



**Marshfield
downs Lions
in opener,
page 1B**

**Asking 'Why?' — 6A
Covered Bridges-3A
Crazy 8s Tour — 9A**

**Creswell water
war precedes
special election,
page 8A**



Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2015 SOUTH LANE COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889 VOLUME 127 • NUMBER 11

Outgoing police chief receives surprise sendoff at CG Armory



photo by Jon Stinnett
Chief Mike Grover is gifted with a new golf cart complete with shotgun and mount at his retirement celebration Thursday.

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A large crowd packed the floor at the Cottage Grove Armory on Thursday to bid farewell to outgoing Police Chief Mike Grover, a group that, to the individual, can be credited with the ability to keep a secret.

Grover recently announced his retirement after a 46-year law enforcement career, including service in Jackson and Lane Counties in Oregon and a decade in Lakewood, Colo. He began his career in Cottage Grove — his hometown — in 1983 and was appointed interim

police chief when an auto accident left Dick Hoffer, the chief at the time, unable to perform the duties of the post in 1991.

A veritable who's who of Cottage Grove leadership showed up to wish Grover well on his retirement, including current Mayor Tom Munroe, who described Thursday evening's surprise as an "amazing feat," and former mayors Jim Gilroy, Darrel and Gary Williams. Gilroy recounted the story of receiving the awful news that Hoffer had been in an accident back in 1991; he then stated that he knew the police department would be in good hands

with Grover at the helm. Darrel Williams praised Grover's "steady hand" in leadership, and Gary Williams called the outgoing chief a "true Grover" who always set an example for the younger generation of students and athletes in the community.

"He could have had a career anywhere, but he came back home, and we're all the better for it," Williams said.

City Manager Richard Meyers served as the event's emcee, spending most of the time seated behind a large desk due to a recent ankle injury. Meyers detailed the major milestones in Grover's

career, sharing humorous stories and photos but also pointing out that Grover attended the FBI Academy in 1990. He also made light of the fact that it was Grover himself who had reserved

the Armory for what he believed would be a K-9 training exercise.

"We've been extremely blessed to

Please see **CHIEF**, Page 11A

Well worries

Dry year fuels homeowners' concerns about their water supplies

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Ed Hack says he's rather fond of the decorative cover atop the well at his home in the hills south of Cottage Grove. It's what's underneath the cover, he said, that has him worried.

Hack has lived off London Road for 30 years, and he said he's never given the well that provides water to his property a single thought — until this year, that is, when an extraordinarily dry winter, spring and summer have Hack wondering what's going on underground.

"We're all on wells out here, and it's really hilly," he said. "I don't really understand the aquifer situation out here. We live 50 feet above our neighbors, and I'm not sure whether my well affects them or not."

Hack said he's stopped watering the plants in the yard in the fear that he may inadvertently be running his well dry.

"The lawn's dead, but I don't want to take the chance," he said.

It's the kind of concern heard almost daily by local well drilling companies and the Oregon Water Resources Department, whose Mike McCord, manager of its Northwest Region, said the concern that a well may go dry is a common one this time of year.

"We don't keep track of the complaints, but we get them every year," McCord said. "This year, we're tracking them, though, and keeping the information on a database. The problem isn't necessarily that there's no water in the well; it may just be that the well or its pump are very inefficient or old. The pump may be of a variety that could cause it to not draw much water."

Problems such as poor pump performance, broken water lines or inadequate pressure could cause problems for well owners, but McCord said low water levels could also potentially be a cause, particularly in a year this dry.

Michael Mattick, who oversees the OWRD's District 2 that includes Cottage Grove, said the



photo by Jon Stinnett
Ed Hack said he's not given his well a second thought in 30 years, though a dry summer has him wondering how long his water supply will hold out.

Department monitors the water levels of seven wells in Lane County, checking them about every three months. Mattick said the levels in these wells were about one to three feet lower than last year based on July measurements. Another round of measurements is due in October.

"We've not gotten a lot more

calls about wells drying up, but we always do," Mattick said. "There's still potential with more time left in the dry season; we're not out of it yet."

The vast majority of wells in Oregon serve residences, and Mattick

Please see **WELLS**, Page 12A

Creswell plane crash kills grandfather, grandson

Mechanical error cited as cause

Engine troubles are being blamed for a plane crash that took the life of a grandfather and his grandson at Creswell's Hobby Airport Monday morning.

The Lane County Sheriff's Office said it responded to reports that the plane crashed at about 10 a.m. at the north end of the airport and had caught fire. Arriving deputies and personnel from South Lane County Fire and Rescue arrived to find the plane — a single-engine, two seat Luscombe — in flames. After extinguishing the flames, two deceased subjects were located in the wreckage.

On Monday afternoon, the deceased pilot was identified as Milo Skinner, and the passenger was his grandfather and the owner of the involved aircraft, Hal Skinner.

Police say that their investigation revealed that shortly after taking off, a radio transmission came from the aircraft indicating they were having engine troubles and that they were attempting to come back to the airport. A witness observed the aircraft in the process of turning around, when it abruptly crashed into a field about 50-75 yards short of the runway.

New school year means new faces

School District has 34 new teachers, transfers and administrative changes

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

This week brings back-to-school time for students in South Lane School District, and in most area schools, students will find a host of new faces ready to greet them when they reach their classrooms.

A list of 34 new teachers, transfers and administrative positions means many changes at SLSD, where all schools save London will adjust to new personnel in the 2015-16 school year.

It's certainly an extensive list, and Brian McCasline, Human Resources Director for South Lane, said it's a situation many area districts have

found themselves facing in recent years, particularly as Oregon's economy improves.

"I've talked with other human resources directors, and there seems to be a lot of movement that's primarily due to jobs being available," McCasline said. "Most districts have better finances than they have in the past few years, and there's been more movement than they're used to."

A lot of that 'movement' is happening between schools within the District, especially with regard to kindergarten, where the mandate of a full day of kindergarten instruction has meant the hire of three new teachers at Bohemia Elementary and one at Harrison Elementary.

Retirements of longtime teachers have also been a factor at schools such as Dorena, and McCasline said many positions are attractive to teachers who previously lived in Eugene but want to move closer to a home in Cottage Grove.

On Thursday afternoon, students and parents paid a visit to Bohemia Elementary, where personnel changes this year begin at the top. Ready to greet them when they arrived were new Principal Heather Bridgens and new Assistant Principal Laurie Melendy. Bridgens has been transitioning to the leadership role at Bohemia over the past year, due to the move of

Please see **TEACHERS**, Page 12A



photo by Jon Stinnett
New Bohemia second-grade teacher Stephanie Randall speaks with Eryn Knutson and daughters Carly and Zoey during a classroom visit Thursday.

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