



Cottage Grove Sentinel

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

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Council votes to ban smoking in parks

Another 'yes' vote is needed
 to enact the ordinance

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council passed a unanimous vote to prohibit smoking in the City's parks on Monday night, though the Council's rules dictate that it will require another passing vote at a subsequent meeting to enact the ordinance.

City Manager Richard Meyers explained to the Council that Mayor Tom Munroe had

expressed an interest in banning smoking in the parks, and by the comments and vote from the Council, it appears they share that interest. The Council is expected to revisit the ordinance again at its Nov. 9 meeting, at which it will likely be adopted.

Currently, city codes prohibit smoking inside park buildings, with reference to the Indoor Clean Air Act, and a recent council discussion regarding the use of electronic smoking devices, or "vaping," amended

the definition of "smoking" to mean "inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, pipe, weed, plant or other tobacco-like product...in any form," which also includes "the use of an electronic smoking device."

Councilor Jeff Gowing indicated a concern that the ordinance didn't specify a stance on the use of chewing tobacco, to which Meyers responded that the new rule would state that no person may use a tobacco product, which would include chewing tobacco.

A light crowd observed the proceedings Monday night, with

the few public comments registered in support of the parks smoking ban.

Garrett Bridgens, a school-district employee, said he came to address the Council as a father who has had to tell his children he can't use the swings at City parks because there were people smoking there.

"There are places we want kids to be able to go to be in a smoke-free environment," Bridgens said.

Elizabeth Boram thanked the Council for "considering making this place as healthy as possible." A nurse by occupation, Boram said she had witnessed

"sad things about mothers who smoke and have smoke around children." She also asked if the ordinance addressed marijuana smoke, to which Meyers responded that smoking marijuana in public is already illegal.

Jessica Pemberton said that, as a former smoker, signs informing her that it was illegal to smoke near building entrances opened her eyes to the impact smoking can have on others.

"I figure that if people see signs there (at the parks) saying not to smoke, maybe they would actually move away from

Please see **PARKS**, Page 10A

Daylight Saving Time
 ends Sunday, Nov. 1

Turn your clocks
 back one hour

2:00 → 1:00

Also
 inside:



TARDIS

Free library goes up
 downtown, page 3A



Invasives

Non-native crayfish
 concern ODFW,
 page 5B

Head, Hands, Heart, Health

Supporters of 4-H hoping it can make a comeback in South Lane County

BY JON STINNETT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The rain beat steadily on the metal roofs of the barns at the Western Oregon Exposition Fairgrounds on Sunday, but the much-needed showers did little to dampen the mood inside.

There, youths busied themselves with sack races, balloon games and a "needle in the haystack" search that substituted coins for needles — the kind of "wholesome fun" that one parent and volunteer said epitomizes the program the event aimed to promote.

A few dozen kids and their parents attended the second in a series of meetings that doubled as a way to get the word out about 4-H — the youth mentoring and development organization that boasts over six million

members aged 5-18 nationwide — in southern Lane County. Organizers say a chicken barbeque held last month drew about 80 youths to learn about 4-H, a plus for an organization that's hoping to rebound from the loss of county funding that essentially ended its offerings in the area.

In previous years, Lane County partnered with the Oregon State University Extension Service to offer 4-H here, but hard economic times, coupled with the County's loss of federal timber funds, forced the County to cut its funding to the Extension in 2008.

"Every state in the nation has 4-H, as does every county, but our county doesn't support it, so we have to do it ourselves," said Ken Ball, a Community Club Leader who's been involved with the program for decades.



photo by Jon Stinnett

Tara Eckstine helps son Augie get ready for a sack race with Everett Eckstine and Colton Crudele during a 4-H event at the WOE Fairgrounds Sunday.

There are 4-H clubs operating in East Lane County (headquartered in Pleasant Hill) and London Springs, but Ball and others are hoping the South Lane group has a bright future after a lack of activity until about a year ago. Still, the lack of funding means that membership fees are need-

ed to fund 4-H programs, which Ball said can be a difficult prospect for area families.

"I'd way we have about 20 percent of the membership we used to, judging from the turnout at the Lane County animal auction," he said. "I'm not sure we'll ever be as big as we used

to be."

"But we're staying hopeful," interjected Brittney Kuebler, a club leader who began her involvement in 4-H and the WOE Fair at age six.

Please see **4-H**, Page 10A

Ribbon-cutting dedicates Row undercrossing

BY SAM WRIGHT
 The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The afternoon of Wednesday, Oct. 21 saw the official unveiling of an underpass for the Row River bike path. The path itself is a widely popular attraction in the community, and during last week's ribbon cutting, speakers stated that the underpass (which takes cyclists and other users under Row River Road) is a necessity.

The path saw its first fatality in 2007. The victim of the tragedy was Claude Weimer, a new member of the Cottage Grove community (just six months) who was hit by a car. Four years later, Michele Portmann was hit and killed by a car on the same path at the same crossing. East Lane County Commis-

sioner Faye Stewart was there to speak at the unveiling.

"When you find yourself in a position where you really need to act, it's really important that this all come together," Stewart said. "Through hard work and great partnerships, we were able to accomplish what you see today."

Individually, the city of Cottage Grove and Lane County struggled to find the funds and resources to begin the project, which totaled \$1 million.

"Coming together to do it all, and partnering with Weitman Excavation made it possible," Stewart said.

Stewart, who is also a Cottage Grove resident, recalled his worries using the path with his children, and said he now feels much safer.

Lydia McKinney, the Lane County

Transportation Planning Manager, also praised the success of the project.

"It's unfortunate that these things are precipitated by a tragic event, but it really makes people want to act," she said.

Standing to cut the ribbon were the family members who survived Weimer and Portmann. Weimer's wife, Elaine, held the gigantic scissors to cut the ribbon while Portmann's sister, Marsha Yandell, watched on.

The tunnel was accompanied by another project (under the same \$1 million federal grant) to rebuild a crossing at milepost 5.4.

Cottage Grove resident and cycling enthusiast Don Strahan feels the tunnel is a huge improvement for the safety of cyclists.



photo by Greg Lee

Elaine Weimer, wife of Claude Weimer, and Marsha Yandell, sister of Michele Portmann, cut the ribbon to dedicate the new undercrossing.

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WEATHER



HIGH 58 LOW 49

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