

# On the homefront

National Guard aids playground installation

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

For its first official trip back to Cottage Grove since moving to new headquarters in Springfield, the U.S. Army National Guard's 2-162 Battalion spent the past week working to fulfill a different kind of mission.

The Battalion called the Cottage Grove Armory home until 2009, and many of its members returned from a deployment to Afghanistan just a few weeks ago. But beginning last Tuesday, troops lent a hand to help erect a playground structure at Bohemia Park, and the progress of the installation effort in one week was difficult to miss by press time Monday, when the playground could be glimpsed rising high above the nearby restroom facility.

Second Lt. Jeff Kincaid of 2-162 said the move is part of an effort originating from the upper levels of command to concentrate more on local projects following a decade marked by overseas deployments.

"They want to get back to the roots of the National Guard with stateside-based projects," Kincaid said as soldiers carried pieces of the new structures — one intended for children aged 2-5 and another for kids ages 5-12 — into place. The troops helped out until Sunday, and Dennis Bleser, the lead installer for Playcraft Systems, designers of the play structure, said the site had seen a



photo by Jon Stinnett

Dennis Bleser of Playcraft Systems checks the level of playground beams at Bohemia Park as soldiers with the National Guard move more beams into place.

remarkable transformation in that time, particularly with the soldiers' help.

"It's like having your own little hill of ants," said Bruce Stewart of the Bohemia Foundation, owners and builders of Bohemia Park and its new play structure.

Stewart's son, Faye, called the National Guard's help a "blessing in disguise," adding that he had originally spoken to Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers, who helped make the connection with the Guard.

"Three days later we had a full crew out there," he said. "Seeing it from Main Street, I was very impressed. It should be a lot of fun, and there are a lot of kids that are anxious about it being finished."

The kids shouldn't have to wait too long, Stewart said, to begin tromping around on

the park, which boasts ramps for disabled access. He said the project is set for completion on June 17 and that the play structure will be usable immediately.

Also in the plans for Bohemia Park is a 60-foot flagpole that's scheduled to be installed in the next few weeks, and three new tables and new benches are also on the horizon, according to Stewart.

The playground carries a \$240,000 price tag, and Stewart said donations from the Barker Foundation, Weyerhaeuser, Seneca Lumber, Murphy Plywood, the Oregon Community Foundation, Norm Wildish and Starfire, in addition to aid from the Cottage Grove Community Foundation and Rotary clubs helped cap off fundraising to get the structure built.

## Social media helps nab suspects

Cottage Grove Police say they've reached out to the public online with satisfying results lately.

Commander Conrad Gagner said a comment from a local resident who follows CGPD's activities online recently noted that the department's Facebook page had become overrun with information about lost dogs that police have been housing at the new kennel by the city shop as they search for their owners. Gagner said he decided to change it up a little and posted surveillance footage of two suspects wanted in connection with a June 1 theft at Walmart.

"We put the picture up, and we had a positive ID within five minutes," he said. "It was unbelievable."

Police later arrested Billy Wells and Erica Farmer on theft charges; Gagner said the pair allegedly were witnessed changing price tags on items to attempt to purchase them at a discount, after which Wells allegedly left the store with a backpack full of items.

Gagner also recently reached out to Facebook users regarding



Cottage Grove Police say the suspects in a June 1 theft at Walmart were identified within minutes after these surveillance photos were shared online.

the information available at crimereports.com, which plots the locations and other information about crimes committed and reported by police agencies. A search of local incidents in the Cottage Grove area showcased a large collection of thefts at press time Monday.

## City says tree removal not necessary at Birch and Q

Officials with the City of Cottage Grove's Planning Department say the construction of access to a home near the corner of Birch and Q streets in Cottage Grove's Northwest Neighborhood won't necessitate the removal of a large cedar tree nearby. Recent online activity indicated the concern of some residents that the construction to build out Birch St. — which currently ends at an empty lot at the intersection with O St. — to its intersection with Q St. would mean the end of the large tree. But City Planner Amanda Ferguson said that the City will be building a 20-foot fire lane for access to a nearby house.

"The tree is partially in the right-of-way," Ferguson said. "But we don't have to remove the tree just to get fire access for the house." Ferguson said the continuation of Birch St. to Q St. has been "plotted out for decades." "It's just one house there that currently needs legal access," she said. "Most of the other access comes from the alley behind the street."

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## Nordin appointed to LTD board

A recent press release from the Lane Transit District announced that Oregon Governor Kate Brown has appointed Cottage Grove businessman Don Nordin to the Lane Transit District Board of Directors. Nordin was tapped to replace former LTD Board member Michael Dubick and will represent LTD subdistrict 3 in southeast Eugene and southern Lane County.

Nordin is the owner of Equinox Industries, a pioneer in the field of convertible human powered trailer systems. These specialized bicycle trailers change into a stroller, jogging cart, ski sled, kayak carrier or a garden cart.

Nordin is a graduate of the University of Wyoming and a former Peace Corps volunteer. He has served on a variety of boards, including: the National Peace Corps, Cerro Gordo Cooperative, Cottage Grove Planning Commission, and Cottage Grove Community Sharing. Don is no stranger to LTD. He has served on the District's budget committee for the past six years and played a leadership role in the expansion of LTD services to Cottage Grove in the late 1990's.

Nordin officially joined the LTD Board this month, and his term will run through December of 2019.

## Popular CBS program features Aprovecho Research Center

Cottage Grove's Aprovecho Research Center is no stranger to the public spotlight, and its efforts to build efficient, clean-burning stoves for the millions worldwide who still cook on an open flame recently garnered more nationwide attention. It's been featured in the "New Yorker" magazine, and director Dean Still has had the opportunity to meet with Hillary Clinton and Britain's Prince Charles. Recently, Aprovecho and Still were also featured recently on CBS Sunday Morning in a segment called "Designs for Better Living," which can be viewed at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/designs-for-better-living/>.

"Forget iPhones and sports cars -- this is light, where there wasn't any before. It's design that truly makes a difference," the announcer reads during the segment.

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