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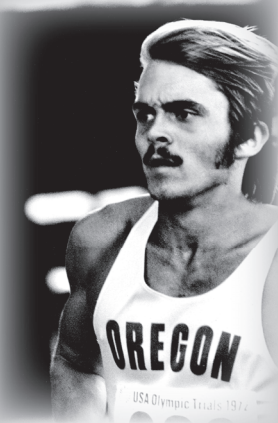
# Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2015

SOUTH LANE COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889

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**Say 'Velo'**  
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## School Board talks budget, drug testing recap

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A year-end review of a controversial policy comprised much of the South Lane School Board's Monday-night meeting, which also found the Board sifting through a long list of retirements and new hires for the 2015-16 school year. The Board had first approved

a policy of mandatory random drug testing for high-school students participating in extracurricular activities back in August of 2014, a policy that ignited a fierce debate among parents, students and staff as its implementation began during the fall sports season. It was later decided that only student-athletes would be tested this school year, and on Monday, the Board was

asked to review the results of the testing policy with the option to expand testing to the middle-school level or to participants in other high-school extracurriculars such as band and choir.

First on the agenda Monday, though, came good news in the form of a promise from the Oregon legislature to increase its funding allotment for K-12 education. The previous \$7.15 bil-

lion allocation for the 2015-17 biennium had put South Lane School District in a hole to the tune of about \$100,000. A new figure of \$7.36 billion, however, allowed the School Board to approve a list of add-backs to the 2015-16 budget.

Superintendent Krista Parent said the higher allocation would allow the District to add back \$707,994 to the 2015-16 bud-

get. She recommended transferring an additional \$250,000 to the District's reserve fund to cover its obligations to the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). In addition, she recommended adding eight hours of funding for a special education assistant and eight

Please see **SCHOOL BOARD**, Page 11A



photo by Jon Stinnett

Kay Beckham of Creswell docks her kayak at the Baker Bay boat ramp Sunday. Beckham visited Dorena Reservoir with her husband, Charlie, and was pleased with its high water level.

## WATER WE TO EXPECT?

Dorena, CG  
Reservoirs more full  
than most following  
dry winter and spring

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

On a hot, muggy Sunday afternoon, boats line the dock at Baker Bay. Families crowd together at picnic tables, the smell of grilled hot dogs and burgers filling the air.

Young folks gather together for a rousing volleyball match, and all manner of pleasure craft ply the waters, which reach high up the boat ramp, offering easy access to the lake.

It's a scene that will become increasingly common at Dorena Reservoir southeast of Cottage Grove as summer weather continues to grace the southern Willamette Valley, though it's one that won't be taken for granted at other area reservoirs managed by the Army Corps of Engineers,

reservoirs that still showcase low water levels following a dangerously dry winter and spring.

Low water conditions are a serious concern throughout the west, though Dorena should be one of few reservoirs in this area not lacking for water.

"One of the serious mission impacts will be recreation," according to Corps of Engineers spokesperson Scott Clemans. "A great many boat ramps

Please see **WATER**, Page 12A

## Committee approves city budget — quickly

Some members upset with amount of review

BY MATT HOLLANDER  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The City of Cottage Grove Budget Committee ended its May 26 meeting on time and with an approved budget to boot. But this did not sit well with several members.

At the beginning of Tuesday's meeting, which began at 6 p.m., the committee established an adjournment time of 8 p.m. City Manager Richard Meyers then led the committee through a presentation of the 2015-2016 budget, including a summary of each individual fund.

When 8 p.m. came around,

the committee had not yet finished going through the 228-page document, and several members expressed interest in a line-by-line discussion of the budget. Nonetheless, a motion to approve the \$26.4-million budget passed by a vote of 6-5. And a public hearing and comment session was scheduled for the June 22 City Council meeting.

Several of the committee members, including City Councilor Kate Price, were openly frustrated by the conclusion.

Please see **BUDGET**, Page 6A

## Wildwood Falls claims another life

Nineteen-year old student jumps, does not resurface

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A popular recreation area southeast of Cottage Grove became the scene for yet another water-related death over the weekend.

South Lane County Fire and Rescue personnel responded at about 4:30 p.m. Sunday to a report of an unknown subject that had reportedly jumped from Wildwood Falls and failed to surface. Dispatchers with the Lane County Sheriff's Office were advised that the subject had been underwater for at least five minutes.

Sgt. Carrie Carver, public information officer for the Sheriff's Office, said LCSO heard reports that the man had resurfaced briefly after the jump and that a bystander had attempted an unsuccessful rescue before witnesses ran to a nearby home to call for help.

Sheriff's deputies and the County's Search and Rescue dive team responded to the location, and volunteers were able to locate a body at the bottom of a deep pool at the base of the falls.

The deceased was identified as Sidney Anthony Nelson III, a

19-year old student at the University of Oregon, whose family resides in California and has been notified. Carver noted that, until the County's medical examiner issues a cause of death, the incident has yet to be officially classified as a drowning and is instead referred to as a "water-related death."

The incident is the second fatality at Wildwood in just under a year. On July 1, 2014, 16-year old Scott Alexander Smith of Aloha did not emerge from the waters beneath the falls after attempting to rescue his younger brother. The assistance of a towtruck was eventually required to remove the downed log from the falls that had trapped Smith. Past drownings have occurred at the falls in 1996 and 1999.

Joe Raade, Division Chief of South Lane Fire and Rescue, said he wasn't sure that Sunday's incident was caused by the characteristics of the falls themselves, though he acknowledged that cold water early in the year and the force of water cascading over the falls could certainly have contributed.

Please see **WILDWOOD**, Page 12A

## Fire District budget funds added staffing in Creswell

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A committee overseeing the budget process for South Lane County Fire and Rescue approved a \$5,437,147 budget for the agency last week that includes funding for increased staffing, particularly for staff based in Creswell.

South Lane provides fire protection, rescue, emergency medical services, fire prevention and code enforcement services for Cottage Grove, Creswell and outlying areas of South Lane County. Chief John

Wooten said Monday that the department will be increasing staffing in Creswell by moving three of its engines — one per day — to the Creswell station. Another firefighter/paramedic will also be hired with funds garnered through the local option levy that was approved for SLCF&R by voters in 2013. In all, the agency will be increasing its total staffing by 12 hours per day, Wooten said.

The change comes in response to high call volume, particularly in the northern part of the Fire District, Wooten said.

"I'd bet that for every three

structure fires we've responded to in the year I've been here, two have been in Creswell, and they've usually come at a time when the ambulance was already out on call," he said. "The change is an effort to maintain the ability of that engine (in Creswell) to respond even if the ambulance is already out on a call. We're trying to limit the risk as much as we can."

The additional staffing in Creswell will reduce the "daily footprint" at the Cottage Grove station by one person, Wooten said.

Elsewhere in the budget,

South Lane budgeted more funding to the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) in response to what Wooten called "significant cost increases," increases the department expects to occur again in 2017. He said South Lane has attempted to withhold funds to cover those anticipated cost hikes without being forced to reduce staffing.

"We weren't able to put a lot into reserve funds due to those added costs," he said.

The South Lane Fire and Rescue Board of Directors is expected to approve the 2015-16 budget at its June 18 meeting.

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