

YES, PLEASE!

Kristen Carpenter serves ice cream to Savannah Davis after Davis finished the 5K portion of the Ice Cream Bowl at the Chambers Covered Bridge Saturday. The event, a family friendly run/walk, drew about 37 participants and was a collaborative effort of A Primary Connection, the 90 by 30 initiative and the Cottage Grove Jogging Club.



photo by Jon Stinnett

PLAN

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developed to revamp operations on the so-called O&C Lands owned by the federal government. With regard to agricultural concerns, the consultants recommended partnerships with agencies, particularly Dorena Hydro, which they pointed out is required to collect water quality data that may be shared with the City. Algae blooms have also been a recent concern at local waterways, and Sifford and Sievert said the attitudes about monitoring blooms is changing. Conditions can be controlled to limit future blooms, they said. “The BLM has described Mosby Creek as a raceway,” Sievert said. “And the more we can slow that water down and cool it down, the better off we’ll be.” With regard to land use in the watershed, the consultants said practice exercises to deal with potential dam failures or contaminations have occurred

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— Alex Sifford, E-Systems Services consultant

at other dams in the area. They said septic systems can also be inventoried, adding concerns that the septic systems of some homes around the waterways are dangerously close to the waterways themselves. Sifford also pointed out that water quantity could be as important a topic as its quality in future years. He said that, while

the impacts of activities above Dorena Dam is mitigated by the dam itself, the areas upstream are critical for drinking water protection and should be addressed by the drinking water cooperative. “That area needs to be addressed, and this collaborative is the way to do it,” he said. “We can’t just look at the dam as the ultimate water wall for the city.” More information on Cottage Grove’s drinking water protection plan can be obtained through City Planner Amanda Ferguson by email at planner@cottagegrove.org or by phone at 541-942-3340.

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A better work environment serves employees, company

Many people spend more time in the office than they do at their own homes. As a result, the environment at the workplace is especially important, and businesses big and small should attempt to make that environment as enjoyable and supportive as possible. A positive workplace environment not only benefits the company’s employees, but it also benefits the company. Numerous studies have shown a link between workplace environment and error rate, willingness to collaborate with other employees and even absenteeism. For example, a study by the United Kingdom’s Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment and the British Council for Offices found that something as simple as good lighting and adequate daylight throughout the office can reduce absenteeism by as much as 15 percent. In addition to minor changes around the office, there are several other things companies can do to improve the workplace environment. **Increase and improve communication.** Particularly in the current economy, where uncertainty seems to be reigning over many businesses, open and honest communication with employees is especially important. As a result, communicate more frequently and effectively with staff. Let staff know the company is always open to suggestions, and respond to all suggestions to let employees know their opinions matter. **Emphasize respect for others**

throughout the company. No one wants to come to work and feel disrespected. Foster a culture of mutual respect wherein everyone knows bad behavior between employees simply won’t be tolerated. Workplace bullying is not that uncommon, and employees who feel bullied or disrespected at the office are bound to be unhappy and less productive. Make sure everyone from the company CEO to the summer interns are aware that they must respect others and that they deserve respect regardless of their position within the company. **Involve employees when instituting changes.** When attempting to improve a workplace environment, go straight to the source for ideas on

improvement. Employees are on the ground floor every day, and they are an invaluable resource as to what’s working and what’s not working with regards to the environment at the office. Use them to help institute positive changes, and the result will likely be an improved environment as well as employees who feel more valued. **Show appreciation.** A 2011 study from Massachusetts-based employee recognition solutions provider Globoforce found that 41 percent of workers studied are not satisfied with the level of recognition they receive at their jobs. Companies hoping to foster a more positive work environment should always show appreciation to their employees when a job

is well done. Appreciation can come in many forms, but companies should never avoid expressing gratitude or appreciation simply because they expect their employees to perform their jobs well. While it’s important to set high expectations for employees, always give recognition and appreciation when employees meet those expectations. Fostering a better workplace environment can be done in a variety of ways and lead to happier, more productive employees.

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