



Victory!

Girls' basketball downs tough Falcons, page 1B

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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FLOOD CONTROL



photo by Jon Stinnett

Dustin Bengston, Deputy Operations Project Manager for the 13 dams managed by the Army Corps of Engineers, examines the spillway gates at Lookout Point Dam. Four of the five gates were recently refurbished.

Dams help Corps go with the flow

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

In one room of a multi-story building beneath the hulking figure of the Lookout Point Dam near Dexter — a building where the elevator travels to floors labeled by their elevation above sea level — a series of computer screens showcases the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' efforts to control the waters of the Willamette River and its tributaries.

There are screens in this control room

for nine of the 13 dams in the Willamette Valley that the Corps manages primarily to alleviate the risk of flooding during Oregon's wet winter months, and operators are on hand 24/7 to gather real-time weather and other data, information that can be used to collect water behind the dams to alleviate the risk of flooding downstream or release water to empty a reservoir in anticipation of the next rain event. Dorena and Cottage Grove Reservoirs, which are used to manage the waters of the Row and the Coast Fork of

the Willamette River, are just two of the dams that the Corps operates remotely from this location.

"During storm events, it can be really intense," the operator on duty says. "You always have to be ready, and when it's intense, it's really intense."

Dustin Bengston, who serves as the Deputy Operations Project Manager for the 13 dams in the Willamette system, touts the recreational benefits that its

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Council passes tobacco license ordinance

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council voted 6-1 in favor of an ordinance that will create a licensing program for the City's tobacco retailers Monday night, introduced originally by the Lane County Health Department in early 2015.

The main purpose of the program is to help deter youth from being tempted into buying tobacco products. Health Officer Dr. Patrick Leudtke of the Health Department explained that data from 2014 showed that use had increased in the area among 11th-grade students for seven out of eight different varieties of tobacco products.

City Councilor Jake Boone was the only one who voted against the ordinance, but his opposition did not go without reason. His issue, stated in previous Council meetings, was that youth and first-time users usually don't get cigarettes or tobacco products from retail stores.

"I don't see the reason to take more money from people who are at least following the rules," he said.

Eighteen-year old Jordan Richards spoke in favor of the ordinance. Richards pointed out that tobacco products are advertised next to candy ads and packaged in specific ways to appeal to children.

"Children and teens are bombarded by tobacco products and advertisements when they walk into a store," he said. Richards pointed out that the ordinance will also ban the sale of tobacco products within 1,000 feet of a school. "This helps by preventing children from being tempted."

Before the ordinance was voted on, Boone tried to make clear of his opposition. "I'm still against it, but since I've already state my reasons...that's all," he said. The program will be in effect in 30 days.

Also inside:



Cascade crew

Home Centers' new owners settle in, page 3A



Replenish the Roses

Get out the shears; it's pruning time, page 11A

Smithsonian traveling exhibit to explore what it means to be human

Cottage Grove Library is exhibit's only Oregon stop and one of just 19 stops nationwide

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Late last week, personnel at the Cottage Grove Library received an exciting message: The exhibit is on its way.

Beginning next Wednesday, Feb. 17, the Library will host a traveling exhibit entitled "Exploring Human Origins: What Does It Mean to be Human?" an installation brought to Cottage Grove by the Smithsonian Institution, the American Library Association and the John Templeton Foundation, for a slew of both public and private events scheduled well into March.

On Thursday of last week, the exhibit began a trip south from Spokane, Washington, and Cottage Grove Community Services Director Pete Barrell said he's excited that it will make its only Oregon stop and one of only 19

nationwide here. Barrell wrote a grant to the American Library Association to bring the exhibit to Cottage Grove, and he said an ongoing relationship with the ALA that has brought exhibits dedicated to Abraham Lincoln and other subjects to town in the past could only have helped land such a prestigious exhibit this time.

"We're a rural library, and they probably wanted to offer a little bit of diversity," Barrell said. "We have a good track record with the ALA."

Briana Pobiner, a paleoanthropologist with the Smithsonian who studies the evolution of the human diet, recently returned from a trip to Africa, where she spent time examining fossil bones to uncover evidence that early humans had been eating animals. Pobiner, who will participate in many of the upcoming events in Cottage Grove, said the exhibit and its related happenings are

meant as a conversation-starter.

"It's focused on human evolution and the characteristics that make us unique as a species," Pobiner said. "But it's really all about the programming as a springboard for conversation. It's about the intersection of the scientific understanding of evolution with other forms of understanding."

To that end, the exhibit's run in Cottage Grove will begin on Wednesday, Feb. 17 with a special event for clergy, where Pobiner and a colleague, Dr. Rick Potts, will join members of the local clergy to discuss the Smithsonian's presentation of the science of human origins. Many belief systems posit that the Earth is only 6000 years old, and Barrell said he's already heard impassioned comments from community

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photo courtesy Smithsonian Human Origins Program

Visiting scientists will present the scientific evidence for human evolution, which they hope can meld with other forms of understanding during conversations scheduled this month.

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CONTACT US

On the Internet www.cgsentinel.com
By telephone (541) 942-3325
By fax (541) 942-3328
By e-mail cgsentinel@gmail.com
By mail P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424
In person Corner of Sixth and Whiteaker, Cottage Grove

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