

Keizertimes

SECTION A

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Shortages persist despite refreshed parks budget

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Most management-level government employees probably feel some relief when the new fiscal year begins on July 1 and budgets gets refreshed. For Robert Johnson, Keizer parks supervisor, "relief" isn't the word he would use.

"It feels good, but it doesn't feel like it's a license to do whatever I want. It has to last the entire year and something always comes up," Johnson said.

Since the beginning of the year, two things have caused unexpected headaches: wind storms and vandalism.

Snow during the winter and wind storms throughout the spring caused tree damage that put the city over its tree services budget, and cut into purchases Johnson was hoping to make with surplus this past month.



Someone recently drove their vehicle on a tiny path between The Big Toy and the parking lot at Keizer Rapids Park, the act destroyed portions of native landscaping.

"I had to keep it lean and I was doing that already," Johnson said.

In the past several weeks, joyriders have extensively damaged a fence separating a Keizer Rapids Park from a quarry to the north, which

falls on the parks staff and contractors to repair. Last week, someone else drove a car over a berm in front of The Big Toy and into a four-foot path between the fence around the toy and the parking lot.

The car bottomed out at least twice destroying a section of native plants and tearing up two sections of the landscaped berm.

"Two weeks ago, we had an Eagle Scout finish his service project there. He got plants

donated, put in a picnic table slab and finished bark dusting," Johnson said.

Depending on what gets vandalized, the city's parks employees – 1.5 full time and a few seasonal employees – are sometimes racing the clock in addition to trying to fulfill other duties and needs. Damaged plants have a limited amount of time in which they can be rescued.

"When the car pulled out of the path, the driver knocked over a mountain hemlock, which is a nice landscaping tree. I won't know for a while what damage was done to the root structure," Johnson said.

Johnson did manage to sock away some funds for new equipment, which will appear in the form of new picnic tables.

"We never have enough of them and the wooden ones are vandalism targets and need

Please see PARKS, Page A9

Keizer's story will be etched into trees



By ERIC A. HOWALD
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For the past three years, one of more unusual points of interest in Keizer have been two dead, branchless Douglas fir trees in front of Keizer Civic Center.

They might remain that way for another two years, but plans are finally in motion to turn them into something else – story poles telling the tale of Keizer.

"They will not be totem poles, they will depict the history of our area and I'm sure it will include things like rivers, irises and maybe even the face of Thomas Dove Keizer,"

said Lore Christopher, former Keizer mayor and current member of the Keizer Public Art Commission (KPAC).

Christopher spoke to the Keizer City Council at its meeting Monday, June 19. KPAC is working with a grant writer to apply for project funding and needed an endorsement from the council, and a designation of the area around the trees as public art space, to meet the Oregon Community Foundation

Two Douglas fir trunks near the Keizer Civic Center could be turned into story poles by 2019.

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application deadline of July 15.

"This has been several years in the making, but I'm excited that it's cultural and it will be a great asset to the community," said Councilor Amy Ryan.

Two ailing fir trees were cut down to the trunk in 2014, but then-Mayor Christopher implored city staff to keep the trunks intact with the hope of finding someone to carve them.

In documents presented to the council, the cost is estimated at \$75,000 and includes everything from the actual carving (approx. \$25,000) to dedication of the land, staff time and the value of the poles themselves.

The endorsement requested from the city council included covering the costs of continued maintenance in the form of a pest-resistant sealant that needs to be applied every two to five years (\$350 per coating) and insurance costs of up to \$1,000 annually. One outstanding question is whether the poles will require braces once the project is complete.

Christopher also submitted a timeline for action.

"We will organize community meetings to take input and develop the images that will go on the poles," Christopher said. "Then we

Please see TREES, Page A9

Staffing changes on deck for MHS

By DEREK WILEY
Of the Keizertimes

McNary is beefing up its one club, one sport, one activity for every kid every year initiative.

Instead of one activities director, the high school will have two in 2017-18.

Derick Handley, former girls basketball coach, is taking the lead on activities but he'll be joined by art teacher Todd Layton.

"Derick is a great teacher who has great relationships with kids," McNary principal Erik Jespersen said. "Todd is a great teacher who also has great relationships with kids and we really think between the two of them we're really going to bring in a lot more kids into the fold and even more kids involved in clubs, sports and activities. It's pretty exciting. I think it's going to be great."

Handley and Layton are replacing Dan Borresen, who has been promoted to assistant principal, where he will be in charge of the student management system as well as supervising the English department, counselors and attendance.

"Dan brings 27 years of teaching experience into this role," Jespersen said. "He's one of our strongest

Please see STAFF, Page A9



McNary principal Erik Jespersen

New team calling Keizer home
PAGE A10



Bike station headed to Civic Center
PAGE A2



Man busted in sex sting
PAGE A9



Volcanoes off to rough start
PAGE A10

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