

# Recycling reset still faces local challenges

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
Of the Keizertimes

If you're wondering whether that plastic container you have can be recycled under the new recycling rules in Marion County, here's a pro tip from Reed Carlson, recycling coordinator for the Mid-Valley Garbage Recycling Association:

"Turn it in your hand so that you are looking at the opening of the container, if the opening is smaller than the rest of the container, it can probably be recycled," Carlson said. Colored plastics that meet that condition are also fine.

Recycling changes were the topic of the night during a Community Conversation hosted by the Keizer Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, Sept. 26. Earlier this year, the area's garbage haulers had to hit a reset button on what could be recycled because of changes on the international level.

China, which had long been the largest buyer of American recycled goods, raised the standard for the level of contamination it was willing to accept. Local recycling facilities struggle to meet the new levels of acceptable contamination and it led to changes in what is accepted at curbside bins.

Recently, area haulers have begun charging for non-recyclable goods still showing up in blue bins.

Here are the biggest changes:

- Only empty, clean and dry bottles and jugs larger than 12 ounces should be placed in the



recycle bin.

- Steel and aluminum cans can still be recycled.

- No tubs (think peanut butter, spreadable butter, pasta sauce or mayonnaise) or clamshells – even if they have the recycling symbol on them.

- No film plastics such as plastic bags or cling wrap.

- No cold storage boxes from frozen meals.

- No foil, aerosol cans or scrap metal.

- No shredded paper.

After decades of trying to get more people to recycle, and China's history of giving the West Coast an easy way to offload recyclable materials, reversing the tide is likely

going to require time and effort from all sectors, said Greg Dittman, operations manager for Valley Recycling and Disposal.

"It's a very complicated issue because producers want that little logo on their products and it makes us feel good. It's a matter of shifting perceptions of recycling," Dittman told the more than two dozen attendees.

In that vein, it might require a return to mayonnaise

jars made of glass which are easier to manage when they re-enter the waste stream. Such change will most likely require consumers putting pressure on companies to shift

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— Greg Dittman  
Valley Recycling

their practices.

"Keep the end market in mind and what happens when [garbage and recycling] gets to its destination. We need to find our best selves to solve this problem," Dittman said.

## Keizer Florist spreads good will with free flowers

On Thursday, Oct. 24, Keizer Florist will be participating in the Society of American Florists "Petal it Forward" movement.

The effort is intended to show more people the positive impact that flowers

have in spreading happiness, and as a way to bring something positive to the community.

The store, located at 631 Chemawa Road N.E., will be handing out free two-flower bouquets, one to keep and one to

share with someone you know or someone you don't.

Volunteers are also needed to and flowers out on the day of the event, contact the store at 503-930-9035 to help out.

KT on vacation



Submitted photo

Janie and Dennis Spencer took their Keizertimes along on a trip to Las Vegas' California Club. You too can have your photo in the Keizertimes. Simply take the paper to your destination, snap a picture with you and your group holding it, and send the photo along with everyone's first and last names to kt@keizertimes.com.

## Fire district seeks levy renewal on Nov. ballot

By DEREK WILEY  
Of the Keizertimes

Keizer Fire responded to a record 5,419 Emergency Medical Services last year, which would not have been possible if not for a levy passed five years ago.

On the November ballot, Keizer residents will have the opportunity to renew that levy, for another five years, at the current rate—59 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

The Keizer Fire District Board of Directors voted unanimously in July to seek voter approval of the funding measure, which would provide staffing to respond to fire and medical emergencies and pay for the costs of the district's 911 dispatch services.

KFD's call volume has increased 45 percent since 2012, including 15.7 percent last year. The district responded to

93 percent of the calls within six minutes.

Oregon law requires levies to be renewed every five years. The levy is not a request for new funds.

The fire district's permanent tax rate is \$1.3526 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, which the board has determined is insufficient to maintain the present level of service for the next five years. To fund operations, the district required the levy funding to meet emergency response needs in the community.

If the levy is approved, Keizer Fire District would continue to have a lower rate for fire and EMS than the City of Salem or Marion County Fire District.

KFD, which is served by 20 volunteer and 35.5 career personnel, has provided ambulance services since the 1990s.

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