

TESTIMONY: ‘Few places have said you are outlawed’

(Continued from Page A1) feel and hear about homeless people. You owe it to us, as elected officials, to consider the moral consequences of doing nothing, and the moral benefit of working hard to find viable solutions to this heartbreaking condition in our community,” McCullough-Jones said. “If you do choose to support this ordinance, what are you going to do for better services in this community?”

In Salem, the city council allocated \$200,000 to establish a temporary camping site on city-owned property the same night it passed a similar camping ban. Keizer contributes \$5,000 a year to the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Initiative and Mayor Cathy Clark is a member of its development council.

Jonathan Thompson, president of the Keizer Chamber of Commerce, reviewed some of the efforts chamber members make to be involved in needs of

the homeless and then said the chamber supported the ordinance.

“Some members have invested thousands in cleaning up property and damages, others have had to clean up used needles and spent fentanyl patches,” Thompson said. “We see this ordinance as a necessary tool for Keizer police and support its passage.”

Richard Walsh, a Keizer attorney and former city councilor, said he would rather the city focus on alternative measures rather than banning tent camping.

“This is a crisis and its of humanitarian proportions. It’s been dealt with in various ways, but few places have said you are outlawed,” Walsh said.

Walsh directed the council to the possibility of establishing conestoga huts, micro-shelters that give those experiencing homelessness a hard-shelled insulated tent in which to stow possessions and sleep.

The cost of a single

conestoga hut is approximately \$2,500 and running a 20-shelter site is estimated to be around \$50,000 per year.

“I will buy [a hut] to start this off. It’s better to have some individual dignity and a path to re-assimilate into society,” Walsh said.

Mark Coutis, vice president of the West Salem Neighborhood Association, suggested the former Fairview Training Center and Hillcrest Youth Correctional Facility properties in south Salem as a space that could repurposed to assist homeless people facing a variety of challenges.

Kevin Dial, a retired veteran who works with several local veteran-focused, non-profit entities, said “It’s going to take someone with the initiative to focus on it (homelessness) as the hill they will die on.”

Jimmy Jones of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, which oversees several homeless outreach and rehousing programs, said the

effect of the camping ban in Salem has not driven more residents to seek services.

“When we had the concentration around the ARCHES office, the utilization of services was high. The [anti-camping] ordinance pushed some of the population farther and farther away. The iron law is that whenever government tries to enact a punitive law, it hinders the services trying to reach them,” Jones said.

Former Keizer mayor Lore Christopher echoed Walsh’s call for pursuing alternatives and added that banning camping in commercial zones might be a more effective route to achieve what the city hoped to achieve.

Former city councilor and a candidate for the Republican nomination in the 2020 race for U.S. Congress Amy Ryan Courser said the ban was a matter of keeping the city safe.

“There are over 700 non-profits in Salem-Keizer. The people I’ve encountered have not been willing to utilize those services. There are choices being made. It’s important to remember that we have a moral obligation to the residents for a safe and clean city,” Courser said.

COST, continued from Page A1

Once contact was made, CRU officers informed campers that the area would be visited regularly and any applicable laws would be enforced. In many cases, the roughly 40 entrenched camps were vacated. It also became known that there was a low tolerance for homeless camping in Keizer.

“It’s a little bit different now. We have people that sleep and then move, but they don’t set up camps,” Copeland said.

By last month, CRU officers were only spending about eight hours a week on the task, but actions by the city of Salem to ban sidewalk camping were having an impact.

“In just a two week period, there was a noticeable increase in the number of subjects sleeping in doorways and on sidewalks without tents,” Olafson wrote.

Lt. Andrew Copeland said impact of the camping ban was nearly instantaneous, but not in the way some might expect.

“We haven’t seen an uptick

in camping or campsites, but we’ve seen several people who are known primarily as Salem residents walking around the city,” Copeland said. “For example, we encountered one guy from Salem yesterday who has been contacted more than 30 times by Salem police officers and arrested numerous times.”

Copeland said Keizer officers got the man to agree to self-commit to the Psychiatric Crisis Center in Salem, “but it will probably only be a week or two before we see him again.”

Keizer’s city council passed a similar ban unanimously at its meeting Monday, Jan. 6.

