

**INSIDE »** Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo section



# THE REDMOND Spokesman

A special good morning to subscriber Highland Baptist Church

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## Pacific Northwest heat wave



Attendees crowd under shade at Music on the Green on Wednesday, July 27, at Sam Johnson Park in Redmond.

Nick Rosenberger/Spokesman

# REDMOND ROASTS

## Crushing temperatures reach all corners of Central Oregon life

BY NICK ROSENBERGER • Redmond Spokesman

The sun bludgeoned much of the U.S. West this week, with temperatures reaching 109 degrees at the Redmond Airport and forcing residents to face the crushing heat and uncertainty of future Central Oregon summers.

With thermometers reading triple digits on Wednesday, crowds at Music on the Green stuck to the shade of Sam Johnson Park. On Thursday, food trucks like the Mighty Greek in Redmond stored iPads in their fridge to keep from overheating. Some construction workers started their day at 5:45 a.m., before the sun and temperatures rose.

### Homelessness

The local unsheltered community is especially at risk for extreme heat. For dozens of Redmond residents living among the sage and junipers east of 17th Street, the baking sun was overwhelming and inescapable.

Many made their way to two blue tents set up city streets, wrapped by hoses that sprayed a cooling mist of water into the air. A blue kiddie pool with water balloons and a floating ice pack rested nearby. Water spilled on the cement sizzled and popped.

Volunteers provided potable water, bags of ice, popsicles, food, shade and support.

Colleen Thomas, a homeless services coordinator for Deschutes County Health Services, helped coordinate service providers and mutual aid groups. The tent and misters were set up by Bob Bohac and Jericho Road.

But it was Larry, a man experiencing homelessness himself, who “manned the battleship.”

“He helped organize this,” said Kathryn Osborne, a community volunteer and candidate for Redmond City Council. “It wouldn’t have happened without him.”

See **Heat** / A4

# REPRIEVE FROM

## Shepherd’s House provides daytime respite from triple-digit temperatures

BY LEO BAUDHUIJ  
Redmond Spokesman

Kim Neal spent daytime hours during last week’s heat wave at Shepherd’s House, located off Highway 97 south of downtown Redmond. She came equipped with her phone, iPad and books for entertainment and spent the week hanging out with others in the safety of the air-conditioned shelter.

The building served as a cooling center from Monday to Saturday between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. — though Neal said director Andrew Hoeksema would sometimes let her in to escape the heat as soon as he

showed up each morning. The cooling center was “a godsend,” Neal said.

Neal has been homeless since 2014, first living out of a smaller car and now a van. She’s currently parked outside of Shepherd’s House. Neal is hoping her sister will send her gas money so she can pick up her medication and relocate once temperatures drop, she said.

“You learn to live with it,” she said, but it’s still not ideal. “I have a ton of family, but not any that want to be family right now.”

When the cooling center closes in the evening, Neal moves outside to the van.

See **Cooling** / A4

## DESCHUTES COUNTY FAIR & RODEO

# Determined teen takes reins as Deschutes rodeo queen

BY TIM TRAINOR

Redmond Spokesman

A woman changed the course of Jessica Sperber’s life when she walked into her fourth-grade class at Tumalo Community School.

Her name was Emily Cox. She wore jeans and a western snap shirt, a cowboy hat atop her head and sash across her chest. Cox was queen of the Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo and she looked and acted the part. She signed autographs and chatted with awestruck elementary students. Sperber, 10 years old at the time, was one of them.

“I knew right then I wanted to be queen of the Deschutes County Fair,” she said.

For most young people, dreams come and go. But not for Sperber. Now 18 and a graduate of Ridgeview High, she never wavered from her desire to be queen of her local rodeo.

Earlier this year, that desire became a reality. After undergoing the rigorous pageant process, Sperber was named queen of the 2022 Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo.

That she succeeded was no surprise to her mom, Carla.

“She is the most focused, most determined kid I’ve ever seen,” she said. “She’s had that attitude from the beginning. And she has the most impressive follow through.”

To claim the crown, Sperber was tested not just on her horsemanship, but on her public speaking skills, a written test of rodeo history and rules, her presentation and her academics, athletics and extracurricular activities.

One look through her bio, and it was clear that no one could keep Sperber from her title.

She was the salutatorian of the Ridgeview’s 249-person Class of 2022, graduating with a 5.0 GPA as member of the National Honor Society. She served on student council, volunteered as a math tutor, was captain of her soccer team, was a counselor at the Deschutes County Horse Camp, president of her 4-H horse club and a four-year member of Ridgeview’s track and equestrian teams. She also worked part time at Stone Pony Dressage and Wilco Farm Store.

“She became involved in absolutely everything,” said Carla Sperber. “That’s the kind of kid she is.”

The Sperbers own about 10 acres between Tumalo and Redmond, enough room for their five horses and the numerous 4-H animals Jessica Sperber brings each year to the fair.



Photo by Jeff Sperber

Jessica Sperber is the queen of the 2022 Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo.

See **Queen** / A4

# Planned Oasis village homeless shelter sees progress

New timeline means construction to start next May, grand opening in November 2023

BY NICK ROSENBERGER  
Redmond Spokesman

With increasing housing prices and continued inflation, homelessness has continued to tick up across Central Oregon.

Whether nestled on unused roads or on the edges of Redmond, Bend or Sisters, it’s not difficult to find dozens of people — all with their own diverse stories, personalities and histories — dreaming of home. Those dreams might be closer to reality as Oasis Village, a planned Redmond transitional shelter, pushes forward despite delays.

On Wednesday, July 20, the Board of Directors for Oasis Village presented

their updated plans to the three-person Deschutes County Board of Commissioners. In it, they detailed a new timeline: a May 2023 start of construction with the goal of welcoming residents by November 1.

“This looks like a pretty firm timeline,” said James Cook, a community advocate and vice-chair of the Oasis Village Board of Directors. “Right now I think we’re in pretty good shape.”

Cook and the rest of the board will meet with the City of Redmond on Tuesday, July 26, to discuss plans and will meet with ODOT by the end of the year. They aim to submit a site plan to the city on September 1 with a decision by December.

“We’re well on our way,” said Bob Bohac, chair of Oasis Village.

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The Spokesman uses recycled newsprint

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