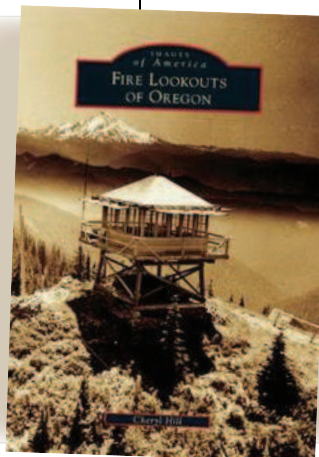


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New book chronicles some of the area's iconic structures, page 6A

Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2016

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

VOLUME 128 • NUMBER 37

Full-day K challenging students, teachers

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

South Lane School District administrators say they plan to meet with some of the District's kindergarten teachers this week to address the challenges brought on by offering a full day of instruction to its youngest students.

The District fulfilled a state mandate to offer full-day kindergarten beginning this school year, though a report given to the School Board Monday night proved that the transition has been anything but smooth sailing.

In fact, Chad Hamilton, South Lane's Special Education Director, stated that the change to a full day of kindergarten has been "tough for very seasoned professionals."

Part of the challenge, Hamilton said, could be illustrated using the results of a kindergarten readiness assessment conducted by the state of Oregon. He called South Lane's results on the assessment "mediocre," adding that this District's results were lower than most in the area.

"This explains why we're seeing so much stress in our teachers; our kids are struggling," Hamilton said. Before entering kindergarten, he said, students come to South Lane below the county and state average in the most basic math skills. With regard to literacy, incoming students recognize

far fewer letter shapes and sounds than the state and county averages and fewer than all comparable area schools.

Superintendent Krista Parent said the District is having internal discussions about solutions, including how it might better allocate the services of its educational assistants. Staggering the start of school for some students in the fall based on their preparedness and stamina was also discussed.

"We are aware of the situation, but we don't have the perfect answer," said Parent. She said that many teachers don't believe they're able to introduce more academic instruction into a full day of kindergarten "because of what they're experiencing in the afternoon."

"Kids don't have the stamina and behavior skills to be functional, and teachers are spending their afternoons dealing with those issues as opposed to teaching," she said.

Parent said the District made a mistake in not doubling the allocation of educational assistant time for full-day kindergarten classrooms.

"It should've been obvious that we needed to double the EA time," she said. "We have several teachers saying they don't want to teach kindergarten anymore because it's too hard. We're really going back to the drawing board."



Taking the hike

photo courtesy Greg Lee

Log House Plants employees Margarita and her daughter Jessica plant vegetable starts. Log House owner Greg Lee said the company may have to adjust prices as the minimum wage continues to rise.

Local business owners react to minimum wage increase

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

As executive director of Cottage Grove's Chamber of Commerce, Travis Palmer speaks frequently with local business owners about the issues and challenges they face. Lately, he said local entrepreneurs have had a lot to say about the increase in Oregon's minimum wage that was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown last week.

"I haven't heard anything positive," Palmer said. He said the Chamber itself has not taken a position on the increase, though

many of its members have reacted with "strongly negative" feedback.

The bill, signed on Wednesday, will raise the state's minimum wage — at \$9.25 per hour, it's already one of the nation's highest — incrementally and to varying degrees in different parts of the state. In counties like Lane, the minimum is expected to increase to \$13.50 per hour by 2022. Rural areas will see an increase to \$12.50 over time, while inside the urban growth boundary of the Portland metropolitan area, the minimum wage is expected to increase to \$14.75 per hour. The

law takes effect on July 1, and a \$.50 per hour hike will take effect along with it.

Palmer said he and local business owners worry that the area's small businesses will be unable to cope with the added payroll costs brought on by the increase and will thus find themselves at a competitive disadvantage.

"Employers may be able to hire less people, and I worry that people who might otherwise start a small business might not do so because of the added cost," he said.

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Also inside:



Buzzer-beater!

Last-second shot sends Lions onward, page 1B



Tryout trip

Local dancer hopes to make it big, page 3A

Inaugural CG Half Marathon shows its speed Saturday morning

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A light smattering of rain just prior to start time was all that materialized of a day of expected showers for the over 160 runners and walkers who journeyed from Dorena School to Trailhead Park in Cottage Grove as part of the inaugural Cottage Grove Half Marathon Saturday.

One runner, Kathy Andrews, traveled all the way from Tallahassee, Florida to compete; Andrews joined a large contingent from the Eugene/Springfield area and a strong showing from Cottage Grove and Creswell, towns that boasted nearly 30 of the day's competitors. The race's male and female winners, however, hailed from Bend.

At 8 a.m., several school buses left Bohemia Park bound for Dorena; the race staged at Dorena School and began at 9 a.m. Sponsored by Banner Bank, it served as a fundraiser for United Way of Lane County. The top finisher sped into Cottage Grove not long after 10 a.m., covering the 13.1

mile course in a little over an hour. Flagger met competitors at each road crossing, and there were several aid stations along the way offering water and electrolyte drinks.

The course was flat and fast one, by all accounts. Organizer Mike Ripley said the event went off with few hitches, though Ripley said a sign he brought to alert drivers to the presence of runners on the road — a sign valued at over \$200 — was stolen prior to the race. Ripley said he also recognized the need for more restrooms. He will now look forward to the Oregon Gran Fondo, another signature event of his company, Mudslinger Events, that serves to showcase Cottage Grove to area cyclists.

Ripley said plans are already underway for next year's Cottage Grove Half Marathon, which is scheduled for March 11, 2017. Registration opens in September, and more information is available at cottagegrovehalf.com.

More coverage and results from the race can be found in this week's sports section.



photo by Greg Lee

Runners synchronize their watches and phones to the race clock while taking off at the start of the Cottage Grove Half Marathon Saturday. Over 160 participants signed up for the 13.1-mile journey from Dorena back to Cottage Grove; the race raised funds for United Way of Lane County.

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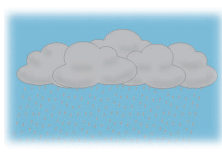
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