

## Attention: Early deadlines

Early deadlines will be in place for the July 6 edition of the Sentinel. The newspaper asks that items for its July 6 edition be submitted by Thursday, June 30 at noon.



Search for man missing since 2012 continues, page 3A



Daytripper hears from noisy neighbors, page 8A

# 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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## BMX track torn down

City said facility had become dangerous after years of disuse

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A structure that has played host to youth activities and competitions for many years in Cottage Grove came down in mere minutes last week. Public Works Director Jan Wellman with the City of Cottage Grove said that the local BMX track, which existed on city land on the southeast edge of town since the 1980s, had become a "dangerous attraction" due to disuse and the deterioration of its buildings. City employees used a trackhoe and bulldozer that the City had rented for other projects and took down the

announcer's booth, bleachers and other facilities there, then leveled out much of the dirt that made up the track's twists and turns.

Wellman said the City had come across an agreement from 1984 whereby local BMX enthusiasts would rent the land for \$1 per year and develop the track. The track drew cyclist competitors from throughout the region. Following its demolition, many took to social media to express their regret that the structure was no more and lament the loss of another activity for area youth.

"I no longer live in Cottage Grove, but while I was there, all I did was go to

the track," one commenter said.

"It would be nice if they started it over," another said. "It was so popular when I was a kid growing up in CG... it's said that it's just another thing taken away from our youth."

The challenge to keeping the track up and operating, City Manager Richard Meyers told the Sentinel recently, was that over the years, groups of young people and their parents have utilized the track and invested in its success. Then, as those young people grew up, graduated from school and moved on to other concerns, interest and activity at the BMX track waned.

"There isn't sustainability to it,"



photo by Melissa Keenan

Public Works employees used a trackhoe to take out the announcer's booth and bleachers at the BMX track last week.

Meyers said.

"Nobody's taken responsibility for quite a while," Wellman said. Eugene-based Emerald Valley BMX hosted

events there for 3-4 years following a period of local inactivity, and a group

Please see **BMX**, Page 10A

## On your mark, get set, read!

Kyndra Kelley, age 6, chooses a book during the kickoff to the Cottage Grove Library's Summer Reading program on Wednesday, June 22. The Library reported that 197 children and 107 adults attended the kickoff, adding that 223 kids had already been signed up to participate in the program. Participants received a free book donated by the Friends of the Library and ice cream donated by Umpqua Bank, and they had the opportunity to play carnival games and win prizes. There will be Summer Reading Program activities every Wednesday from 2:30-3:30 p.m. in the Library, and readers will keep track of their progress throughout the summer for a chance to win prizes later on.



photo by Bruce Kelsch

## One year later:

Marijuana legalization and its impact (or lack thereof) on local law enforcement

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

This Friday, July 1, will mark the one-year anniversary of the legalization of recreational marijuana use for those over age 21 in Oregon.

There have been other milestones related to legalization since last summer: established medical marijuana dispensaries began selling recreational marijuana on Oct. 1, 2015 and were greeted with a wave of new customers. Last month, New Breed Seed, a company that hopes to revolutionize the growing of marijuana from seed, received the first retail license for recreational marijuana from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. Then on June 1, 2016, medical marijuana dispensaries were cleared to sell edible marijuana products to recreational users for the first time, initiating another wave of new business. The Cottage Grove City Council has also voted to place a three-percent tax on recreational marijuana purchases, with the rationale from some being that the tax would go to offset rising costs of law enforcement related to legalization.

But have there been rising costs associated with marijuana legalization, and just how has legalization impacted local law enforcement? If you ask personnel with the Cottage Grove Police Department, the impact would seem to be negligible at most.

"We haven't seen a big impact, an increase in crime or other problems that can be attributed to legal marijuana," Commander Conrad Gagner told the Sentinel.

Gagner reasoned that those who wanted to try marijuana in the Cottage Grove area had likely already done so before recreational legalization.

"People who wanted to smoke pot were already doing it," he said. "There might be a few more people who try it, but it's not looking like a significant number."

Gagner said he didn't believe that CGPD was finding any more marijuana during its searches or routine activities; it's just that police are no longer taking it away.

"For a long time, cases involving an ounce or less were dealt with by saying, 'give us the weed,' and then it was destroyed," he said. "Citations haven't been a huge revenue stream, and in fact they don't happen very often at all."

The Department has dealt with a few cases involving individuals who were found to have too much marijuana on their person during a consent search, according to Detective Doug Skaggs.

"It's likely the same people we would've dealt with before; they're just carrying more of it around now," Skaggs said.

Public use of marijuana is illegal, but Gagner said CGPD has not cited anyone with public use. Such a citation may be rare anyway, however, because an officer must witness a person using the drug firsthand to issue a citation.

With regard to marijuana's effects on driving, Gagner said that local police have not lately made an arrest for driving under the influence of a driver that has been found to be using only marijuana. He said that the amount of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in

Please see **MARIJUANA**, Page 10A

## Woman sought in connection with teen party

The Cottage Grove Police Department is seeking the public's help to locate a woman that police say furnished alcohol to a party involving several intoxicated juveniles last month.



Angela Ward

The Department utilized its Facebook page Monday to enlist public involvement

in the search for 33-year old Angela Ward, who they said purchased alcohol for several teens in advance of a May 20 party that attracted police attention after South Lane Fire and Rescue received a report of a 14-year old female foaming at the mouth.

According to its post, CGPD stated that additional calls had indicated that a fight had occurred at the same location and several juveniles had been drinking alcohol. When police arrived, they reportedly found several teens drinking there, and one parent who had been notified

of the party was there caring for a teen that was "vomiting and nearly unconscious." Several of the teens were extremely intoxicated, police said — a 15-year old was reportedly found with a blood alcohol content of .26 percent, over three times the legal limit for an adult DUI. Police say a second 15-year old was found to have a BAC of .18 percent.

Commander Conrad Gagner told the Sentinel Monday that Officer Fred Dilworth had spoken to Ward, who Gagner admitted to purchasing alcohol for some of the involved teens and driving

them to the location of the party. Ward reportedly agreed to be cited on a charge of furnishing alcohol to a minor, a Class A misdemeanor. Since then, though, Gagner said attempts to contact Ward have been unsuccessful.

"It is believed she is intentionally avoiding contact with law enforcement," according to the Facebook post.

Those with information as to Ward's whereabouts are asked to call the Cottage Grove Police Department at 541-942-9145.

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### WEATHER



Sunny

HIGH 84  
LOW 53

### CONTENTS

Calendar.....11B  
Channel Guide.....4B  
Classified ads.....6B  
Obituaries.....2A  
Opinion.....4A  
Public Safety.....5A  
Sports.....1B



6 18134 42405 2

1 Dollar