Trade, political discourse among DeFazio town hall topics

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

For some time now, the end of August in Cottage Grove has almost invariably meant a visit from U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio, who travels the Fourth District he represents to conduct town hall meetings and interact with the public. On Monday morning, DeFazio's visit drew a large crowd to council chambers at City Hall for a conversation that touched on subjects including the nation's infrastructure and trade situations, the political discourse in Washington, D.C. and a public health care option.

During his prepared remarks, DeFazio stated that his position on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has helped keep him engaged in a particularly frustrating time in Congress, most notably due to the committee's record of bipartisanship.

"We still get things done there, even though we don't totally agree," he said, adding that the "only bill of significance" passed by Congress lately has been a long-term transportation bill that will allow states to know their federal allocation for transportation spending for the next 10 years.

On disappointment of that bill, DeFazio said, was that it did not address an increase in funding for infrastructure projects such as rebuilding the nation's deficient bridges, of which there are many. DeFazio said he pursued a raise in the federal gas tax to address such concerns, a wholesale tax that

Please see **DEFAZIO,** Page 11A

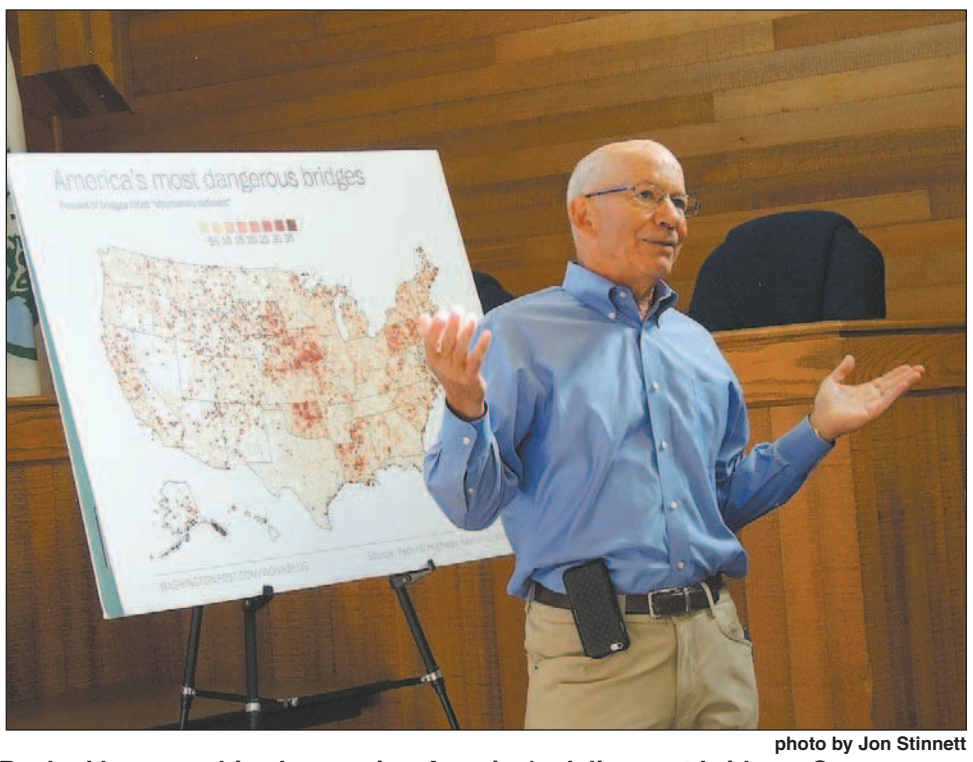

photo by Jon Stinnett

Backed by a graphic showcasing America's delinquent bridges, Congressman Peter DeFazio expresses dismay about the nation's political climate.

School District offers online option

Odysseyware curriculum will be available to students in third through 12th grades

BY JON STINNETT
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Area students will have the option of online education beginning this fall, as South Lane School District unveils "South Lane Online" for students in grades 3-12.

South Lane Online will utilize Odysseyware, a computer-based curriculum that the District says allows students to take classes that fit their individualized needs and offers over 190 online classes.

