

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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

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Champion!

Macauley does it again in bench press competition, page 1B



Small Biz Sat.

Promotion encourages shopping local, page 3A

Freezing Nights shelter active during frigid week

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Those with nowhere to go as the days and especially nights get colder can benefit from Beds for Freezing Nights, a shelter hosted for much of last week at Our Lady of Perpetual Health Catholic Church. Doors opened at 7 p.m., and the shelter, which rotates between locations at local churches, has been offering the less fortunate a warm place to sleep and a hot meal for seven years.

On Sunday, Jack and Judy Anderson of Cottage Grove were the volunteers on duty; they said they have been help-



photo by Sam Wright

A total of 14 visitors took advantage of a shelter at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church Sunday night.

ing out at the shelter for four years.

"It would be really awful for me to sleep out in the cold; that's why I choose to volunteer," said Judy Anderson, who also volunteers at events for Community Sharing.

The shelter featured several rooms for men and women separately and also rooms for couples in need. Piled up along the hallway were boxes of

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County urges Council to adopt tobacco license program

Points to statistics showing an increase in teen use

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Teenage tobacco use increased dramatically in Lane County last year, according to the Public Health department, which sent representatives to appear before the Cottage Grove City Council to put forth a countywide ordinance that aims to create a licensing program for businesses that sell tobacco products.

Lane County Public Health appeared before the Council last January to pitch a tobacco licensing ordinance; the Council questioned certain aspects of the ordinance and took its own steps to combat tobacco use throughout 2015, including banning the sale and use of e-cigarettes to and by minors, increasing the acceptable distance from a building that one must stand to smoke from 10 to 25 feet and most recently banning the use of tobacco products in city parks. Representing the health department, Health Officer Dr. Patrick Luedtke said the County's Board of Commissioners recently passed an amended licensing ordinance for the unincorporated areas of the County, and county representatives have been visiting with city governments again to try to convince them to adopt the same ordinance for a uniform tobacco retail license throughout the County.

Luedtke said that licensing can help decrease the initiation of youth to tobacco use, of interest because data shows that use among area 11th-graders increased for seven of eight varieties of tobacco products in 2014.

"The fear was that as e-cigarettes hit the market, they would eventually be a gateway to other products, and unfortunately we're seeing some of that," he said, adding that kids who see more tobacco advertisements are statistically more likely to experiment.

"Kids tend to frequently stop in convenience stores, where there are ingenious marketing strategies including discounts, flavored products, packaging that appeals to young people and strategic ad placement," he said.

Please see **TOBACCO**, Page 8A

Cottage Grove promotes itself well, marketing group says

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Efforts to market Cottage Grove and surrounding areas as a tourist destination are paying off, according to representatives with Travel Lane County, who detailed their own efforts to promote the County's appeal at the Nov. 23 meeting of the Cottage Grove City Council.

Carrie Westlund, President of Travel Lane County, the marketing contractor for the County, told the Council that for every dollar of transient room tax collected by county businesses in 2014, \$36 was returned to the County's economy, which saw \$609 million in spending by visitors last year. Those numbers translate to close to 10,000 local jobs, Westlund said. Data showed that visitors spent 40 percent of their money on food and beverages, 15 percent on retail purchases and 13

percent on transportation and fuel.

Locally, Cottage Grove showcased its fourth year of record transient room tax collection, Westlund said, pointing to increased local stays in hotels and motels in addition to campgrounds, which also collect room taxes. The City collected \$254,000 in room tax last year, she said, contributing \$60,000 to Travel Lane County.

"We're trying to drive overnight stays, because overnight visitors tend to spend more, even though the majority of overnight visitors still stay in private homes," Westlund said. She said Travel Lane County is also promoting package leisure vacations and conventions. A company called Sports Leisure Vacations, she said, is planning its third covered bridge tour in the area in 2016.

"Your community has a lot of strong assets," Westlund said, pointing out that visitors to the Travel Lane County

website sought out information on Cottage Grove from homes in Eugene and Springfield but also from Portland, Seattle and San Francisco. "You're becoming the definition of a covered bridge tour."

"There's no other place that can get close to you in terms of the covered bridges or the scenic bikeway," she said. "These attractions really draw the soft adventure crowd, and promotion efforts have played on the covered bridges and access to wine country."

Natalie Inouye, Travel Lane County's Vice President of Tourism Marketing, said a packed schedule of summer events also helps to ensure that there's always something for visitors to see and do locally.

"You've done it better than most towns," Inouye said. You've got a series of events that really showcases the heart of this community."

Cooperation was key in severe 2015 fire season, says Department of Forestry

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Short days, frigid temperatures and recent rainfall may have dulled memories of the summer of 2015 for many, but looking back, it's easy to remember that dry months followed by intense heat created a tinder box effect and an extremely active fire season this year.

The Oregon Department of Forestry responded to many of the season's most dangerous blazes, and in a recent report entitled "Oregon's coordinated wildfire system pays dividends in severe 2015 season," ODF detailed the cooperation that it says is necessary to fight fires before their threat to lives and property intensifies. Calling the summer a "witches' brew of drought, hot weather and dry lightning," the report points out that these conditions spawned more than 2000 wildfires in Oregon alone,

fires that consumed "some 631,000 acres of forest and rangeland."

"In a massive coordinated effort, the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and its local and federal partners fought back, stopping hundreds of new fire starts at small size and preventing many large blazes from growing into megafires," it stated, continuing that the state's ownership pattern, a "a spider web of intermingled public and private lands," demands such cooperation.

According to the ODF news release, the agency deployed eight incident management teams to support fire suppression efforts across the state in 2015. The Oregon National Guard supplied several helicopters and flight crews, other equipment and 375 personnel to form 18 fire hand crews. The state fire marshals' office provided three structural fire teams, the Department of Corrections provided 330 inmates from 10 institutions to fight fire and support

fire camp operations. Resources such as personnel, equipment and aircraft came in from the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, 27 states and two Canadian Provinces.

John Wooten, Chief of South Lane Fire and Rescue, said he saw that cooperation firsthand throughout the summer.

"The best way to attack a fire is to share resources," Wooten said. "There's not any one single agency that possesses all the resources to handle a larger fire."

The Department of Forestry, he said, contracts the use of a helicopter that can be used to dump water onto fires, in addition to air tankers and a bulldozer, equipment that South Lane could not afford to own.

"We don't have this equipment, and if a fire is capable of working its way into ODF's wooded areas, they can bring it to bear," he said. "But if we call



Sentinel file photo

Access to equipment such as this helicopter, which helped fight a fire outside Lorane in August, is a welcome aspect of collaboration between agencies that fight fires.

them, we have to pay for it." Wooten explained that the Department of Forestry mainly represents the

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