

## LCC

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mented enrollment figures, LCC finds itself searching for its "new normal," and not just in Cottage Grove, according to Mary Jeanne Kuhar, Executive Dean of LCC's School of Professional and Technical Careers.

"Enrollment is a big, broad, gnarly problem that everybody's struggling with, not just Lane,"

Kuhar said.

The geographical area served by Lane Community College is a large one, and satellite campuses such as Cottage Grove's (LCC has had a presence here since the 1970s; its current campus opened in 1995) were meant to bring the college's education opportunities closer to rural students.

Kuhar said community college enrollment tends to rise and fall

with the condition of the economy, and the economic downturn that began affecting this area in earnest in late 2008 led to a large increase in enrollment as frustrated workers returned to school to hone their skills. Data provided by LCC shows that the rise in enrollment peaked in the 2011-12 school year, after which numbers began and have continued to fall.

"The decrease happened

slowly over a couple years, and we thought that it was probably going to end up where it had been before the recession. But at Lane, it just continued to drop, and we haven't yet found our 'new normal,'" Kuhar said.

During peak enrollment at LCC's Eugene campus, Kuhar said many students living in the Eugene/Springfield area were actually coming to Cottage Grove to take core classes due to crowding at the main campus. But Cottage Grove's enrollment has declined a whopping 80 percent since that peak. And Kuhar said the reasons why may in fact be quite complex.

"It is difficult to know all the factors that affect enrollment, but some factors at play may be changes in federal financial aid requirements, decreasing local high school graduation rates, perceived loss of value for a college degree, flattening state support and an improving economy and employment," she said.

Still, Lida Herburger, who has been the director at LCC Cottage Grove for about a year, said that the direct path from high school to college for young people hasn't really been the norm here in the past, either. She pointed out that the average

age of an LCC student is 28.

"The traditional path from high school to college isn't traditional anymore," Herburger said.

In response to the drop in enrollment, LCC has offered fewer credit classes in Cottage Grove in favor of continued education courses that tend to appeal to an older audience with more disposable income, and a list of offerings these days includes an introduction to mime and light sabers. A recent series on historic preservation was well received, Herburger said, as are classes offered by the Booher family of musicians on musical improvisation.

Cottage Grove's campus still offers amenities that are useful for area students taking classes for credit, Herburger said, such as the ability to interact with an academic advisor, take tests locally and utilize computer labs. Tuition costs also tend to be much lower than a four-year university.

"For the surrounding communities, for a student in Dorena, not having to drive that extra 20-plus minutes into Eugene is a big benefit," she said.

But Herburger said the college has attempted to offer lots

of classes that haven't gone over as well as expected.

"We need a critical mass of students to make them work," she said. "And the numbers aren't really huge. Ten or 15 students are all we would need in some classes."

Facing an uncertain future, both Kuhar and Herburger said that LCC remains committed to its Cottage Grove campus.

"Lane is interested in working with Cottage Grove to see what offerings can be most beneficial," Kuhar said. "We want the center to be vibrant, filled with students. But what we do here depends on what the community wants."

To that end, LCC has begun a process of outreach to gauge the community's needs and wants regarding its campus, and the formation of an advisory committee is also underway.

"We've done some outreach to the CG Chamber and other organizations to try to figure out what our niche is," Herburger said. "We want to see what's out there, what people in Cottage Grove really want. The center in Cottage Grove has a lot to offer, and we want it to be a benefit for everybody."

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## BUDGET

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complaint basis, most frequently in regard to the overgrowth of yards and other vegetation that happens in the early summertime. The City could be more proactive about dealing with nuisances, particularly in its "limbo houses," if it hired someone to seek out and deal with nuisances before a complaint is issued, Meyers said.

## SAFE

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Church of Christ on Gibbs Pastor Aaron Earlywine and Cottage Grove Faith Center Pastor Isaac Hovet were part of the kickoff ceremony. Their churches got excited about the Safe Families after a 90by30 Child Abuse Prevention Initiative presentation last fall.

Meyers also said that the City will remain open to the idea of a bond to address road repairs. The City's general budget does not include enough funding for major renovations, and many of its arterial roads that handle the most traffic are in terrible shape. The gas tax that is earmarked for road repairs barely keeps up with basic maintenance and cannot fund renovations, Meyers said, pointing out that the

current budget will only include about \$320,000 in gas tax revenue.

"The Council may be looking at what the School District and Fire District have chosen to do lately," Meyers said. "They use their tax money to finance their day-to-day operations, and when they need equipment, they do a bond to pay for it. That's what the Council seemed to be saying."

Hovet said, "In Luke 18, Jesus' love for children is revealed. We love our town and it's a privilege to recognize and participate in this important service. We are excited and praying, full of faith that we are going to make a positive difference and change a child's future for the best."

Earlywine added, "This pro-

gram is important because it allow us to meet the needs of a family in crisis upstream with intervention before a tragedy happens."

For additional information or to register your interest, go to [www.Safe-Families.org](http://www.Safe-Families.org), or email [AngelaA@cafeweb.com](mailto:AngelaA@cafeweb.com) or call 541-686-6000, ext. 870.

# EASTER SUNDAY CELEBRATION

## March 27, 2016

**Delight Valley Church of Christ**  
33087 Saginaw Road East, Cottage Grove  
541-942-7711

9:00-10:30am	Free Breakfast
9:00-10:30am	Free Easter pictures
& After Service	Props available, pictures received on the spot!
10:30-Noon-ish	Worship Service – in the Gym
11:00am-Noonish	Kid's Program – in the Chapel
Noonish	Easter Egg Hunt (after Worship Service lets out)

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