

# 'Oregon Beauty' kicks off Art Walk season

Friday marked the year's first Art Walk in the historic downtown district of Cottage Grove. The walk featured a variety of artists such as Springfield resident Sarah Bast (right), who moved to Oregon in 2007 from New Hampshire and fell in love with the beauty of the state. Bast focuses on acrylic paintings of farm animals, as she is very enthusiastic about the agricultural industry. Other art featured mediums such as sterling and copper jewelry, yarn art, pine needle basketry, photography, pencil drawings and even tattoo art from Studio Tattoo.



photo by Sam Wright

# County officials present plan to collaborate with rural communities

Talk of a liaison with rural governments is presented

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Lane County officials approached the Cottage Grove City Council at its April 25 meeting with a promise to bolster relations between the two governments and work toward common goals. County Administrator Steve Mohrisky and two Hatfield fellows tasked with analyzing the relationship between communities like Cottage Grove and the County presented a plan aimed at greater collaboration, a plan that featured the possibility of a liaison position to act as a bridge between the County and rural governments.

"We have some work to do in continuing to partner with rural communities in helping to support vibrant local economies," Mohrisky told the Council, several members of which were not shy in later sharing their skepticism that much attention would be paid to concerns outside the Eugene/Springfield area.

First, though, Mohrisky and the Hatfield fellows, Stephen Dobrinich and Aniko Drlik-Muehleck, told of a plan that was developed "as a result of the listening we've tried to do" with a focus on support and advocacy for rural communities. He said that lottery funds had been set aside during the County's upcoming budget process for a liaison position in an extension of a pilot project begun in Florence.

A Power Point presentation helped detail what the County sees as a collaborative effort at economic development that includes more than just efforts to recruit new businesses, including work to foster education and

a thriving Main Street. The challenges to such a relationship included the lack of time and resources dedicated to such efforts, as well as a lack of communication and coordination.

"Communities were not feeling connected to the County," said Drlik-Muehleck. "They had no idea what was going on, and the communities didn't know what each other were doing."

She said that another shortage involved capacity and expertise, pointing out that most rural communities cannot afford to fund staff dedicated to economic development efforts. Infrastructure shortcomings including deteriorating roads and lack of access to high-speed Internet service were also noted as barriers to stronger rural economies.

Further, Drlik-Muehleck said that Lane County lacks a coordinated strategy for economic development, adding that rural towns harbor a "perception of invisibility" that makes them feel that they are consistently overlooked.

During their time to provide reactions to the County's presentation, several Councilors agreed with that statement.

"We're the third-largest community in Lane County," Mayor Tom Munroe said. "You've got to get more towns involved; it can't just be Eugene and Springfield."

"Lane County is an arm of Eugene and Springfield," said Councilor Garland Burback. "Whatever Eugene/Springfield wants is what Lane County does. Unless they can prove different, I don't see anything changing."

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# New city website (still at cottagetrove.org) goes live

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The City of Cottage Grove's online presence underwent a significant transformation last week, as a new city webpage went live on Tuesday, April 26.

City Manager Richard Meyers wrote in the City's Friday Update publication (which itself has a new look on the new website and will now be managed by subscription) that the site, which is still located at www.

cottagetrove.org, went live with "only a few issues." The new site brings all of the City's pages — including city functions, police, the Cottage Grove Library and Middlefield Golf Course — together in one location.

"It is designed to easily be edited and modified so it will always be a work in progress," Meyers wrote, adding that much of the information that needs to be transferred from the old site has already been moved.

Last month, Meyers announced that the City would be

"going to Google" for its new site and email services. The new page was designed by Lake Oswego-based Aha Consulting and was expected to cost between \$6800 and \$8000. The City's internet technologies services will be handled through the Lane Council of Governments, which has facilitated the move to the new website. The transition ends the City's relationship with locally based Oregon Internet Properties for these services.

Meyers said he expects cloud-based storage to benefit the City,

which must keep track of emails and other public documents for long periods. Information can be added to the new site by anyone, which means that Meyers no longer has to code information for the site himself.

At its April 25 meeting, the City Council was advised that its members' email accounts would be down during the transition and that they would soon receive new tablets to access their email.

# House fire damages rural home

No injuries were reported by South Lane County Fire and Rescue as the result of a house fire that displaced a family on Adams Road Thursday.

The department was called to a report of a structure fire in the 78000 block of Adams just before 11 a.m. Thursday, where crews first on scene discovered heavy smoke and flames coming from the second floor of the home.

According to a press release, crews were able to extinguish the fire and contain it to the home's second floor, though the first floor did sustain moderate smoke and water damage.

The home was reportedly occupied by two adults and two children, though no injuries were reported. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.



courtesy photo

Fire crews battled a blaze on Adams Road Thursday.

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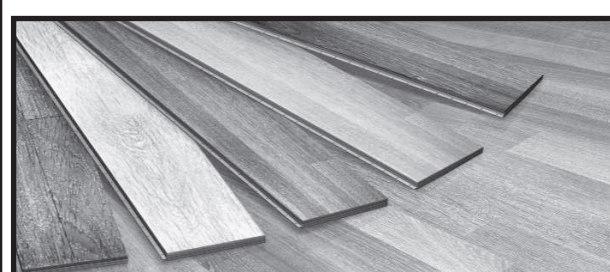


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