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**Palmer's patriotism, selfless service, page 6A**

**THURSDAY  
SEPT. 22  
AUTUMN BEGINS**

# Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

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

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## Gone is the 'interim' — Shepherd officially named Chief of Cottage Grove Police

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

With a one-sentence announcement, it became official.

An email from Commander Conrad Gagner with the Cottage Grove Police Department announced on Wednesday, Sept. 14 that "effective today, Interim Police Chief Scott Shepherd has been named Chief of Police."

Shepherd has guided CGPD since former Chief Mike Grover retired last August, at which time

it was announced that Shepherd would serve as interim chief for six months.

Over a year later, City Manager Richard Meyers said late last week that the City "needed to get it squared away so we can fill vacancies in the Department."

Meyers said that the City has been pleased with Shepherd's leadership thus far, lauding his work with locals to enhance the reporting of possible crimes in the City and his handling of difficult "personnel issues" that

Meyers declined to explain further.

"He's had a good year of tests to see how he will perform under a variety of situations," Meyers said. "It's been a nice exercise."



Police Chief Scott Shepherd

Meyers said that Shepherd "does the job well, and it's going to be fun working with him."

For his part, Shepherd said he's excited to officially take on the chief position but somewhat nervous about the full weight of responsibility it will entail. He said the Department will conduct an "in-house" recruiting process to fill the vacant commander position he previously held, in addition to replacing a police officer and a dispatcher lost after a recent retirement.

## Ballot Box



The lowdown on each of the fall election's ballot measures

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

This November, local voters will weigh the merits of several ballot measures. In the coming weeks, the Sentinel will examine each of these measures, with this week's "Ballot Box" devoted to Measure 20-245, a potential three-percent tax on the sales of recreational marijuana items.

### Measure 20-245:

Shall Cottage Grove impose a three percent tax on sales of marijuana items by recreational marijuana retailers in the City?

**Summary** (from the Notice of Measure Election filed by the City on June 3): If adopted by the voters, this measure would impose a three percent tax on sales of marijuana items (including marijuana, marijuana products and marijuana extracts) by recreational marijuana retailers licensed by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and located within the City of Cottage Grove. The tax would be collected from consumers by recreational marijuana retailers at the point of sale. Recreational marijuana retailers would remit the three-percent tax to the City. The three-percent city tax would be imposed in addition to any state taxes on the sale of marijuana items. The three percent tax would not be imposed on medical marijuana sales.

**Background:** Cottage Grove is not the only municipality exploring a three-percent tax on recreational marijuana, with the pursuit of such a tax approved by the Oregon legislature with House Bill 3400 in response to the statewide legalization of recreational marijuana. Lane County, the cities of Veneta, Westfir, Dunes City, Florence, Eugene, Springfield and Oakridge are also exploring a three-percent tax, with some cities such as Creswell seeking the tax while also putting forth a ballot measure that would prohibit medical and recreational marijuana processors, dispensaries, producers, wholesalers and retailers.

The Cottage Grove City Council has thus far been reluctant to place restrictions on the burgeoning local marijuana market; it decided against a possible one-year moratorium on the operation of medical marijuana dispensaries, dispensaries that are now also doing brisk business in recreational marijuana sales.

At its May 25 meeting, the Council voted 6-1 to refer the recreational marijuana tax to voters. If enacted, it would be added to a statewide recreational marijuana tax that will be reduced from 25 to 17 percent next year.

Councilor Jake Boone stood alone on the Council in opposition to the tax, which he said could put local dispensaries at an advantage if passed. Boone also stated that he believed a tax targeting any industry should be used to "somehow offset issues that come from that industry," adding that legalization of recreational marijuana should not increase the cost of law enforcement efforts as has been stated.

Mayor Tom Munroe and others supported the ballot measure and tax as a way for the City to "get our fair share." It might be expected that marijuana retailers would oppose the tax, but Darby Valley, majority owner of Apothecaria dispensary in Cottage Grove, which hopes to earn its retail license, supported the tax at the May City Council meeting.

