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Julie Salcido tackles County's code enforcement backlog

Second dwellings, solid waste disposal among Salcido's key challenge

BY TRISHA WALKER
News staff writer

Hood River County created the new post of code enforcement coordinator last fall, and on Oct. 1, 2014, Julie Salcido took on the task of managing the intake, investigation and resolution of various land use, health and safety ordinances within the county, not including the cities of Hood River or Cascade Locks.

The county previously had no

designated staff to deal with code enforcement violations, which created a backlog of both processed complaints and potential code offenses, prompting County Commissioners to approve the new position. (The City of Hood River's code enforcement officer is Marty Morgan, who also handles parking enforcement and evidence management.)

The county position was created "to support the statewide planning

program and Hood River County land use policy goals through effective and equitable enforcement of the city's codes," she said. "Hood River County ordinances are designed to balance healthy economic growth and environmental stewardship."

For now, Salcido is focused on working through previously reported complaints and is not actively looking for violations. She sees two challenges in the year

'I'm looking forward to (producing) tangible results for Hood River County residents, which I hope will include protection of property values, farming practices and promoting a clean environment.'

JULIE SALCIDO



ahead: Working with property owners to voluntarily remove unauthorized second dwellings, and to decrease the storage of solid wastes, which includes tires, metal appliances and inoperative vehicles.

To aid in the resolution of the second challenge, she's planning a countywide spring clean-up effort in May "to provide a one day opportunity for Hood River County residents to conveniently dispose of

old tires and waste metal at a significantly reduced cost."

There are currently "a significant number" of open enforcement cases in the county that involve "illegal collection and storage of solid waste," she said.

She's recently worked with a property owner to remove a large shipping container that had been placed in Neal Creek and was

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Mt. Hood snowpack lacking



LOW SNOW: Mount Hood is pictured here on Jan. 30 with the Hood River Valley covered in a layer of clouds. Snowpack (snow water equivalent) for the NRCS Mount Hood Test Site at 5,370 feet, is 32-percent of average while the Mid-Columbia basin is at 14 percent of average.

Photo by Adam Lapierre

There's still hope, but as dismal winter continues, water worries grow

'Yeah, we're concerned; we're always concerned when we don't have an average or above average snowpack.'

JER CAMARATA,
Farmers Irrigation District

By **BEN MITCHELL**
News staff writer

For those who have been snow dancing, it may be time to learn some new steps.

As the month of February begins, and as we crest the halfway point of the winter season, Mt. Hood's snowpack is in rough shape, hurt by warm rains washing away whatever meager amount of snow remains.

Data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Mt. Hood test site, located at 5,370 feet elevation on the south side of Mt. Hood, shows that the mountain's snowpack

is currently is at 32 percent of normal. The Mid-Columbia basin, which includes the Hood, Sandy, and Lower Deschutes river basins, started the month of January at what was an already disappointing 30 percent and as of Feb. 3, has a snowpack that is at 14 percent of normal.

In Hood River County, at the Red Hill site, the situation is even worse. The site located southwest of Parkdale at 4,400 feet elevation is at 7 percent of normal, the lowest it has been for this time of year since station records began in 1979, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The abysmal accumulation is less than ideal for area ski resorts, or for the many other businesses that rely on skiers and snowboarders to bring in revenue via renting gear, staying at hotels, or hitting up breweries and restaurants for some après ski fare.

The low snowpack also affects local irrigation districts, who have been keeping an eye on the weather forecasts, hoping for snow.

At Farmers Irrigation District, which provides water to 5,800 acres of land to 1,722 users on the west side of Hood River, District Manager Jer Camarata balances concern over the current snowpack with opti-

mism that the latter half of the winter can often be the most productive time of year for snowfall.

"Yeah, we're concerned; we're always concerned when we don't have an average or above average snowpack," he said, but then added, "a lot can happen in February and March."

Camarata noted that the region is experiencing "very similar weather patterns to last year," when concerns of drought were washed away by prodigious precipitation in February and March. In February of

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Outpouring of support meets family in need

Cause of housefire under investigation

By **KIRBY NEUMANN-REA**
News editor

A large outpouring met the Maurer family after a fire destroyed their home on Jan. 30.

From clothing and eyewear to housing and meals, the family is being taken care of, between the kindness of friends and family, and a few strangers.

