

Childcare benefits expanded during COVID emergency

To support Oregon's working families dealing with the spread of COVID-19, the Oregon Department of Human Service is making s and the Early Learning Division immediate changes to childcare benefits. The temporary changes are intended to help low-income, working families access childcare and help providers stay in business during the state of emergency.

- The changes are:
- Eliminating co-pays for eligible families.
 - Providing access to more families by increasing the income limit from 185 percent of the federal poverty level (\$4,040

per month for a family of four) to 250 percent of the federal poverty level or 85 percent of the state median income, whichever is higher for the family size (\$5,899 per month for a family of four).

- Ensuring more certainty for providers. Childcare providers are able to continue to receive payments from DHS, even if children are unable to attend or if they have to temporary shut down during the state of emergency.

Providers and parents/caretakers may contact the DHS Direct Pay Unit with questions Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-800-699-9074.

BIRDS, continued from Page A1

conversation about adding goats, bees, miniature horses and potbelly pigs into the realm of permitted animals.

"There are a lot of options out there, but our goal with this was finite," said Nate Brown, Keizer development director.

Commissioner Jeffrey Watson questioned the logic of requiring animals to be kept in coops when a six-foot fence might suffice.

Keizerite Matt Griffith spoke in support of the changes and said he's never seen anyone have a problem with a six-foot fence as the only barrier.

"The larger problem in this area is predators," he said.

Keizer resident Erica Arcibal spoke in favor of permitting ducks.

"Duck eggs are bigger and more nutritious and the keep up production through the winter," Arcibal said. She added that duck coops have more of a horizontal profile than the vertical profile of chicken coops. Adding drakes in addition to hens isn't the noise problem that roosters

can become while offering protection for the females.

Chris Duggan, another city resident, said chickens could be allowed to range in backyards if their wings were clipped, but predators like hawks and raccoons would remain a danger without a rooster.

After public testimony, Watson seemed more convinced that mandating coop confinement was unnecessary.

"I think without it, the code is more difficult to enforce," said Commissioner Mark Caillier.

The recommendation, with the mandated confinement, passed unanimously, but still needs to clear the city council's dais before residents run afoul of the law.

In other business:

Commissioners approved a new four-foot standard to front yard fencing. For year's residents have had trouble scrounging up fencing material meeting Keizer's 3.5-foot maximum height.

"What that means is we have a lot of illegal fencing all around the city, but this takes care of the problem," said Shane Witham, Keizer senior planner.

Sidewalk savings plan will have to wait – for now

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

Members of the Keizer Traffic Safety, Bikeways and Pedestrian Committee planned to ask city officials to start socking away money each year to help fill in Keizer's numerous and sometimes enormous gaps in sidewalks throughout the city.

The plans rapidly collided with reality, but members of the committee haven't lost hope.

"I met with Tim Wood [Keizer finance director] and Bill Lawyer [Keizer Public Works director] and the idea was fine, but it will have to come from the street fund. This year, the street fund is entirely dedicated to repaving River Road," said David Dempster, a member of the committee.

Hoping to seize on momentum, Dempster then suggested that the committee draft a list of its top five sidewalk priorities and submit it to the city council.

"It will give a firm direction to go in when looking for set-asides in future budgets," Dempster said.

He suggested looking at known problem areas in terms of getting kids to and from schools, and getting all residents to public services, police and fire services, food banks,

health clinics and transportation hubs safely.

"We could have everyone bring back a list of the sidewalk gaps they know about and what problems might be solved by adding them," said Pat Fisher, committee vice chair.

Moving quickly might also help the city get in line for upcoming grant opportunities, said Jamie Davis, a newer member of the committee.

"I've been going through some of the upcoming grant deadlines and we need to have our applications filed by June for most of them," Davis said.

"This year, the street fund is entirely dedicated to repaving River Road."

— David Dempster

Beginning Gardeners Welcome

Sometimes you just don't know where to start. So, come to a place with healthy plants and friendly people who can answer your questions. You'll find perennials, shrubs, planters and all kinds of flowers, and the things you need to care for them.

Join our class on
Basics of Pruning
Sat Mar 21, 2 pm
No charge. Please call to register.

Mon-Sat 9-6, Sun 10-5

Egan Gardens GREENHOUSE GROWERS

(503)393-2131
9805 River Rd NE Salem
EganGardens.com

JACKSON'S BODY SHOP INC.

Your locally owned and family operated collision repair business since 1958
3353 Silverton Road NE in Salem ♦ 503-363-1990

"I was in a collision recently. It was a painful and traumatic experience. The staff at Jackson's were very helpful! They treated me with compassion and were professional. I was thrilled with the appearance of my car after they completed the repairs!" — Marlene B.

See BEFORE & AFTER photos at jacksonsautobody.com

Give Us Your Keys, and You'll be Pleased!

BETTER dish TV FOR LESS!

\$59.99 MONTH for 12 months
190 Channels America's Top 120

Add High Speed Internet
\$19.99 /mo.

CALL TODAY - For \$100 Gift Card **1-866-373-9175**

SUBSCRIBE
A YEAR'S WORTH OF
KEIZER NEWS
DELIVERED FOR ONLY
\$35
CALL 503-390-1051

92%

*Data gathered from recent reader survey. To take the survey, go to tinyurl.com/Keizer2020

of **Keizertimes** readers say it **"is a trustworthy source of news."**

Don't miss out on essential Keizer news

3 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

CALL: 503.390.1051
CLICK: keizertimes.com/store
COME BY: 142 Chemawa Rd N