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Sky-Em fight intensifies

Showdown with Elmira will help decide league champ, page 1B

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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

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SLSD budget approved, but questions remain

Amount of carryover for the following year as-yet undetermined

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A committee dedicated to examining South Lane School District's budget for the 2016-17 school year unanimously passed a balanced budget Monday night, though it remains to be seen how ongoing negotiations with the District's teachers may affect the budget carryover for the following year.

In her message to the Budget Committee, South Lane Superintendent Krista Parent outlined the factors that have led to a lesser-than-anticipated contribution to the District's budget from Oregon's State School Fund, including declining enrollment and adjustments to the way the state calculates the number of students living in poverty and reimburses the District for the

experience level of its teachers. Parent said South Lane's enrollment has decreased by 140 students in a two-year time period, and since the state funds education on a per-student basis, the decline means less funding for the District, to the tune of about \$525,000.

"The loss of enrollment is occurring as 12th-grade classes leave the system with more than 200 students per class and incoming kindergarten replaces those classes with enrollments of 160 students," Parent said.

The state's new method for "calculating poverty" has also caused a nearly \$200,000 reduction from last year, and the reduction in the District's average experience level among its teachers as older teachers retire has led to another decrease.

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Council passes on needle exchange program

Presentation from head of HIV Alliance fails to persuade

BY GORDON OKUMU
For the Sentinel

On Monday, the Cottage Grove City Council listened to a presentation from Renee Yandel, the Program Director of the HIV Alliance supporting the proposal for a 'needle exchange' program in the city.

This was a second meeting between the City Council and The HIV Alliance on the proposed needle exchange program. Previously, the Council listened to Jim Tandrow, a physician who spoke on behalf of the HIV Alliance but was unable to convince them.

By the end of Jim Tandrow's presentation, Mayor Tom Munroe said the Council should have a second meeting before voting; hence the decision to have Yandel join a worksession and make a presentation that would help the Council decide.

The HIV Alliance is a non-profit organization formed in 1994 to support individuals living with HIV/AIDS and work to prevent new HIV infections.

In her presentation, Yandel said the program is all about public safety and health and suggested that the City Council should support it.

She went ahead to indicate that last year alone, The HIV

Alliance exchanged 150,000 used needles for clean ones while acknowledging that there has been a "public objection" to such programs in many areas.

From the previous presentation, Tandrow indicated that City Manager Richard Meyers and the police chief had mentioned incidents where city workers and police officers received inadvertent needle sticks from contaminated syringes, and it was agreed there's a problem with them being left in public spaces. However, this alone seems not to have convinced anyone at the Council, and Yandel tried to bring it forward again.

When asked by Interim Police Chief Scott Shepherd how their program would help reduce drug use, which the police chief indicated that has been in the rise since he started his career in 1995, Yandel said, "It's not really a choice between having people stop the use of drugs; we're looking how to avoid the spread of Hepatitis C and HIV through the needles used in injecting drugs."

Yandel asked the Council to consider potential locations where an exchange could be set up or a mobile van could be located for an exchange, or at the

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EVERY 15 MINUTES

photo by Sam Wright

Students gathered around the mock police scene as real coroners carried off a student playing dead as a result of the crash.

'Emotionally charged' mock car crash gives students unique perspective

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The rushing sounds of sirens and horns from emergency vehicles could be heard from Cottage Grove High School — always an ominous thing to hear about. But last week's sirens left a positive impression on CGHS students, as they were part of a mock drunk driving accident in the school's back parking lot.

The mock accident is part of a program called "Every 15 Minutes," which was organized in coordination with the Lane County Sheriff's

Office and aimed to show the devastation caused by drunk driving.

The program also implements a simulation of losing students. Leading up to the crash, someone dressed as the grim reaper would walk into any given classroom and pick a student to be essentially deceased. A police officer would then present an obituary written by that student's parents to the class that they were in.

"It's an attempt to give students a simulated experience of what it could be like," retired Sergeant Kevin Woodworth said. Woodworth acted as one of the leading coordi-

nators of the entire event.

Before the crash, the whole student body assembled in the main gym to hear a few words from Woodworth and Principal Iton Udosenata.

"Outside you'll see exactly how emergency personnel respond to these situations," Woodworth explained. Woodworth also acknowledged the students who had been "chosen" by the grim reaper, who were dressed in black cloaks, represented the real amount of people that died around the country in the time leading up to the mock crash.

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Briggs named new District Ranger

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The new District Ranger for the Cottage Grove Ranger District will have a lot on her plate when she shows up for work on June 13, though she's also looking forward to a little exploration of what this area has to offer.

Alice Carlton, supervisor of the Umpqua National Forest, announced last week that K.C. Briggs has been named the new District Ranger for Cottage Grove. Briggs, 43, comes to the Umpqua from the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest in Washington, where she currently serves as the Fisheries Biologist for the Cle Elum Ranger District. She replaces Joe Linn, who retired last December after three years as District Ranger.

Briggs will be responsible for managing resources on the 87,038-acre Cottage Grove District, a job that she said represents the "right fit" for her and her family.

"I had been looking at Ranger positions for a while," she said, "but I hadn't applied to the others because the 'right fit' was important. There are neat aspects of the Ranger District in Cottage Grove that are appealing, and I've heard that the group of folks I'll get to work with there are fantastic."

Briggs said she's aware of the complexity of many of the issues faced by the District.

"There is a rich history of mining there, and I'm excited to learn about some of the changes in policy that will affect things there," she said. "The Forest Service is working to implement certain projects surrounding issues that are challenging, but when everyone works together, we can find creative solutions and make progress."

In the meantime, Briggs said she's studying up on the area that she will now call her home and office.

"I'm a little bit familiar with the Willamette Valley," she said. "Most of my trips to Cottage

Grove so far have involved visits to Territorial Seed, but I know the area is beautiful and I'm excited to explore. I've been doing my homework about the trails nearby and the City of Cottage Grove."

"K.C. places a high value on building and maintaining strong relationships to find solutions through working together," said Carlton. "She is excited about meeting and working with community partners and employees of the Umpqua National Forest."

Briggs began her Forest Service career on the Mt. Hood National Forest in 2003 while simultaneously earning her degree in aquatics and fisheries biology from University of Washington. In 2005 she began working on the Willamette National Forest in fisheries. She then accepted the fisheries biologist position on the Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest in 2011.

She has experience through temporary assignments as a district ranger and in the civil rights

Also inside:

No vacancy
 Birds blamed for power outages relocate, page 3A

Fire-fighting
 Steps toward disaster preparedness, page 8A

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