

The art of letting go

Farming may be difficult, but just try walking away, page 6A



W.O.E there!

Coverage of Heritage Fair on pages 11A, 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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Code officer tasked with 'zombie houses'

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

In her new position, Shauna Neigh is set to do battle with Cottage Grove's "zombies."

Neigh, who also serves as the director of the Cottage Grove Main Street Program, began a stint last week as a code enforcement officer with the City's Planning Department. During the City's 2016-17 budget process, city staff spoke of the need for a code enforcement officer to tackle the problem of "zombie houses," homes mired in long-term vacancies for which owners are not readily found.

Neigh will work to enforce city codes related to the condition of those properties, City Planner Amanda Ferguson said.

"We're hoping we can be more consistent, less reactive and more proactive with regard to code enforcement," Ferguson said. Currently, the City only regularly enforces codes that deal with nuisance abatement such as those that require yards to be mowed during the summer dry season. "Zombie houses" are also dealt with on a complaint basis, though the City often has few resources to compel an absentee homeowner to comply with city codes.

"Now, we can start dealing with other issues," Ferguson said. "We're hoping it can help encourage other property owners to maintain their properties as well."

Ferguson also said that she hopes Cottage Grove is seeing the end of the foreclosure crisis that crippled the local economy beginning in 2008 and with it the dwindling of the number of zombie houses it created.

Going forward, Neigh will spend her mornings working to see that city codes are upheld and her afternoons promoting Cottage Grove's downtown business district for the Main Street Program.



Shauna Neigh was hired as the City's new code enforcement officer last week. Neigh also serves as Main Street Program coordinator.



What speed!

Dachshund Jack-Patches (far right) sprints to the finish to win the final race of Habitat for Humanity's Wiener Dog Races on Saturday afternoon. Rounding out the top four were Frankie (second from left), Daisy (second from right) and Hope (far left). The races were moved to the W.O.E. Fairgrounds and held in conjunction with the fair this weekend. More on the races and fair can be seen on page 11A.

photo by Greg Lee

Local woman charged with felony for allegedly striking child

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A 25-year old Cottage Grove woman faces a felony charge after police say she left bruises on a two-year old child during an incident in late January.

Detective Doug Skaggs said that bruises on the buttocks and legs of the two-year old were discovered by a family member of 25-year old Tiffany Nicole Roberts-Larson. Skaggs wrote that medical professionals later determined that the injuries were non-accidental. On Friday, Roberts-Larson was arraigned in Lane County Circuit on one count of first-degree criminal mistreatment.



Tiffany Roberts-Larson

Please see **ABUSE**, Page 10A

Four more join City Council race

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Cottage Grove voters will elect a new mayor and three new City Council representatives this November, and recently, four more candidates threw their proverbial hats into the ring.

Current City Councilors Jake Boone, Jeff Gowing and Mike Fleck have all filed to run for the mayoral seat currently held by Tom Munroe, and the looming absence of Gowing at his current Ward II position leaves that seat open this fall. By the end of Monday, Bob Ehler, Rodney Cimburke, Merlyn Adams and Henry Lancaster had filed to represent Ward II.

Ehler, a retired machinist, is no stranger to public life in Cottage Grove; he currently serves

on the Planning Commission in addition to previous stints on the budget committees of the City of Cottage Grove and South Lane Fire and Rescue. Lancaster has also been a public presence of late, representing the Youth Advisory Council at recent council meetings. Lancaster also unsuccessfully campaigned for appointment to the at-large council seat that was later appointed to Kenneth Michael Roberts in the spring. In his filing, Cimburke listed his occupation as a "budtender" at local dispensary Apothecaria and as a recorder of minutes for government and other agencies.

Roberts has filed to run again for the aforementioned at-large seat, and he'll now be facing Ivan Del Sol for that position. Del Sol, a computer programmer, filed for the position on Aug. 15. Del Sol previously ran unsuccessfully against

Victoria Doyle for a City Council seat back in 2010.

Councilor Amy Slay appears to be running unopposed for election to the Ward IV seat that the Council appointed her to in 2015. Paperwork was taken by someone interested in filing for the Ward IV seat, according to City Manager Richard Meyers, though Meyers said that paperwork was not turned in to the City by Sentinel press time Monday. Two packets of paperwork were also taken by individuals interested in running for mayor, Meyers said, though those packets had also not been returned. The deadline to file for the Nov. 8 election was Tuesday, Aug. 23 by 5 p.m.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Work progresses at Coiner Park, new Arby's site by Walmart

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

New construction can be counted upon to come to the attention of passersby, and the Sentinel regularly fields questions about new projects popping up in the area. These days, two projects in particular seem to have piqued public curiosity, and as such the Sentinel offers this construction update:

What's happening across from Walmart?

Doug Mortimore of Howling Coyote, LLC, told the Sentinel late last week that despite a "fairly slow process" of acquiring permits to build on the lot across Row River Road from Walmart,

his company is looking forward to a "smooth transition" from the current Arby's location on Gateway Blvd. to the new one that's currently under construction.

"Some of the equipment can be transported, but a lot of the specifications have been upgraded," he said. "The kitchen design has changed, and the equipment and sizing are all different. The way we make roast beef sandwiches hasn't changed, but just about everything else has."

The new Row River Road Arby's location will be one of the first new prototypes for new Arby's restaurants, Mortimore said, of which there are only about 100 already functioning nationwide.

Mortimore said that some foundation work is still happening at the Row River Road site, adding that he hopes

crews can "go vertical" with construction in September in anticipation of an early-December opening. With regard to the current Arby's location, Mortimore said that the building is being offered for lease to other restaurants, though no one has expressed interest thus far. Rumors that the building was set to host a return to Cottage Grove for a Taco Time franchise are incorrect, according to Mortimore. Mortimore built the structure in the Bi-Mart shopping center that currently houses Arby's in 1989, the year he founded Howling Coyote, though the building originally hosted a Taco Time franchise. Arby's opened there in 2000; currently Howling Coyote operates five Taco Time restaurants and three Arby's restaurants in the Eugene/Springfield area.



photo by Jon Stinnett

Foundation work continues at the future site of Cottage Grove's new Arby's restaurant, which is eyeing an early Dec. opening.

Please see **CONSTRUCTION**, Page 10A

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