rod Runyon expressed uncertainty about creating a task force immediately, instead wishing to defer to Interim City Manager Hunter to conduct research on the topic. Councilor Long then

stressed the importance of acting now, rather than waiting and being held up by the holiday season. The council ultimately agreed that Hunter, with the help of the mayor as well as Ferrer, would begin work on a task force. When public comment opened, many community members expressed support for climate change action, including Mayor Arlene Burns of Mosier, who spoke to actions Mosier has taken to help with climate change. She also mentioned that they’ve been able to attain government funding to assist with their efforts, and then commended The Dalles for taking needed steps. “I really applaud you and encourage you to take this with gusto,” Burns said. “I think having people in the community that are passionate and interested in what the solutions are makes a better future for all of us.”

COVID

Boosters now available to all

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reported. Some 815 vaccines were given in the last week by area providers, and at least 30,640 doses have been given in Wasco, Sherman and Gilliam counties since the pandemic began. That does not include doses from pharmacies. For the week ending Nov. 19, NCPHD gave 424 doses, 18,885 total; Mid-Columbia Medical Center clinics gave 118 doses, 2,311 total; One Community Health gave 286 doses, 4,187 total; and Deschutes Rim Clinic gave 23 doses; 748 total. Booster doses are now available to everyone 18 and older. Previously, they were only available to seniors, those with health conditions, or in high risk living or work conditions. Boosters can be given six months after the second dose of Pfizer or Moderna, and two months after the Johnson & Johnson

vaccine. One Community Health had a successful vaccine event Nov. 19, geared toward children ages 5-11. It featured Disney characters, live music, hot chocolate and crafts. “We had 250 slots and vaccinated 264 patients,” said Amy Marquez, site director for The Dalles Clinic of One Community Health. “It was a fun family event and so exciting to see the kids and their parents getting their vaccines together. We are very thankful for the support of NCPHD for the donation of the backpacks, they were a huge hit!” Children ages 5-11 who got their first dose received a backpack with school supplies at the event. In other encouraging vaccine news, Pfizer announced last Tuesday that its Phase 3 trial of children 12-15 found the vaccine 100% effective against COVID. This phase followed participants for four months. Children 12 and older and adults can schedule a vaccine appointment at NCPHD clinics by visiting www.

ncphd.org/book-vaccine. The clinics, on Dec. 9 and Dec. 16, offer first, second, third (for immunocompromised people) and booster doses. NCPHD does not offer the vaccine to those 5-11, but that age group can visit their doctor’s office for a COVID vaccine, or visit these pharmacies:

- Fred Meyer (www.fredmeyer.com/rx/covid-vaccine)
- Rite-Aid (www.riteaid.com/pharmacy/scheduler)
- Walgreen’s (www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid/19/landing)

The pharmacies also offer first, second, third (for immunocompromised) and booster doses. As of Tuesday, Nov. 22, Wasco County had vaccinated 78.2% of those 18 and up, Sherman County 67.6% and Gilliam County 52.1%. For more information, visit COVID-19 Vaccine in Oregon, contact North Central Public Health District at 541-506-2600, visit us on the web at www.ncphd.org or find us on Facebook.

Drug ring had ties to Hood River

PORTLAND — A Mexican national residing in Oregon City pleaded guilty Nov. 24 for his leadership role in a conspiracy to traffic large quantities of methamphetamine, heroin and cocaine from Mexico for resale in Oregon and Washington State. Among communities impacted was Hood River, where the drugs were delivered for resale. Victor Alvarez Farfan, 49, pleaded guilty to conspiring to possess with intent to distribute and distribute controlled substances and illegal reentry, according to a press release from the office of acting U.S. Attorney Scott Erik Asphaug of the District of Oregon. Farfan is the last of 23 defendants charged in the conspiracy to plead guilty. This is Farfan’s second federal conviction in the District of Oregon for drug trafficking and illegal reentry. According to court documents, Farfan received approximately 20 kilograms of methamphetamine, half a kilogram of heroin and two kilograms of fentanyl from a drug cartel based in Michoacán, Mexico. He and his associates would then resell the methamphetamine and heroin in Hillsboro, Gresham, Portland and Hood River, Ore., and Tacoma, Wash. Farfan also oversaw the manufacturing of crystal methamphetamine from its liquid form. As part of the conspiracy, one of Farfan’s co-conspirators, Eduardo Alvarez Farfan, 27, of Gresham, provided the two kilograms of fentanyl to a co-conspirator, Noe Antonio Machado-Madrano, 26, who had flown in from Baltimore, Md. Investigators arrested Machado-Madrano at a

