Council

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around them." Sharon Jean was recognized for six years' effort to establish a Sunday soup kitchen at the Cottage Grove Community Center. Don Strahan received an award for his "work on many bike projects and dedication toward the upkeep of our Rails to Trails Project, better known as the Row River Trail," while Danny and Candace Solesbee, owners and recent refurbishers of three downtown buildings, were recognized for projects that are "helping to turn our Main Street from one that people can't wait to get through to one they want to stay for a while or longer," according to Munroe.

State of the City

The address ticked off a list of events and accomplishments that colored the calendar year 2015. Munroe mentioned the Oregon Mayors Conference that came to town amid sweltering temperatures in July, the Eugene Symphony's visit that same month, the "Main Street Project," or the passage by the City Council of the Main Street Refinement Plan, a grant received by the City for its Water Protection Plan and maintenance projects such as the cleanup of the bell tower at All-America City Square.

Cottage Grove's Community Center has once again experienced a busy year, Munroe said, with the Genealogical Society moving into new headquarters there. The library was also a busy place in 2015, he said. The Mayor saluted volunteers who responded to the needs brought about by frigid winter weather.

"The way people in and around our great town come forward with help is amazing," he said.

Tobacco ordinance postponed

Those who attended Monday's meeting to see the Council deliberate on a tobacco licensing program proposed by the Lane County Health Department may wish to return to the Council's Monday, Jan. 25 meeting. With the absence of one councilor and one position still unfilled, the Council voted to table deliberations on the program, which the County has said will help curb the rise of tobacco use among young people, until its next meeting.

TSP approved

The Council did unanimously pass one major agenda item on Monday, an ordinance to amend the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and adopt the 2015 Transportation System Plan update. The TSP, as it's known, is necessary because the City needed a planning document for its transportation systems that take into account the recent expansion of its Urban Growth Boundary, Community Development Director Howard Schesser said. The Council examined the TSP at a worksession in December, and an engineering consultant and representative with the Oregon Department of Transportation were on hand to review its recommendations, which often deal with problem areas in the City where accidents or poor driving are common. The section of Highway 99 between the Cottage Grove Connector and Woodson Bridge receives much scrutiny in the TSP, and it recommends a roundabout as the best way to reconfigure the intersection at the Connector.

On Monday, the Council was reminded that, since the agenda item to update the TSP has been available for one week, a unanimous vote could approve the plan in one meeting. A unanimous vote for approval immediately followed.

In other business, the Council voted for an annual increase in the City's SDCs, or Systems Development Charges, which are levied on developers in the City to offset the added cost their developments will incur for City systems such as water, sewer, etc. The increase of 1.63 percent in SDCs drew a response from Councilor Mike Fleck, who said that high SDCs are "absolutely impacting development in our community."

"We need to lower that, so I won't be supporting this," Fleck said. "We should be looking at reducing or fees by about 25 percent overall to encourage development."

Shooting

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On Monday, Interim Cottage Grove Police Chief Scott Shepherd said that all indications point to an accidental shooting as the cause of Ledford's death. Police had elected to re-interview the two witnesses to the incident, he said, due to discrepancies in information that had come to light since then. Police have declined to name the shooter in the case.

"Even given that they were reportedly close, considering each other brothers by many accounts, we still have the responsibility to investigate," Shepherd said. "There could be components of negligence or the improper handling of a firearm, anything from involuntary manslaughter to unlawful possession of a weapon. It's still an evolving investigation that could depend on more information going forward, but it's clearly a tragic situation on many levels."

Shepherd said the case has also been forwarded to the Lane County District Attorney's Office for further review. Meanwhile, friends and family plan to say good-bye to Ledford at a funeral scheduled this Friday, Jan. 15 at 1 p.m. at Smith-Lund-Mills Funeral Chapel in Cottage Grove.

Joyce

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whatever He hears [from the Father….]"

One way we learn how to hear the Holy Spirit is by understanding that He has emotions and He can be grieved. Ephesians 4:30 (AMP) says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God [do not offend or vex or sadden Him]…." Because He lives in us, when He feels grieved, we will feel it too.

Ephesians 4:29-31 (AMP) lists some behaviors that cause Him to be grieved: foul, polluting language; evil, unwholesome, worthless talk; bitterness, indignation, wrath, rage, a bad temper, resentment, anger, quarreling, contention and slander. So when we choose to think and speak in ways that go against His nature, we will feel conviction, and the best thing we can do is confess our sin and repent immediately.

James 3 teaches that no one can "tame the tongue" and sometimes we make mistakes and say wrong things. But we can learn from our mistakes; we can pray and ask God to help us only say things that are right and pleasing to Him.

I know it's easy to be insensitive and say the wrong things sometimes. The other day I was wearing a blouse that didn't fit me right, and I said to someone, "This thing is way too big for me but it would probably fit you." Afterward, I couldn't believe I said it!

The Bible teaches us that "no one can tame the tongue" (James 3:8). We need to pray for God to help us hear His voice, giving us wisdom and direction in the thoughts we choose to think about and the words we speak. As our Counselor, He wants to guide us in everything we do, and we can learn how to hear His voice. So listen for the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart. You'll hear it as you wait quietly in His presence, while you're studying His Word, in your circumstances and even through nature.

Odell

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handfuls of it until we watched our daughter do so for most of two afternoons. By Saturday morning, we'd strapped on the cross-country skis, renting a pair for the kiddo at the lodge for a modest fee and skied from the front door of the cabin out toward the miles of groomed trails behind the lake. She took to the skis like a natural, amazing both her mother and me, though at times she'd still stop, drop both poles and plop down face-first to munch more snow.

With such proximity to groomed trails, we'd go for a quick ski, return to the cabin for a rest and a snack and head out again. On Saturday, with the cabins and lodge full of winter revelers, the sledding and snowball fights continued long into the evening, and we partied until exhaustion told us we could take no more. It's rare to encounter an excursion that's so easy to enjoy.

If you're interested

Odell Lake Lodge and Resort offers a variety of affordable accommodations, from small, rustic cabins to larger ones for group stays. In the summer, a row of campsites also sees lots of use. More information can be obtained by visiting odell-lakeresort.com.

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