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meeting July 26. Here's what was discussed:

North-River Road North in-

tersection. Community Devel-

Small rewards, big change at skate park

By ERIC A. HOWALD Of the Keizertimes

Kelly Owen's first trip to Keizer's Carlson Skate Park was discouraging.

The Salem Health emergency room and trauma nurse estimated that less than a third of the park's users were wearing helmets while they rode their bikes, skateboards and scooters. And that was the best rider-tohelmet ratio of the four parks she and co-workers visited in the mid-Willamette Valley.

"It's important that everyone wear helmets because brain injuries are so tragic, but so preventable," said Owen.

Getting kids to wear their helmets has become something of a crusade for Owen.

"In spring and summer of 2015, we had some really tragic events resulting from longboard and skateboard crashes. We had some local kids end up with life-changing traumatic brain injuries and one was killed," Owen said.

Owen herself cared for more than one of the injured riders, and it got her thinking about what more she could do to in-

"I already do a lot of talks in the schools about wearing helmets, so it's not like the kids don't have the information. We have to get them to actually

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Above: Kelly Owen talks with Aaron Sanders and Cameron Hatfield. Right: Kaia and Silas Branch were two of the riders wearing helmets on Owen's recent visit to Carlson Skate Park. KEIZERTIMES/ Eric A. Howald



wear the helmets," Owen said.

The team decided that rewarding good behavior might be their best option. Armed with donated \$5 gift cards from Dutch Bros. and Jamba Juice and others that were purchased, Owen set out on the first of five unannounced visits to Carlson Skate Park this summer.

In addition to goodies, Owen brought along a poster board advertising free gift cards and featuring photos of two of the crash victims she cared for.

On her first visit, still only about a third of riders were wearing helmets. On her second visit, helmet usage was up to 50 percent. When she visited for a third time Tuesday, July 26, about 80 percent of riders were sporting headgear while

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"I think we sometimes try to make thing too hard. I truly am amazed how something like rewarding kids with a \$5 gift card seems to be making such a huge difference," she said.

For riders who don't own helmets, she keeps some on hand to pass out, but even then there are holdouts.

"Kids are very fussy about their helmets and what they look like," Owen said. She ran through a small supply of multisport helmets quickly and the bike helmets remaining don't

Her ace-in-the-hole at Carlson is 14-year-old Cameron Hatfield. Owen met Cameron on her first visit and enlisted him as an ambassador to talk with the other kids he meets at the park.

"Most of them say it's uncomfortable or looks dumb, but after talking to Kelly I started wearing my helmet a lot more," Hatfield said. "If you fall and get hurt that's your fault. You have to care about your life."

Hatfield said the older park visitors are less receptive to his message, but riders his age and younger have been more open

"This parks gets a lot of kids who are middle school and younger, and I think we have a better chance of redirecting their behavior," Owen said. "It's been our most successful park in regard to increasing helmet usage.'

Owen also hopes that influencing behavior at the park will increase helmet usage in other community spaces. The kids who were injured last summer were riding on city and county streets.

"The thing to remember is that this is only a start. Parents need to reinforce helmet usage at home. It can change lives later on," Owen said.

To support helmet program, contact the Salem Foundation, 503-561-5576 or foundation@salemhealth.org, and make a donation to the injury prevention program.

scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 16, will be a tour of all the Points of Interest. The public The tour will begin at the

Keizer Civic Center, 930 Chemawa Road N.E., at 5:30 p.m. 503-856-3418.

terest Committee meeting

The Keizer Points of In- Participants will carpool from the civic center and be given a map showing the points of interest with informational paragraphs as well as an agenda vith driving instructions.

For more information. contact Debbie Lockhart at



The Keizer Public Arts Commission had its most recent

Trunk Show at Keizer Civic Center.

at some of the locations has been lukewarm while others are still being contacted. Commissioners are looking to fill open art display

opment Director Nate Brown said reception from owners

- spaces in the Keizer Civic Center between January and
- Fifteen portraits on the Keizer Mural Project at Town and Country Lanes are complete with a dozen more left to finish. Organizers are shooting for a Sept. 10 dedication

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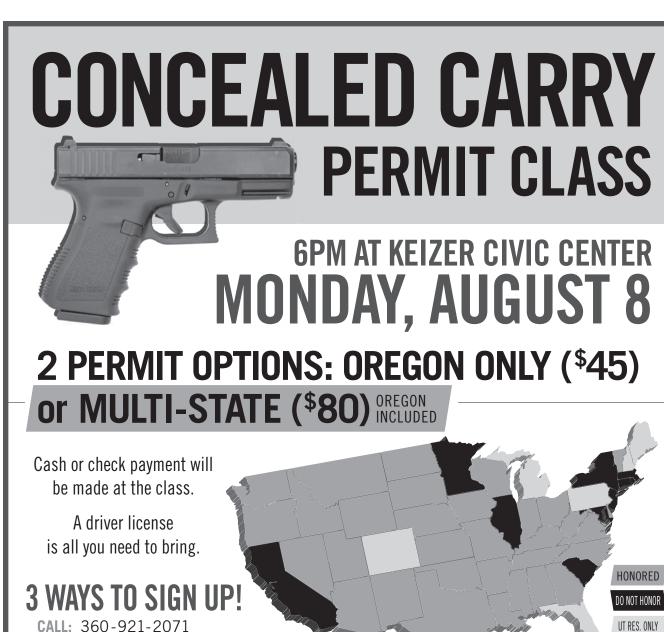
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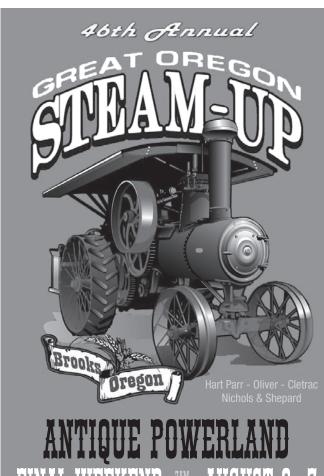
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