When *Keizertimes* talked with Copeland last week about some of the hidden costs of homelessness, one of the projects on his desk was drafting a flowchart to inform other Keizer police officers about the appropriate and applicable laws in each of a number of scenarios.

“The main thing is we try to treat all of our transient

population very nicely and we have great compliance in getting them to move along when we ask them to,” Copeland said. “The big push right now is trying to get everyone who wants to be housed in some sort of housing and we are working with community partners to make that happen.”

Additional time dedicated to law enforcement is just one of the ways that homelessness creates strains on public systems. Keizer’s limited budget and lack of larger city amenities, such as a hospital, keep some of the associated costs at arm’s length, but homelessness also impacts the city’s park system, said Robert Johnson, Keizer parks supervisor.

“We don’t typically find permanent camps, but we end up cleaning up a lot of the stuff that’s left behind. Our garbage cans are constantly being filled with what looks like remnants of people who are probably living in their cars,” Johnson said.

For health and safety rea-

sons, parks employees take extra precautions when dealing with garbage precisely because they don’t always know what’s might be sticking out of it, which detracts from the time available to perform other duties.

In December, parks employees discovered what appeared to be a temporary camp set up on and under the play structure of Willamette Manor park. In addition to hauling away the typical detritus, like sleeping bags and trash, two bicycles were left behind, along with numerous blankets and a tarp among other items.

“It appeared to only be two people, but two people can carry a lot of stuff,” Johnson said. “I think we are trying to get used to this being the new norm even though it pains me to say it that way.”

Parks employees work closely with Keizer police officers and the city’s code enforcement officer to put homeless people in contact with support services.

BAN, continued from Page A1

rights-of-way,” responded Keizer Police Chief John Teague.

Councilor Dan Kohler asked if the ordinance would be a useful tool for police officers.

“If someone is sleeping on the sidewalk, we’ll ask them to

make the sidewalk passable. If they are claiming they possess as section of the sidewalk, this prevents that. If it becomes a problem we cannot solve, we will send them to the judge,” Teague replied.

Unlike an earlier draft of the ordinance included in packets leading up to the meeting, the ordinance adopted Monday grants police and code enforcement officers the ability to cite offenders and

impose a fine of up to \$500. The earlier draft only said camping sites on public rights-of-way could be removed.

Councilor Marlene Parsons was visibly distraught when asked about her stance on the ordinance and appeared to be holding back tears.

“I appreciate everyone coming tonight. Know that we are proactive and we will try to do our best to help people get out from under the circumstances they are in,” she said.

Councilor Roland Herrera said he was committed to following up on alternatives to camping or designated camping sites.

“I know there is a balance in finding solutions, but I think it starts with having rules,” Herrera said.

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Today in History

A drilling derrick at Spindletop Hill near Beaumont, Texas, produces an enormous gusher of crude oil, coating the landscape for hundreds of feet and signaling the advent of the American oil industry. The geyser was discovered at a depth of over 1,000 feet, flowed at an initial rate of approximately 100,000 barrels a day and took nine days to cap. Following the discovery, petroleum, which until that time had been used in the U.S. primarily as a lubricant and in kerosene for lamps, would become the main fuel source for new inventions such as cars and airplanes; coal-powered forms of transportation including ships and trains would also convert to the liquid fuel.

— January 10, 1901

Food 4 Thought

“I do not think that there is any other quality so essential to success of any kind as the quality of perseverance. It overcomes almost everything, even nature.”

— John D. Rockefeller, business magnate, founder of Standard Oil

The Weeks Ahead

Friday, January 10 – Saturday, January 11
McNary High School presents *Hello, Dolly!* Performances are at 7 p.m. Thursday-Saturday and a 2 p.m. matinee on Saturday. Tickets can be bought online or in person.

Through Saturday, January 18
S.K.I.T. Theater presents *Newsies!* at Salem First Free Methodist Church, 4455 Silvertown Rd N.E. Tickets are \$6 for children (3-12) \$8 for students/seniors.

Friday, January 10 – Sunday, January 12
2020 Mid-Valley Home Show, Jackman-Long Building at Oregon State Fairgrounds. Hours are 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Saturday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday. Free admission and free parking.

