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

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Council mulls needle exchange program

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council requested that a worksession be scheduled to hear more specifics about a potential needle exchange program in this community at its Monday night meeting.

The Council heard from Jim Tandrow, a physician who spoke on behalf of the HIV Alliance, which operates exchange programs in Eugene, Roseburg, Grants Pass and Brookings. These programs exchange used syringes for clean ones, Tandrow said, a growing need thanks to a burgeoning use of intravenous drugs such as heroin.

"It's all about public safety and health," Tandrow said. "IV drug use is increasing astronomically along with opiate abuse in general and the number of overdose deaths."

Last year, the HIV Alliance exchanged 150,000 used needles for clean ones, he said, while acknowledging that there has been a "public objection" to such pro-

grams in many areas.

"I think that's changing," Tandrow said. "I think people realize a program like this is important. I've discussed this with (City Manager) Richard Meyers and the police chief, and they mentioned incidents where city workers and police officers received inadvertent needle sticks from contaminated syringes. It is agreed there's a problem with them being left in public spaces."

The site for such a program is critical, Tandrow pointed out, as anonymity is prized by many who would exchange needles there, a need that would be doubly important in a small town where "everybody knows everybody."

"People arrive there to do business," he said. "They're not there for a social event. They get their equipment and leave."

Tandrow asked the Council to mull potential locations where an exchange could be set up or a mobile van could be located for an exchange, or at the very least where a drop box for used

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CLEARING THE CAMPS



photo by Jon Stinnett

Police officers Steven Biehler, Sean Branstetter, Tami Miles and Josh Dumas walk through a camp by the Coast Fork on the northern edge of Cottage Grove. Police say they're warning campers that it's time to go.

Police warning illegal campers

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

On a dazzling spring Thursday morning, Cottage Grove Police Officers Sean Branstetter, Tami Miles, Steven Biehler and Josh Dumas gather near their patrol vehicles at a turnout along Highway 99 on the northern edge of the City. Soon, the officers walk a winding trail that quickly slopes down and off the highway and across the nearby railroad tracks. Not far in the distance, the Coast Fork of the Willamette River sparkles in the sunshine.

Soon, the trail approaches a collection of tents among a camp littered with piles of debris, and two officers approach

the first tents, knocking on their door flaps to the best of their ability as they announce their presence.

"Hello! Cottage Grove Police!" they half-shout, approaching first one tent and then another in a collection of what appear to be about a half-dozen distinctive camps. Tarps have been erected at the entrance of most tents; some have clotheslines nearby, and piles of rubble — suitcases, coolers, bike parts, old camping equipment and lots and lots of trash — surround most of the makeshift dwellings. Officers warn of the possibility of human feces and used syringes in the area, but on this day, there are none to be easily observed.

At the last tent, a motion sensor announces the police presence, though there appears to be nobody home throughout the camp. At the end of the trail, a rope dangling from a tree spans the width of the river, and on the other side of the Coast Fork, a group of golfers can be seen approaching one of Middlefield Oaks' manicured greens.

For the past several weeks now, police say they've been visiting this camp and a similar one on the south end of town that's also on private property near the river and Cottage Grove High School. With each visit, they bring a simple message they say needs to be delivered in person to the camps' inhabitants — it's time

to move on.

The visits are part of an effort to curb illegal camping in the Cottage Grove area, in these camps and other locations such as under the City's bridges, according to Interim Police Chief Scott Shepherd. Until recently, the City believed that the camp north of town was located outside the City Limits on property under the purview of Lane County; when the City discovered that the camp was actually on land owned by the Cottage Grove Speedway and that the Speedway's ownership did not appreciate the campers' presence there, police began visiting the camp to advise them

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First Lady plants Territorial turnips

Personnel with Cottage Grove-based Territorial Seed Company got a welcome surprise last week with news that some of their turnip seeds had been planted at the White House by First Lady Michelle Obama.

Territorial's Mel Reynolds informed the Sentinel on Friday that White House culinary histo-

rian/photographer Eddie Gehman Kohan tweeted the company a photo of Obama planting Territorial seeds in a raised bed with two youngsters nearby.

"Want to #TurnipForWhat like @FLOTUS in YOUR Veg-Garden? She planted @TerritorialSeed Just Right Hybrid turnips at WH," the tweet stated.

The tweet can be viewed at:

<https://twitter.com/ObamaFoodorama/status/718091498487685121>.

South Lane Fire banquet honors its outstanding contributors



courtesy photo

Retiree Steve Pettit was recognized for 36 years of service.

South Lane County Fire and Rescue recognized the accomplishments of its career and volunteer personnel over the last year at its annual awards banquet, held Saturday evening at the Village Green Resort and Gardens.

Division Chief Joe Raade explained that the evening is a chance for the Fire District to say thank-you to its personnel and celebrate their contributions to district operations.

Several firefighters/paramedics were recognized for reaching milestones of service to the District, while two — 10-year veteran Jake Williamson and 30-year veteran Steve Pettit — were honored on the occasion of their retirement.

South Lane recognizes the firefighter that puts in the most volunteer hours with its Drill Award, won this year by Josh Fountain; the Career Commitment to Community Award recognizes commitments

to the community outside basic firefighting duties, and Raade said the winner, Doug Lyda, earned the honor for his work with Toys for Tots and SLFR's car seat clinics. One of the most prestigious honors for the evening, the Volunteer of the Year Award, went to Cliff Horton, who gives of his time in Creswell despite having a full-time job; Horton's wife, Tessa, was honored as Rookie of the Year.

The complete list of honors is as follows:

Years of service

35 Years — Danny Solesbee
30 Years — Bill Parsons
25 Years — Paul Hughes
15 Years — Matt Millam, Joe Millam
10 Years — Doug Lyda
Five Years — Aaron Smith, Tim Heuser

Retirement recognition

Steve Pettit — 36 Years
Jake Williamson — 10 Years

Rookie Of The Year

Tessa Horton

2016 Drill Award

Josh Fountain

Career Commitment To Volunteer Training

Brad Mabie/Joe Millam

Ems Awards

EMT — Cliff Horton

Career Commitment To Community: Doug Lyda

Volunteer Of The Year

Cliff Horton

Fire Chiefs Award

Aaron Smith



courtesy photo

Cliff Horton was named Volunteer of the Year.

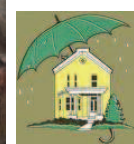
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WEATHER



Mostly Cloudy

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58

LOW

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