

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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\$1.00

McNary grads take the walk

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

SALEM — When David Holcomb told his high school friends he wanted to be a teacher, they laughed.

Standing on stage, 11 years later, as McNary High School's keynote speaker for the 2017 commencement, the joke was on them.

Holcomb, an AP geography teacher at McNary, told the 2017 graduating class on Friday, June 9 not to listen to critics.

"My friends knew who I was up until that point," Holcomb said. "They knew that I failed every class my freshman year. They knew as a sophomore I wasn't doing much better. I couldn't play

sports because my grades weren't good enough. In their eyes I was never going to become a teacher."

Holcomb also grew up in a broken home with parents that were in and out of jail.

"I was depressed. I was embarrassed and honestly I wanted to give up but deep down I had a dream," Holcomb said. "I had a dream that one day the pain of my youth and the lessons that I had learned outside of the classroom would help reach students in a way unimaginable. I wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to be a world changer. I wanted to be a mentor that spoke truth and life into the minds of students. I made a choice to follow

Please see GRADS, Page A7



Members of the McNary High School Class of 2017 toss their caps in the air to celebrate graduating on Friday, June 9.

KEIZERTIMES/Derek Wiley



Record-setting in Seattle
PAGE A12

BY ERIC A. HOWALD

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Keizer kid under the age of 18 has about a 50/50 chance of walking into a River Road business and walking out with a pack of cigarettes they paid for.

That's according to numbers provided based on Oregon Health Authority inspections in 2015. According to 2016 figures, the successful purchase of tobacco by minors was down to about 14 percent, but it's difficult to compare year-over-year, said Inga Suneson, a health educator with the Marion County Health Department (MCHD).

"Because the teams don't go to the same locations at the same times, there's no real control number," Suneson said.

The numbers themselves are alarming, Keizer has one of the worst rates of tobacco sales to minors in all of Marion County — Salem averages about a 13 percent rate with exponentially more outlets — and there are no inspections of vaping shops that now line River Road.

To arrive at the aforementioned numbers, OHA sends 16-year-olds paired with retired Oregon State Police officers to tobacco-selling retailers and successful sales are logged. The teens are even look-tested by others to make sure they appear underage.

Suneson and MCHD Prevention Program Supervisor Kerryann Bouska set out last year to take the temperature of local jurisdictions' openness to increasing regulation of tobacco products in all forms. The process included interviewing as many city councilors and mayors as they could regarding the potential support for new policies and regulations.

Suneson and Bouska are concerned about tobacco use by youth in all forms, but especially given an onslaught of new products seemingly aimed at the youth market.

Federal rules banned flavored cigarettes in 2009, but new products quickly took their place.

"Cigarettes have a minimum pack price, but you can roll flavored tobacco in brown paper and sell them two for \$1.29," Suneson said. "A lot of parents don't go into the gas station when they are



Photo Illustration

Few barriers for Keizer youth wanting tobacco

DESIGN BY ANDREW JACKSON

getting their fill-ups, we have to remind them that this is part of their world."

The new products, dubbed "little cigars" and often in brightly-colored packages, sidestep the federal rules.

"It's constantly evolving and we're chasing them all the time trying to keep up," Suneson said.

Current penalties for selling to underage users are also less-than-helpful. The clerk selling the tobacco is the one cited not the retailer.

"That means the owner can put the blame on individual clerks rather than establishing better policies for the whole store," Bouska said.

Please see TOBACCO, Page A11



Life for convict in murder
PAGE A2



Keizer cop honored
PAGE A3

\$4 monthly police fee advances

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The Keizer City Council unanimously approved moving forward with a \$4-per-month fee to create dedicated funding for new police officers at a special session Monday, June 12.

The vote does not enact the fee — an ordinance will come back to the council for final approval at a future meeting — but there didn't appear to be many roadblocks standing in its way during the meeting.

Public testimony offered by about a dozen residents resembled a lovefest for Keizer cops with only a limited amount of

concern voiced for any aspect of the fee (see related story).

The \$4 fee would be charged to each commercial and residential utility customer in Keizer, but there was no mention of how the fee would be collected during the meeting. If the fee proceeds at that amount, the city would collect about \$630,000.

The money will be used to hire five additional officers in a variety of specific roles. Two officers would be added to the night patrol shifts, and one officer each would be added to the Community Response Unit, the detective unit and the traffic unit.

A lack of resources has affected the department in a variety of ways. In recent months, a lack of officers on the night patrol has resulted in the delay of some responses and arrests. Property crimes have also taken a back burner to more pressing persons crimes.

"Too often, only with property crimes, investigations grow stale because of lack of resources," said KPD Police Chief John Teague.

The proposed fee is slightly more than what Teague requested — \$3.66 per month — but the additional funds could be put toward start-up costs like purchasing additional

Please see FEE, Page A11

Keizer cops get glowing reviews, strong fee support

If there was any question regarding support for a fee to fund additional Keizer police officers, all one had to do was take a drive down River Road North Monday, June 12.

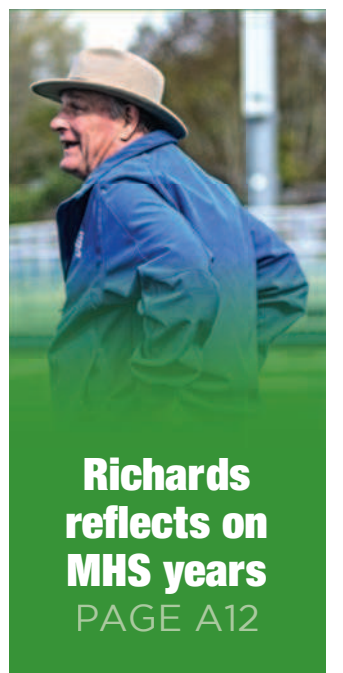
Nearly every business with an available reader board had some sort of message notifying residents of a city council meeting to talk about a proposed fee to hire additional officers (see related story).

That support was echoed by attendees at the actual meeting who lavished praise upon the Keizer Police Department and its officers in addition to supporting a \$4-per-month fee.

"This past week, the first inkling I had about this meeting was all the reader boards. I felt compelled to tell you I wholeheartedly support this," said resident Jeannie White, a Keizer resident for 27 years.

Former Keizer Police chief Marc Adams provided something of a history lesson.

Please see SUPPORT, Page A11



Richards reflects on MHS years
PAGE A12



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