Saturday, January 11
Keizer Homegrown Theatre will hold auditions for its entire 2020 season, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. In theater on the second floor of the Keizer Cultural Center, 980 Chemawa Rd. N.E. Prepare a two-minute monologue; many female roles available in the coming season. keizerhomegrowntheatre.org.

Saturday Night dance and potluck featuring music by Jefferson Park at the Keizer/Salem Area Senior, 930 Plymouth Drive, N.E. from 7 - 10 p.m.

Willamette Valley Genealogical Society will meet at 12 p.m. at the VFW Building (630 Hood St NE, Salem). Dave Brewery will speak about “Bringing Family Trees to Life.”

Monday, January 6
Keizer City Council meeting, 7 p.m., Keizer Civic Center, 930 Chemawa Road N.E.

Monday, January 13
Keizer City Council work session, 5:45 p.m., Keizer Civic Center, 930 Chemawa Road N.E.

Tuesday, January 14
Oregon Spirit Chorus is auditioning singers from 6 - 9 p.m. at the Salem Elks Lodge, 2336 Turner Rd. S.E. Salem. RSVP kathy.schell@oregonspirit.org. For more information visit www.oregonspirit.org.

Free admission all day at Hallie Ford Museum of Art, 700 State Street. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, January 15
Bingo at the Keizer/Salem Area Seniors, 930 Plymouth Drive N.E., from 12:30-3:30 p.m. Admission is \$5.50

Wednesday, January 15 – Friday, January 17
2020 Northwest Agricultural Show, Jackman-Long Building at Oregon State Fairgrounds. More than 120 exhibitors. Admission is \$5, \$3 for seniors and veterans, free for children 12 and under. Free admission on Friday. Hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Thursday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Friday. northwesttagshow.com.

Thursday, January 16
Stories in the Stacks at Keizer Community Library, Keizer Cultural Center, 10-11 a.m. For pre-school children accompanied by an adult. Stories, crafts and music. keizerlibrary.org.

Lego Club at Keizer Community Library, Keizer Cultural Center, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Kids accompanied by an adult are invited for an hour of unstructured Lego play. Legos provided. Free. keizerlibrary.org.

Oregon Housing Economic Summit at the Salem Convention Center from 1 p.m. - 7 p.m. www.oregonhousingeconomicsummit.com

Digital Photography with Bill Leach at the Keizer Community Library, 980 Chemawa Rd N.E. RSVP is required, call (503)-390-2370.

Pablo Cruise music at the Elsinore Theatre at 7:30 - 9 p.m. Tickets can be bought online or in person for \$5 extra.

Thursday, January 16 – Saturday, January 18
McNary High School presents *Hello, Dolly!* Performances are at 7 p.m. Thursday-Saturday and a 2 p.m. matinee on Saturday. Tickets can be bought online or in person.

Friday, January 17
Meet the author: Christel Jonge Vos at the Keizer Community Library from 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. www.keizerlibrary.org for more information.

Add your event by e-mailing reporter@keizertimes.com



5 YEARS AGO

First medical marijuana facility opens in Keizer
Ben Robison recently opened Keizer’s first medical marijuana facility. The way he sees it, there won’t be much competition in the future in Keizer.

10 YEARS AGO

Lady Celts making it look easy on the court
If the Lady Celts varsity basketball team is looking past lesser foes, it’s not showing up in the box scores. One game after hanging 71 points on Sprague the girls put up 70 points against North Salem.

15 YEARS AGO

Keizer PD captain off to FBI Academy
The many facets of police work captured Jeff Kuhns’ interest as a young boy and catapulted him onto a career path that is full of twists and turns. The latest turn will be a three-month stint at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy in Quantico, Va. With two other Oregon officers, a lieutenant from Tigard and a lieutenant from Eugene.

20 YEARS AGO

New K9 joins force
Keizer Police Officer Eric Jefferson started working with a new partner last week – a partner Jefferson himself trained and donated to the department. K-9 Gnikko von Der Sal, affectionately known as “Niko,” joined the force after Jefferson donated the 3-year-old German shepherd and his equipment to the department, said Chief Marc Adams.

maze

Maze by Jonathan Graf of Keizer

sudoku

7	2					1	3
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Enter digits from 1-9 into the blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must every 3x3 square.

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