



2014 in review

Land use squabbles, marijuana dispensaries, budget woes, and a historic win for the HRVHS soccer team were just some of the many stories the Hood River news reported on in 2014. Here's a look back at some of the top stories from each month. Stories are categorized by the month in which they were published.



2014 News file photos

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014 include (top left to bottom right) a decision on the controversial Barrett Park property, an historic state soccer championship, a mayoral runoff between Greg Colt and Paul Blackburn, a precarious Gorge Fire between Rowena and The Dalles, the county's first same-sex marriage and school district budge woes.

By **BEN MITCHELL**
 News staff writer

January

■ With H1N1 flu (swine flu) cases on the rise, Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital institutes visiting restrictions in attempt to reduce the spread of the virus in the county. The restrictions allowed patients to have no more than two visitors at time and restricted children under the age of 18 from entering certain wings of the hospital due to their higher rates of exposure to the flu.

Update: Providence staffers reported in February that flu impacts ended up being "lighter than anticipated."

■ Hood River Valley High School receives a \$438,000 grant from the state as part of its Career and Technical Education Revitalization program. The funding was planned to give the welding shop a complete makeover with a new state-of-the-art

welding facility, and the engineering department was slated to get new computers, 3-D printers and 3-D machines, and computer-aided milling machines, along with new Solidworks, 3-D software to design and build parts with.

Update: The components are in place and students are using them to learn.

■ A concert and event amphitheater planned for the old mill site in Dee receives a flurry of feedback from local residents who were either pleased at the announcement or upset about potential noise and traffic impacts. The developer, Jason Taylor, ultimately ended up scaling down the proposal from 3,095 parking spaces to 437, but the county's decision to approve the scaled-down application was appealed to the Hood River County Planning Commission by the Hood River Valley Residents Committee. The appeal was heard in December and failed due to a

deadlock.

Update: As of the Dec. 30 appeal deadline, nothing was filed.

February:

■ A weather-related landslide lets loose more than 3,000 cubic yards of debris about a mile west of Hood River, resulting in the shutdown of all eastbound lane of Interstate 84. No motorists were injured by the falling debris, although a driver from Summerville badly damaged his rental car due to the landslide. Crews worked round-the-clock and had all lanes of I-84 open within a few days.

■ The U.S. Forest Service approves Mt. Hood Meadows to construct an 878-car parking lot, referred to as the Twilight Lot. The lot is to be located east of Elk Meadows trailhead and west of the Oregon Department of Transportation maintenance yard off of Highway 35 near the entrance to the Hood River Meadows lot.

The decision drew some controversy from those who felt the plan would impact nearby Nordic skiing trails.

Update: Meadows say Twilight Lot likely won't be developed for a couple years.

■ Hood River County Circuit Court Judge Paul Crowley announces his retirement after serving over 20 years on the bench, 15 of which he served as the presiding judge of the Seventh Judicial District. Judge John Olson was named presiding judge by Thomas Balmer, Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court. Judge Karen Ostrye was appointed by Gov. John Kitzhaber in June to fill the vacancy and Ostrye later was elected to the position in November, defeating opponent Timothy Farrell.

March

■ The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife releases a report that wolf

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Spotlight

Saturday

A weekly series about a day in the life ...

Megan Spears brings Disorder 2 Order

By **TRISHA WALKER**
 News staff writer

New year, new series

Megan Spears is not a naturally organized person.

"I sense that people think it's easy for me (to be organized) or that I don't struggle or that my house must be completely organized," she said.

But what she does have is a knack for organization, setting up systems and completing projects. It's what led her to start her Hood River-based professional organization business, Disorder 2 Order, in 2004.

"I see the rewards. I see the benefits of setting up the right systems to process things. It makes such a huge difference," said Spears, a Certified Professional Organizer (CPO). "You can draw disorganization to the actual point when it started, some life

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With Megan Spears we begin "Saturday Spotlight," our new weekly feature, succeeding Slice of Life. "Spotlight" will focus on how local people spend their days. Do you have a person in mind for Spotlight? Send ideas to Trisha Walker at twalker@hoodrivernews.com.



Photos by Trisha Walker, submitted

MEGAN SPEARS, CPO, works with home and business clients on a variety of projects, from paper and desk organization to pantries and spare bedrooms. She began Disorder 2 Order in 2004.

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School resumes Monday

Classes resume Monday after winter break for students in the Hood River County School District and in area private schools; parents are reminded that the county district schools are on scheduled one-hour late start on Mondays for staff in-service.

The first meeting of the county school board for 2015 will be Jan. 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hood River Valley High School library.

City, County swear in officials Monday

New mayor Paul Blackburn will take the oath of office in Monday, along with newly-elected City Councilors Susan Johnson, Peter Cornelison, and Becky Brun. It happens during a 5 p.m. City Council special meeting Monday at City Hall. Leaving office are Ed Weathers, Brian McNamara and Carrie Nelson.

County Board of Commissioners will also meet Monday at 4:30 p.m., at the county administration building, to swear in Council President Ron Rivers and commissioners Karen Joplin and Bob Benton. All were re-elected in uncontested races in November 2014.

Three To Go

Roman Ortega is the year's First Baby

"A good start," is how Fernando Ortega described the feeling of being parent the first child born in the new year.

Roman Isaac Ortega was the first baby born in Hood River County in 2015, at Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital. Roman arrived at 12:07 p.m. Thursday. His mother is Alexis Davila, and Roman's brother is Fernando, 5. The family lives in The Dalles.

"It was a little tough, but we're doing well," Alexis said Thursday evening.

Area merchants sponsored a variety of prizes to help welcome the first baby to the world; see the Jan. 7 Hood River News for details.

