

## Canyon burns, Keizer chokes



Submitted photo

### Smoke, ash fill the air as canyon residents flee

BY MATT RAWLINGS  
*Of the Keizertimes*

On the morning of Tuesday, Sept. 8, Marion County residents awoke to a bright orange sky that was caused by the fast-spreading wildfire that burned into the Santiam Canyon on Monday evening.

Just hours later, Marion County issued a state of emergency as the wildfires tore through the eastern part of the county.

The emergency declaration allows the county to request additional resources from the state. On Tuesday afternoon, Gov. Kate Brown declared the fire previously known as the Beachie Creek and Lionshead fires as a conflagration named the Santiam Fire.

Initial evacuation orders included the communities of Mehama, Gates, Mill City, Detroit and Idanha. As of

Tuesday afternoon, Scotts Mill and the Drakes Crossing areas, east of Salem and north of Oregon Highway 22, were ordered to evacuate on Tuesday morning. Aumsville residents, along with residents from Stayton, Silverton and Sublimity, were still on a "be ready" notice Wednesday morning.

Highway 22 eastbound was closed from Stayton to the Santiam Junction to allow residents from the affected communities to evacuate.

The sheriff's office said in a statement at 3:20 a.m. Tuesday, "Conditions in the Santiam Canyon east of Mehama have become extremely dangerous and all residents who have not yet evacuated need to do so immediately."

"We care deeply about the safety of all of our community. Please see BURN, Page A2



TOP: An aerial view of Keizer Station as smoke fills the air around Keizer, courtesy of Ian Koenig of Made of Ian Videography and Photography. ABOVE: Fire crews from as far away as Gig Harbor, Wash., and the Rogue Valley assembled in Keizer Station before moving to Chemeketa Community College.



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## Explorers harassed while hanging flags

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

A team of Keizer Fire District Explorers set to placing flags along River Road in celebration of Labor Day and were met with unfriendly receptions as they went about their work Wednesday, Sept. 2.

Firefighter Nathan Farrand was chaperoning the groups as they made their way down River Road and said multiple drivers shouted obscenities or made obscene gestures as they put flags in place.

"These people also felt the need to threaten to pull over and 'kick our asses.' While on our way to place up another flag, someone also threw an heavy object at myself and the other explorers that were present," Farrand alleged in an incident report regarding the encounters.

Farrand said another man, described as a Black male about six feet tall, approached the group as they placed the final flag at the intersection of the Glynbrook Street North.

"This individual decided to

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KEIZERTIMES/Andrew Jackson

# Oregon's BROKEN Promise

## State defunds a lifeline for college students

By LAUREN MURPHY  
*Of the Keizertimes*

In the 2019-20 academic year, more than 275 McNary High School students applied for the Oregon Promise Grant, which supplies graduating seniors with up to two years of community college tuition.

Now, an unknown number of those students are on their own.

"We can only tell how many students apply for the grants, we can't disclose how many are awarded for privacy reasons," said Rochelle Farris, college and career specialist at McNary High School.

Each year, the Oregon

Legislature approves grant money for the Oregon Promise Grant, which pays community college tuition for high school graduates with at 2.5 grade point average or higher. As a result of the economic devastation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, legislators approved moving the funding elsewhere at a special session held in August.

Not every grant recipient lost their scholarship, but the budget for the grant was reduced by \$3.6 million and more than 1,000 scholarships were revoked. The students who lost their scholarship have an Expected Family

Contribution (EFC) of \$22,000 or more. The EFC is determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

"Students who qualified for the Oregon Promise and then had their award recently revoked will still have financial aid available through their FAFSA," said Farris. "Unfortunately, for most of these students, it will mean Federal Student Loans."

According to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) website, the \$3.6 million is being relocated to the 2020 Rebalance Plan—an initiative

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## Council approves \$1.1 Million in COVID-related spending

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

The Keizer City Council approved more than \$1 million in spending related to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilors asked few questions regarding details of how the money would be spent or how transactions to reimburse community organizations for up to \$500,000 would work. Keizer city officials plan to spend the money with the expectation it will be reimbursed through federal funding made available in the Coronavirus Relief Fund established by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress in March.

"We reached out to partner organizations, like Salvation Army and St. Vincent DePaul, and they said they could use all the money to assist efforts in the community.

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