City Manager Richard Meyers said he is unaware how much tax revenue might come from a three-percent recreational tax in Cottage Grove. Meyers and Finance Director Bert Olsen placed a \$15,000 line item in the 2016-17 city budget for recreational marijuana tax revenue on an estimated \$500,000 in sales, though he acknowledged that the number represented "a guess" and a "placeholder." The Council decided not to dedicate revenue from the tax to any specific city budget item.

Cottage Grove-based business New Breed Seed became one of the first licensed recreational retailers last spring, and many current dispensaries and other businesses are expected to follow. As of Sept. 16, OLCC listed 26 licensees for marijuana businesses in Lane County.

## Engineers find faulty towers

Safety concerns prompt swinging bridge closure

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

On their way home from school on Friday, Cottage Grove High School students could be heard grumbling as they passed a sign posted across a popular local landmark.

Their comments concerned the closure of the swinging bridge that spans the Coast Fork of the Willamette River between Madison Avenue and River Road, a closure recommended by an engineer tasked with assessing the bridge that is sure to disrupt the travel plans of many in Cottage Grove.

In a letter to City Engineer Ron Bradsby dated Sept. 14, Brad Larsen with OBEC Consulting Engineers wrote of a "conversation regarding the critical condition of this bridge and our serious concern for the safety of the public due to the potential collapse of the bridge." He recommended that the city close the bridge to all potential users.



photo by Jon Stinnett

City employees Mike O'Reilly and Ron Smith stretch a 'do not enter' sign across the swinging bridge. The City asks that those who witness trespassers on the bridge call 911.

Public Works crews had accomplished that closure by Friday afternoon, placing a barrier of boards across its entrance and signs warning all not to trespass there.

Notice of the closure came quickly, but the letter states that the conditions that warranted the closure were not new.

"OBEC's last inspection of the structure was in 2002, and repairs were recommended to be completed on the towers as soon as possible," Larsen wrote. "It is our understanding that those repairs were never

completed."

Larsen wrote that two OBEC engineers inspected the bridge on Aug. 29 and again Sept. 9, inspections that revealed "extensive decay in the vertical towers and some decay of the horizontal braces at each tower."

"The amount of decay in the towers was estimated in 2002 to be 50 percent of the vertical members' capacity," he wrote. "These members now have approximately one inch

Please see **BRIDGE**, Page 11A

## Dept. of Education releases state test scores

South Lane School District excels in some subjects, lags in others

BY SAM WRIGHT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Oregon Department of Education recently released its assessments for 2016, and the South Lane School Board heard the local results of those assessments at its Sept. 12 meeting.

Over the past five years, there has been a steady pattern of significant decline in the percentage of students that meet or exceed expectations statewide. This is

due to a change in requirements and the adoption of a new assessment system, which has become more rigorous over the years. Also, ELA (English Language Arts) standards have become more rigorous since 2010. The ODE also recently switched from the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) to the Smarter Balanced assessments.

The results show what percentage of students in math and ELA met or exceeded expecta-

tions. The assessments are for students in grades three through eight and grade 11 in high school.

Overall, South Lane School District saw an increase in percentage over the last few years, and the District tends to stay above the state average except for in a few grades and subjects.

For the high school students in the District, the percentage of students that met or exceeded expectations in ELA increased from 69 to 74, while the state percentage only increased from 68 to 69. Cottage Grove High School individually scored 80

percent.

In math, 11th graders increased from 32 percent in 2015 to 39 percent; the current state average is 33 percent.

There are some areas in which the School District is notably lower than the state average. For instance, fifth graders in SLSD scored 48 percent in ELA, while the state average is 57 percent. Grade four was five percentage points lower than the state average in 2015 and now finds itself four percentage points higher.

Every grade in middle school in South Lane scored slightly

Please see **TESTS**, Page 11A

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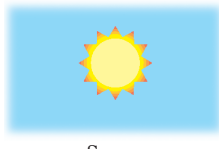
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**WEATHER**




Sunny

HIGH **66** LOW **43**

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