

CHAMBER

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next year's scholarships, making it likely that additional scholarships will be awarded.

Fonda Norris and Carolyn Jenkins were honored as the Classified Employee and Teacher of the Year, respectively. Norris serves as the food service manager at Bohemia, and Jenkins is a special education teacher at Harrison.

Ruth Linoz was recognized as the First Citizen in part for her work as the Executive Director of South Lane Wheels. Other nominees included former city attorney Gary Ackley and former city councilor Lindsey Haskell. Haskell was presented with the President's Award for Community Service.

The award for Business of the Year was presented to Aaron Shumway and Debbie Chalmers of Edward Jones. Also nominated were Buster's Main Street Café, Commonwealth Financial, KNND Radio and South Lane Fire and Rescue.

"All of the nominees this year were incredibly well deserving," Palmer said.



photo by Greg Lee

Honorees at Saturday's Chamber of Commerce Banquet included, from left: President's Award for Community Service winner Lindsey Haskell; Teacher of the Year Carolyn Jenkins; Classified School District Employee of the Year Fonda Norris; Debbie Chalmers and Aaron Shumway of Edward Jones, CG's Business of the Year; Junior First Citizen runner-up Jarett Raade and winner Justin Bennett; First Citizen Ruth Linoz and Distinguished Service Award winner Gene O'Neill.

STREETS

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could receive from the registration fee would barely touch the backlog of maintenance projects needed in the City, according to Meyers.

"The Council will be looking in the near future at financing road improvements," Meyers said, adding that the City's roads "desperately need attention."

"Our revenues don't take care of our needs, and if we try to save money to get something done for four years, we can manage a \$600,000 project. But that doesn't get us anywhere near completing the \$9 million in projects we need to do," he said.

Cottage Grove Public Works Director Jan Wellman agreed.

"Anything will help, but the

fee won't make a major difference," Wellman said. "Paving roads has just gotten very expensive over the years, due to the cost of prevailing wages and the cost of asphalt being so high."

Wellman said it can easily cost \$3-4 million to repair three to four blocks of road, particularly when the cost of needed repairs to the sewer and other systems under the road are taken into consideration. (The City has a policy not to conduct road repairs unless it has the funds to repair the water, sewer and storm systems under the roads, Wellman said.)

Meyers said revenues from the tax on fuel that serves as Cottage Grove's primary source of road funding can only lawfully

be saved for three years, which hampers the City's ability to save money for major projects. He added that gas tax revenues have been declining as vehicles become more fuel-efficient.

"It's how things were funded in the past, but it's not working anymore," he said.

About five years ago, the City Council, with the help of a paid consultant, developed a five-year plan to address a similar backlog in the City's water, sewer and stormwater systems. Fees for water usage were subsequently raised for most of the City's water customers, and the City's systems development charges were raised to help fund capital projects.

But it's more difficult to identify a possible revenue source

to fix city streets, and Cottage Grove is certainly not alone among municipalities that may seek to find new ways to charge for their use.

In the meantime, a map developed by the City showcasing the condition of Cottage Grove's streets indicates that about 2.86 miles of streets in very poor condition could be upgraded to good condition at a cost of \$3,221,600; 6.32 miles of streets need an upgrade from "poor" to "good" condition; 17.21 miles of roads could be upgraded from "fair" to "good" and 1.51 miles of gravel road need to be paved at a cost of \$2,599,300.

The map showcases roads in mostly "fair" condition in many of Cottage Grove's residential areas, and Meyers said residen-

tial streets such as Bryant are in desperate need of repair.

But with limited funding, the City must concentrate on the arterials and connectors that draw the most traffic, and as such Meyers and Wellman both pointed to sections of South Sixth St. and South 16th Street as two of the worst stretches of road in town.

Without funding to finance major repairs, Wellman said Public Works has adopted a maintenance and preservation approach, filling potholes and spot-patching trouble spots before they get much worse. He said heavy trucks moving through town do much to damage road surfaces, though state law prevents assessing big trucks for that damage.