It's a curriculum that is "very rigorous," according to Mike Ingman, who will split his time beginning this year between his position as Principal at Kennedy High School and a new role as the District's Student Services Coordinator. Ingman previously encountered Odysseyware during a stint in Albany, where he said it was used both to help students catch up and recover credits and as a standalone curriculum choice. Odysseyware has been used in a similar capacity at Kennedy for some time.

"Last year, we started having conversations about whether we are serving kids to the best of our ability," Ingman said. "There have been a number of students leaving the District in favor of online programs."

Last year, 18 Cottage Grove High School students took part in a pilot program for South Lane Online under the direction of instructor Rachel Rothman, and Ingman said he'll be supporting Rothman in efforts to expand the program to the rest of the District.

"It offers a class like any other," Ingman said. "There are lessons and quizzes, formative assessments and tests at the end of each unit. It also offers projects that help students apply their knowledge."

Ingman said the District has been happy with the results garnered from South Lane Online thus far, adding that Rothman will be working to find ways to ensure that students stay engaged with their work outside a traditional classroom setting.

"They will be students through a program we manage; it's not its own high school," said Ingman. "Check-ins will take place at Cottage Grove High School, and students can take classes like band and woodshop with other students. We're trying to offer a value-added model that offers the opportunity for students to take regular classes and have a human they can interact with."

Rothman will be available for those check-ins from 12:30-4 p.m. each weekday, Ingman said. He stated that it will be "hard to know" how many students the online option will attract.

"Online education is growing by leaps and bounds," he said. "It may be a way a lot of students want to go."

Those interested in learning more about South Lane Online can contact Ingman at mike.ingman@slane.k12.or.us or at 541-942-3381 ext 127. They can also visit Cottage Grove High School at registration, which will take place Wednesday, Aug. 31 from 1-3 p.m.

String quartet students perform downtown

Last week, 11 young music students from Grants Pass, Roseburg, and Eugene converged in Cottage Grove to attend the first Delgani String Quartet Summer Academy, hosted by Steve and Vera Kilston. The seven girls and four boys, ranging in age from 10 to 19 years, played violins, violas and cellos and spent the week learning quartet movements composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Schubert, and Maurice Ravel. They performed these during the Cottage Grove Art Walk on Friday evening at Apple Pie Antiques, Kalapuya Books and the Crafty Mercantile. Afterward, the performers assembled with their coaches, the Delgani String Quartet from Eugene, for ice cream at the Carousel Deli, where the Delgani also performed. On Saturday they all played for parents and guests at the Kilston home, where the entire academy ensemble also played together a new work composed especially for the occasion by John Hidalgo of Walterville.

courtesy photo

Music students from several Oregon towns perform at Kalapuya Books during Friday's Art Walk.

Online collections detail Oregon's mining history

DOGAMI working to increase access to its records

New online collections of Oregon mining records are opening up the state's rich history.

The records span decades, from the gold rush of the mid-1800s to modern-day aggregate mining operations. The new collections include Baker County Mining Claim Records, mining records held by the Josephine County, Gold Hill and Woodville historical societies, and a Mining Permit Viewer.

Putting the documents online is part of an ongoing effort by the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) to increase access to the Agency's scientific publications, records and historic collections, says Ali Ryan Hansen, DOGAMI communications director. The project was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Oregon State Library.

"So many people will find these mining records interesting and useful," Hansen says. "And now, those historians and genealogists and gold panners and mine operators can look through these books and files wherever they happen to be, instead of traveling to where paper copies are held."

Creating digital copies also preserves irreplaceable information. A flood at the Baker County Courthouse in 2010 put mining claim record books — as well as other priceless historic real estate, tax, and court records — in peril.

Claim books were photographed page-by-page and assembled into PDFs. An 1862 book of mining laws, water rights and claims for the Pioneer District is the oldest book digitized as part of the project, and one of the oldest books of the gold rush era.

"Mining districts were kind of the first local governments in Oregon," says geologist Tom Wiley. "Their laws show us a lot about the lives and livelihoods of early Oregonians."