"My parents are in a bit of a limbo, surviving off the graciousness of other people," said Monique Adams, daughter of Suzanne and Michael Maurer.

"This experience just shows you how defensible you are not," Adams said. "They lost everything, and it's a very slow process."

Replacing prescription medications has been a challenge but getting granddaughter Gracie, a Hood River Middle School sixth grader, outfitted for softball is one mission accomplished. Gracie's immediate worries were her gear,

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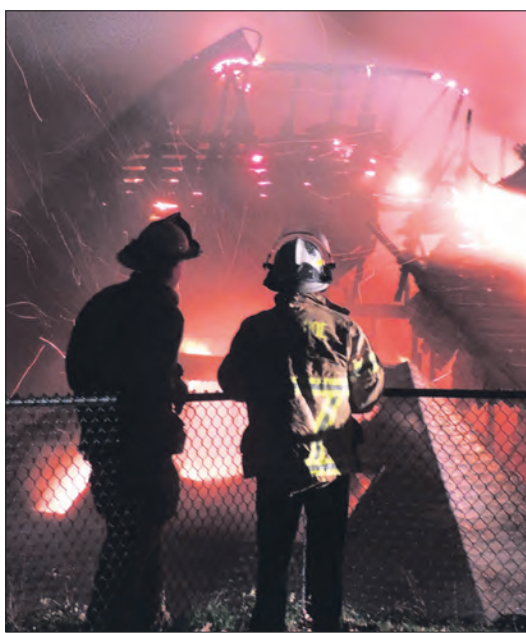


Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

FIRE MARSHAL Jim Trammell, right, confers with Hood River chief Devon Wells during the Jan. 30 blaze.

Dan Spatz named director of Education Foundation

By **KIRBY NEUMANN-REA**
News editor

Dan Spatz was named as the new Executive Director of the Hood River County Education Foundation, the board announced Monday. On Feb. 8 Spatz will step down from his post as Chief Institutional Advancement Officer and Executive Director of the CGCC Foundation at Columbia Gorge Community College. Spatz will begin his new, part-time, HRCEF position on Feb. 9.

Spatz also serves on The Dalles city council, and has extensive experience in both grant writing and journalism. He is currently doing education consulting and facilitation.

Spatz wrote many grants for CGCC, and also served as the editor of The Dalles Chronicle from 1997 to 2006.

"I want to take some time and learn," Spatz said, noting that he views public awareness as the key challenge facing HRCEF.

"Spreading the word is critical," he said. "With any organization you



DAN SPATZ

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Three To Go

Kids Soup deadline is Monday

Students in the Gorge who are starting a new business, nonprofit, or community initiative have until Monday to apply for Kids Gorge Soup, Feb. 26 in Hood River. Last year's Gorge Soup for Kids awarded just under \$3,000.

Applications can be found on Gorge Soup's website at: www.gorgesoup.wordpress.com Applications must be handwritten, mailed, and posted marked by Feb. 9.



Hood River Robotics teams advance to qualifying round

In FTC Robotics at The Dalles High School Saturday, seven of the eight Hood River Valley High School robotics teams advanced to the Feb 21-22 state super qualifying weekend. Hood River took first and second, with six Hood River teams out of 12 robots in the final rounds of elimination.

Hood River also won third place Inspire award, along with awards for robot design. Also next week Hood River County School District has four middle school teams and two high school teams competing at the Lake Oswego qualifier, a similar event to The Dalles.

Law enforcement begins safety 'blitz'

Beginning Feb. 9, the Hood River City Police Department will be conducting a two week traffic safety blitz campaign. The focus will be on seat belts, speed and cell phone use while driving. The purpose of this traffic enforcement is to promote safety, compliance and to reduce the number of motor vehicle related injuries or deaths. This enforcement campaign will take place throughout the state. The traffic blitz will conclude on Feb. 22.

Oregon law requires a child weighing less than 40 pounds to be properly restrained by a child safety seat. A child under one year of age or weighing less than twenty pounds must be restrained in a rear-facing child seat. A child over forty pounds but under age eight or less than 4'9" tall must be restrained in either a child seat with harness system or in a booster seat that raises the child up so that a lap and shoulder belt system fit correctly.

Law enforcement will not only be checking for persons wearing seat belts, but also that they are being worn properly. For additional information, please contact Sergeant Don Cheli at the Hood River Police Department at 541-387-5256.