Creating local improvement districts could finance repairs in certain areas, Meyers said, and a local bond levy for street repairs could be a possibility for funding repairs in the future. Meyers expects the City Council to schedule a worksession dealing with street repairs in the coming months.

Councilor Jake Boone said on Monday that he's unsure which tact the Council may take to address the problem.

"Our roads are in terrible condition," Boone said. "But we don't have the money to fix them as fast as they're falling apart. I don't know the solution, but it may be a matter of choosing the least worst option at this point."

FILM

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it was shot."

For someone who's spent much time in the area, even locations shown in the trailer for "Noble Fir" may look familiar, as the movie was filmed in the spring of 2012 and shot entirely in locations around Cottage Grove, Creswell and Pleasant Hill.

And the setting isn't all that's local about this movie, as Graham, his co-director for "Noble Fir," Joseph Arney, cinematographer Justin Holbrook and audio expert Chad Sanders are all graduates of Cottage Grove, Marist and South Lane Christian high schools.

After graduation, Graham said, each member of the team went their separate ways, but each pursued their dream at different film schools throughout the nation. They began collaborating again about 12 years ago.

"I've been doing professional videos and commercials, but we

always dreamed of making a feature together," he said. "We've had a few stories kicking around, and this one is loosely based on our co-director's grandfather. Both of our families grew up on Christmas tree farms, and we thought a farm would be a nice setting for a dramatic film about loss and grief, about a man who isolates himself in grief."

According to its synopsis, "Noble Fir" "follows Henry Dean, a man not given to emotion, who is struggling to maintain control over his life during the busiest part of the Christmas-tree harvesting season. Like his body, Hank's wounded spirit limps along; he's 'out in the trees' and it's ultimately his choice whether or not to walk out. 'Noble Fir' is the patiently unfolding story of a strong man who has strung himself up from circumstance. As the film navigates the shaky curves of grief, it is held together with a tense and, at times, hopeful score. Like a devastated soul, the film

feels as full as it does hollow—with gaps in time and words—while showcasing a quiet truth: loss can be hard to live with, and even more difficult to watch someone try to survive."

A large group came up from Southern California to help Last Light shoot the film, and Graham said the local filmmakers had a lot of fun introducing them to the area they grew up in. Finding locations to shoot the movie was easy, he said, and much of it was shot at Pleasant Hill's Northern Lights Christmas Tree Farm.

"The community was very accommodating," he said. "People were loaning us their properties to shoot on, which is so refreshing after all the red tape we dealt with in Southern California."

To come up with cast members for the film, Graham and Holbrook contacted the latter's father, Hal Holbrook, a fixture in the local theater community, who introduced them to most of the film's eventual cast.

"An awesome group of people came to audition, and I'd say that about 60 percent of them were eventually cast in the movie."

Graham said that his group's main focus is trying to get the film purchased so it can be distributed to a wider audience. "Noble Fir" has found itself in good company in several film

festivals, and Graham is also working on a documentary produced by Sharon Stone.

Graham had great things to say about filming in his hometown.

"It's rich material in a rich environment," he said. "This is a beautiful place to film, and we hope to use what we've done here to draw more filmmakers

to the area. It's something we've always wanted to do."

Tickets for the premier of "Noble Fir" are \$10, and the film will be playing this Friday at 9 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. at Bijou Art Cinemas, 492 E. 13th Ave. in Eugene.

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BURGLARIES

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"Generally people tend to take things that are somewhat alike because they either know how to get rid of it quickly or know someone who wants it," he said. "The name of the burglary game is to get the property and turn it into cash or drugs ASAP."

Shepherd encouraged the victims of a home invasion to report the incident to police, then check with local pawn and secondhand shops for unique items that can be identified. Any specific information on the items could potentially be useful. He said police have already alerted such shops in this area of the recent rise in burglaries, which he said is certainly alarming by Cottage Grove standards.

"Is seven incidents a task-force issue? No, because we're a small enough department that we can still investigate each incident," he said. "But it is concerning — I hate it."

With regard to prevention of such crimes, Shepherd said modern security and lighting systems are certainly helpful, but there are no guarantees.

"Do what you can to make it hard to get into your home," he said. "Lock up everything you can, because you just never know."

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