



## KeizerFEST postponed

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

For the first time in four decades, the annual KeizerFEST has been postponed and the irises that are typically a focal point of the festivities will be long out of

bloom when it returns.

Concerns about the spread of COVID-19 prompted the Keizer Chamber of Commerce, the organizer of the festival, to delay the celebration of all things Keizer. The new dates for the festival that include a parade, live music and a carnival are Aug. 13 to 16.

“After much uncertainty of how to fund the festival due to major economic impacts seen by much of the festivals annual sponsors ... the Keizer Chamber of Commerce’s Board of Directors voted to postpone the annual event.”

— Danielle Bethell

“After much uncertainty of how to fund the festival due to major economic impacts seen by much of the festivals annual sponsors ... the Keizer Chamber of Commerce’s Board of Directors voted to postpone the annual event,” said Danielle Bethell, executive director of the Keizer Chamber of Commerce.

KeizerFEST typically falls on the third weekend in May.

Despite the disruption, Bethell said chamber members are looking for ways to seize new opportunities created by the delay.

“We predict a different look and sound

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‘An absolute miracle’

Keizer woman recovers from near-death due to COVID-19, complications

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Jill Matiskainen hadn’t seen her daughter Nikki in more than a month. When she finally did, on Monday, April 13, seeing Niiki was, unfortunately, all she could do.

“All I wanted to do was run up and hug her,” said Jill. The two attendants dropping Nikki off at The Oaks

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## Keizer recovery home has 14 cases of COVID-19

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

A long-term care facility in south Keizer has battled 14 cases of COVID-19.

The Oaks at Sherwood Park in south Keizer has reported 14 cases of COVID-19 infection according to a list issued by the Department of Human Services Saturday, April 11.

The Oaks was sixth on the list of nine long-term care facilities in the state with more than five cases of COVID-19. A Lebanon-based veterans home and a Portland-based intermediate care facility topped the list.

It is not known how many patients currently reside at the facility. One person who tested positive for the virus has since passed away, but that individual was in end-of-life care prior to the positive test.

A message on the facility’s website dated April 3 states that the organization is not answering questions about the outbreak and directs inquiries to the Oregon Health Authority or the Oregon Healthcare Association.

“Although as an independent facility we strive to be a constructive resource to our

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KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald  
The Oaks at Sherwood Park in southeast Keizer has become a COVID-19 “hot spot.”



Submitted  
Nikki Matiskainen (on the stretcher) talks with her mom, Jill, as she returns home to The Oaks at Sherwood Park Monday, April 13. Matiskainen survived a harrowing battle with COVID-19.



OSAA cancels spring sports

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Falcon teachers parade for students

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Keizer fire adapts to new normal

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## Keizer B&G Club races to fill in the gaps

By LAUREN MURPHY  
*Of the Keizertimes*

The Keizer Boys & Girls Club has foregone in-person meetings, but they’re still connecting with the kids.

“Once the school district made the announcement that [closures] weren’t just spring break, that’s when we started creating programming,” said Keizer Branch Director Marianne Freeborn.

The Boys & Girls Club created a virtual classroom on their website that has packets for kids in both English and Spanish. Freeborn said the packets were made of a mixture of fun activities and learning activities.

Freeborn added that a lot of the material for their online packets already existed. The packets target some of the Boys & Girls Club main focuses: academic success, character, leadership and healthy lifestyle.



KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald  
Marianne Freeborn, director of the Keizer Branch of the Boys & Girls Club, guides club members through breathing exercises.

“We have adapted a lot of that to be self-led so kids can do it at home themselves,” she said.

They created the packets to help kids fight off boredom and to remind kids that the staff still cares about them. Freeborn said that either she, or another staff member have

talked with most of the families in an effort to stay connected.

They have been reaching out through a YouTube channel, Facebook page and a TikTok account, which was created to connect with the teens.

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## ‘Limited’ forum to be held on city charter changes

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Keizer’s city council hopes to put revisions to the city charter on the ballot this November and, to stay on track, the committee tasked with making revisions is planning to hold a limited public forum on Tuesday, April 21.

The forum is planned for 7 p.m. in the Keizer Civic Center and there will be some limited opportunities to testify in person while practicing social distancing. However, participation will be available through ZOOM video conferencing as well. Those interested in participating in the forum via teleconferencing should contact Debbie Lockhart at lockhardt@keizer.org or at 503-856-3418 no later than 3

p.m. the day of the meeting. Written testimony can also be submitted in the Civic Center lobby or emailed to Lockhart by 5 p.m. the day of the meeting.

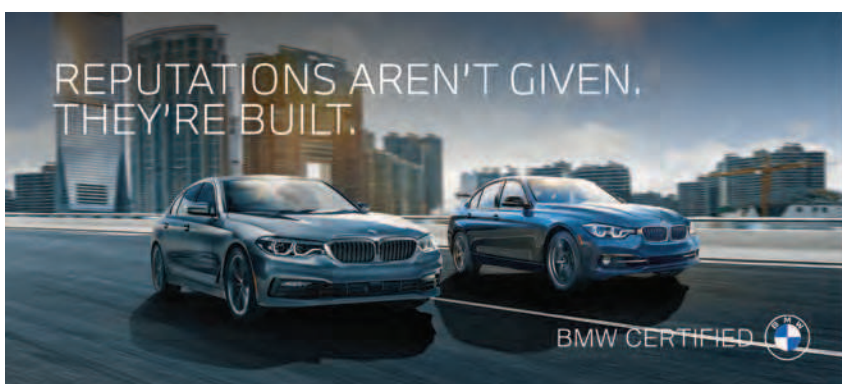
The changes suggested by the committee thus far have primarily been made for clarity and removal of language that marginalizes LGBTQ+ residents. However, the committee is seeking public input on several other questions:

- Changing the way city councilors are elected from “at large” to voting by ward or district. At large, the way councilors are currently elected, means that councilors can run for any position on the council regardless of where they live in the city. Ward or district voting

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Casting about with Jim Taylor

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