bus station and seized the fentanyl. On Oct. 17, 2018, a federal grand jury in Portland returned a nine-count indictment charging Farfan and 21 co-defendants with conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute and distribute methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine; use of a communication facility, including cellular telephones, in the commission of a controlled substances felony; maintaining drug-involved premises to manufacture and distribute controlled substances; interstate distribution of drug proceeds and money laundering. On Oct. 24, 2018, a coordinated law enforcement operation led by the FBI with assistance from Homeland Security Investigations, the Westside Interagency Narcotics (WIN) Task Force and the Clackamas County Interagency Task Force (CCITF) resulted in the arrest of Farfan and 17 co-defendants. Later, on Nov. 27, 2018, Farfan was charged in a second indictment with illegal reentry. Farfan faces a maximum sentence of life in prison with a 10-year mandatory minimum sentence and a fine of \$10 million or twice the gross gains or losses resulting from his offense. With Farfan’s continued acceptance of responsibility, the U.S. Attorney’s Office will recommend a sentence of 180 months in federal prison when he is sentenced on Feb. 15, 2022, before U.S. District Court Judge Michael H. Simon. As part of the plea agreement, Farfan has agreed to forfeit any criminally-derived proceeds and property used to facilitate his crimes

identified by the government prior to sentencing and pay \$100,000 to satisfy a forfeiture money judgment. Acting U.S. Attorney Scott Erik Asphaug of the District of Oregon made the announcement. This case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Oregon and is the result of a joint investigation by FBI, HSI, WIN, and CCITF. Forfeiture was litigated by the U.S. Attorney’s Office Asset Recovery and Money Laundering Division. WIN includes representatives from the Washington County Sheriff’s Office, the Beaverton Police Department, the Hillsboro Police Department, the Tigard Police Department, the Oregon National Guard Counterdrug Program, and the FBI. CCITF includes representatives from the Clackamas County Sheriff’s Office, Clackamas County Community Corrections, Oregon City Police Department, Canby Police Department, FBI and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Strike Force Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs and transnational criminal organizations.

Bring hope to the holidays by giving blood

In 2021, people in Oregon and Southwest Washington faced great emergency needs as the ongoing pandemic exacerbated the challenges related to severe disasters, blood shortages and global conflict. “Our most vulnerable neighbors are facing unique and pressing struggles when crisis strikes on top of COVID-19,” Dale Kunce, chief executive officer, American Red Cross Cascades Region, said. “This holiday season, join us to provide help and hope in these difficult moments by

making a financial donation or by giving blood or platelets.” During the holidays, visit redcross.org to make a financial donation or an appointment to give blood or platelets. Individuals can also learn about volunteer opportunities in their area and give back in honor of American Red Cross Founder Clara Barton, whose 200th birthday will be commemorated on Dec. 25. This year, a family displaced by a disaster in the U.S. spent an average of nearly 30 days in a Red

Cross-supported emergency shelter. These extended stays were largely due to a lack of savings and community housing shortages — signs that climate-driven disasters are compounding the financial hardships of the pandemic. A blood drive is planned in Hood River Dec. 9, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Hood River Fire Department, 1785 Meyer Parkway in Hood River and a second Dec. 16 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Waucoma Building, 902 Wasco St., Hood River.



Shop Local

this holiday season to:

- Keep money in the local economy
- Give back to your community
- Invest in entrepreneurship
- Support local jobs
- Celebrate unique, independent businesses



Working together to promote our business community!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

- Gift Cards • Jane Iredale Mineral Cosmetics
- Skincare Gift Sets • HydraFacial • Mystic Spray Tan

We Even Have On-Line Gift Card Options on Our Website



Call/Text 541.298.5066
301 Cherry Heights Rd., 2nd Floor
The Dalles
ColumbiaLaserSkinCenter.com