

# Keizertimes

SECTION A

FEBRUARY 12, 2016

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## Keizer joins homeless initiative

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

After months of planning, the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative is ready to begin.

During last week's Keizer City Council meeting, the Keizer members of the task force were approved unanimously.

Mayor Cathy Clark has had conversations in recent months with Salem Mayor Anna Peterson as well as Marion County Commissioner Janet Carlson. Thus, it's no surprise Clark will be one of five Keizerites on the task force, which has its first meeting next Wednesday, Feb. 17. Polk County will also be represented.

Joining Clark on the task force will be councilor Kim Freeman, Patty Ignatowski, Verena Wessel and Shaney Starr. Clark has also asked

Keizer police chief John Teague to serve on the technical advisory team.

"We recognize we have homeless members of the community," Clark said.

"As a result of Commissioner Carlson, mayor Peterson and myself having conversation, we thought it would be good to have conversations to address these issues. It's not a one city or a one county issue; it's something we need to solve collaboratively. We will have technical advisors like Chief Teague with a wide variety of infor-

mation, to get to very complex issues.

"This just came from meeting with other leaders," she added. "We will work together to find what pieces we need to put into place to make housing secure for these people."

The Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency's 2015 Homeless Count Report identified 1,660 people experiencing homelessness in Marion and Polk Counties. The report identified obstacles to finding safe and affordable housing and the need for

housing assistance.

According to a press release from the City of Salem, the Feb. 17 meeting will take place in the Anderson Room of the Salem Library (585 Liberty Street SE) from 4 to 6 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

"This is a pressing and complex issue that warrants a strong, community partnership to find solutions," Peterson said in the press release. "This collaborative approach will increase our success."

The task force is scheduled to meet until February 2017, unless additional time is needed.

Contributing factors such as mental illness, addiction, lack of education and the need for transportation, as well as the challenges of unique populations such as youth and/or

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— Cathy Clark, Keizer Mayor



Welcome to KEIZER

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## Family affair for the Whites

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

First Scott White honored his dad.

Then it was Scott himself getting an even bigger honor.

During the Keizer First Citizen and Awards Banquet on Jan. 23, there were 14 Pairings of Excellence recipients, with Scott, owner of Keizer Big Town Hero, honoring father Glenn White as "Big Town Hero Extraordinaire" for his help at the restaurant.

Then it was time for the announcement of the 2015 Merchant of the Year. Joe Egli, last year's recipient of the clock award, handled the introduction.

"We get to add one person to the list that is more than qualified," Egli said. "Everybody knows this person. Not because they advertise a lot, not because they spend a lot of money on things, it's because they're always out there doing things in our community. They're always saying yes. Actually, they don't ever actually say yes. If you ever have a conversation with this person, they won't say yes and they won't say no. They say '...they won't say yes and they won't say no. They say 'sure' or 'absolutely'..."



KEIZERTIMES/Craig Murphy  
Scott White (far left) celebrates his Merchant of the Year Award with father Glenn and son Corey on Jan. 23.

'sure' or 'absolutely' we can do this, no matter how dumb or stupid the idea. They make it happen. They take care of it.

"They are enthusiastic about what they do," he added. "The product they sell is a byproduct of their attitude. It's a welcoming atmosphere every time you go in there. You always hear your name. This person is family. Working in a family businesses, you realize how important family is. I'd

— Joe Egli

like to call up Scott White." Scott hugged Egli and joked about the long introduction.

"Five years ago my kids and I thought it would be a lot of fun to open a sandwich shop in this town," Scott said. "We found out five years later it was a lot of work and just a little bit of fun. But if it wasn't for everyone in this room and this community, we wouldn't be able to give back as we have to the community and the schools. Thank you very much everybody."

Scott went on to thank his family members, who were sitting at his table. Daughter Kalynn is the Big Town Hero manager, while

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## Blind Date on the move

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

Don't you hate it when your *Blind Date* gets moved to a different location?

Members of the Keizer Public Arts Commission (KPAC) believe a move will be good.

*Blind Date*, by the way, is the name of the art sculpture currently in front of Copper Creek Mercantile on River Road.

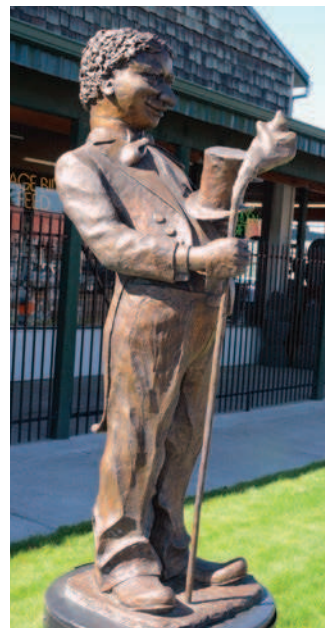
At their meeting in late January, KPAC members voted to move the sculpture since it's too small to adequately fill the large pad in front of the store.

After some discussion of potential locations, KPAC members agreed with Lore Christopher's suggestion to move *Blind Date* to the focal point, also known as McGee-Newton Park or the Keizer Corner at the corner of Chemawa and River Roads where the fountain is.

The KPAC motion was forwarded to the Keizer City Council. Councilors unanimously agreed with the recommendation at their Feb. 1 meeting.

No timeline was mentioned during either meeting. Nate Brown, director of Community Development for Keizer, said on Tuesday the move would happen as soon as Keizer Public Works sets a new pad at the planter area of Focal Point.

*Blind Date* was one of several sculptures put up



KEIZERTIMES file/Craig Murphy  
The *Blind Date* sculpture is moving from Copper Creek Mercantile to the Focal Point.

around town last year as a new commitment to public art in the city. The one attracting the most attention was the large Bouchers diamond ring. Due to fears the ring could be construed as advertising, the sculpture was put in front of Sonic's Drive-In further south along River Road, a placement Christopher sharply disagreed with.

While KPAC members liked the placement of most sculptures, a concern arose over *Blind Date* being too small for its location. At recent meetings KPAC members have gone over pictures of

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KEIZERTIMES/File photo  
Keizer Parks Board members have been debating if voters would approve more funds for parks in the city.

## Budget woes discussed by Parks Board

By CRAIG MURPHY  
Of the Keizertimes

It looks to be another tight budget year for the parks department in Public Works in Keizer.

That helped launch another discussion of how to bring in more funds at Tuesday's Keizer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting.

The discussion got going when Robert Johnson, Parks supervisor for the city, gave a preview of the upcoming 2016-17 fiscal year budget.

"I've been given another status quo budget," Johnson said. "Bottom line, it doesn't increase at all. We know the challenges we had this year and it will be more challenging as we get no more funding."

Johnson said the cost of temporary employees — a proposal to hire an additional full-time employee last year didn't get approved — has gone up 23 percent or about \$10,000. He and Bill Lawyer, Public Works director, looked at options

and determined the money could be made up in only two places: pulling \$10,000 in funding designated for Keizer Little League Park or from the Parks Board's matching grant program.



R. Johnson

members at recent meetings.

"This shows how important it is to be searching for more permanent money," he said. "It's very important."

Brandon Smith, the Keizer City Council liaison who sat on the Parks

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