



Hood River News



Kaleidoscope

Crag Rat Hut

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Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

TRUCK driver Juan Castro, in orange, talks with authorities after the truck and train collision Monday at Herman Creek Lane and Forest Lane in Cascade Locks.



Photo by Emily Fitzgerald

THE PORTS of Hood River and Cascade Locks held a joint meeting Jan. 30. From left, Cascade Locks Commissioner Joeinne Caldwell and Cascade Locks Commission President Jess Groves with Hood River Commissioners Hobby Streich, Kristi Chapman and Ben Sheppard.

'Good implementation' of BreezeBy on CL's Bridge of the Gods

About 30 percent of bridge traffic used electronic tolling during first month

By EMILY FITZGERALD
News staff writer

A month into electronic tolling on the Bridge of the Gods, roughly 30 percent of bridge traffic is now using the Port of Hood River's BreezeBy system, and the Port of Cascade Locks reports that both the system and the partnership between the two ports have been

successful so far. "It's always an anxious time to implement a system but knock on wood ... this has been a very good implementation," said Fred Kowell, chief financial officer for the Port of Hood River, at a joint meeting of the Port of Hood River and Port of Cascade Locks commissions on Jan. 30. "We're focused on (fixing) little things right now, not big things," said Bridge of the Gods Manager Ryan Vollans, referencing cases of drivers incorrectly registering their vehicle, and incidents where the BreezeBy sensor was tripped by Cascade Locks' heavy morning fog. "These are small things that we

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Train and truck collide in CL

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA
News editor

A Union Pacific train collided with and bisected a loaded tractor trailer Monday morning at the rail crossing with Herman Creek Lane at Forest Lane in east Cascade Locks.

Driver Juan Castro of Carson was

unhurt in the collision. He was hauling about two tons of wood chips southbound out of the Bear Mountain supply yard at 8:47 a.m., heading to the pellet plant's main plant, when the truck got stuck on the tracks, according to Sgt. Pete Hughes of Hood River County Sheriff's Office, who responded to the scene along with

Cascade Locks Fire Department.

A Union Pacific train did not have time to stop, according to Hughes.

"It was scary. It's not something you see every day," said Kipsy Mathews of the adjacent hillside Shalala neighborhood, who saw the

See TRAIN, page A8

Lunch and Learn series ends with gender identity discussion

Library Series to continue in May

By TRISHA WALKER
News staff writer

The last in a series of five Lunch and Learn presentations at the Hood River Library came Feb. 6, with more than 30 people coming together in the Hood River Library's downstairs meeting room to learn more about gender identity, the featured topic.

Megan Winn, Columbia Gorge Pride Alliance board member, led the talk, encouraging participants to ask questions or speak to their own experiences.

"I know there are people in this room who could teach this way better than me," Winn said. "And I know there are people here who are just learning about this."

She asked those gathered to adhere to four agreements to aid in the conversation: To speak your truth, to stay engaged, to experience and lean into any discomfort and except and accept non-closure.

In short, she explained, sometimes a new idea or topic that pushes us in a direction we've yet to think about or experience can lead us to tune out and not be engaged — one of the body's natural impulses — and that, because gender identity is a big topic, not everything could reasonably be covered in an hour.

Winn had participants introduce themselves and say a few words about why they were in attendance.

"I'm surprised, I thought there'd be like 10 people," she said to the crowd. "Some of you are at expert level, some are at infant level, and I want to make sure I hit the middle."

Several said they wanted to learn more about the topic to support friends and family; others expressed a desire to help build a more inclusive community or learn to use the correct pronouns.

"It's important to show up and normalize the conversation," said one. "There's always more to learn," said another.

Winn noted that while some people shared their preferred pronouns during their introduction, it is a cur-



Photo by Trisha Walker

PARTICIPANTS in the Feb. 6 Lunch and Learn presentation on gender identity come together at the conclusion of the event in a show of support.

rent practice to let people choose for themselves whether they are comfortable with that practice.

She also noted that while the topic is new "for our society," gender identity and multiple genders "have been represented in our world for a long time," she said. "We're acknowledging that this isn't new and isn't something that's been created in the last 20 years."

Gender identity corresponds with who you feel yourself to be on the inside. Gender expression is how you might show your gender on the outside — clothes, hair, makeup, how you walk or talk.

This can be different from sex assigned at birth, when babies are born and identified as male or female based on genitalia. That can be complicated if a baby is intersex, meaning the person is born without being "entirely aligned male or female," Winn said. In the past, doctors and parents would decide on the gender.

"The medical community is moving further and further away from surgeries and letting young people experience and determine their own identity," she said.

Transgender refers to someone who does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth; cisgender refers to someone who does identify with the gender assigned at birth. And

nonbinary refers to someone who does not identify exclusively as male or female.

A person may also identify as gender queer — identity that falls on the spectrum between male and female — or gender fluid — identity that changes over time, from one end of the spectrum to another.

"I've met trans-kids at age 3, living life with parental support, no big deal," Winn said. "For some, it's a big decision, but for others, our gender identities solidify at 2 or 3, and for parents and grandparents and those supporting their own young people, the power of believing, of choice and power and love, is huge ... At 2 and 3, little kids start knowing who they are, and that can be difficult for some people to digest. Sexual orientation comes into play at puberty; gender identity starts very young and is completely different than sexual orientation that happens around puberty."

"They might biologically be female, but gender expression or gender identity is gender queer and they might be attracted to women," Winn said. "Gender identity and assigned sex does not dictate who a person will love or be physically attracted to ... We can never assume or know

See GENDER, page A8

E. Oregon flooding causes major damage, claims woman's life

Interstate 84 is open after a one-day closure near Pendleton, but otherwise, the counties neighboring the Gorge in eastern Oregon are emerging from one of the worst flooding in memory, and one person has died in the disaster.

On Feb. 6, a combination of heavy rain and snowmelt caused by warm temperatures brought flooding to many areas of Umatilla County; Gov. Kate Brown has declared a State of Emergency (details on A8).

One woman was killed when high water swept through her property near the Bar M Ranch, the only reported fatality in the flooding.

The body of Janet Conley of northern Umatilla County was recovered on Sunday morning by search and rescue volunteers

who were canvassing the area with neighbors.

Umatilla County and Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers have issued the following details:

Since flooding started, the Oregon Army National Guard used helicopters to rescue 54 people, 10 dogs, one cat and one rabbit stranded by the flood. High water and road damage closed Interstate 84 in both directions Friday, Feb. 7 between Exits 182 and 188. Crews worked through the night and opened one lane in each direction late Sunday night, Feb. 9. On Monday, weather was expected to be cool and dry with no new flood threats.

A website has been set up for homeowners, renters and businesses to report damage to their prop-

See FLOODING, page A8



Corps of Engineers photo

HIGH WATERS in Mill Creek in Umatilla County, where Corps of Engineers are working to relieve flooding.

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"Education — no one can ever take that away from you, the knowledge you learn." — Veronica Sandoval, Cascade Observations, B2

BRIEFS

Waterfront closures

The Hook Road is closed to all access Feb. 10-14 while the Port of Hood River grades roads and applies herbicides. The Spit Access Road will be closed Feb. 18-21; Marina Park Feb. 24-28.

Alzheimer's support

Hood River Valley Adult Center, 2010 Sterling Place, hosts its monthly Alzheimer's Support Group on Feb. 12 from 2:30-3:30 p.m. All are welcome. More at 541-386-2060.

HR Council meets

The Feb. 10 agenda, too late for presstime, included Hood River Reads proclamation, HR Bridge project update, and Transportation System Plan update. See Feb. 15 paper for details.

