

## Four years together

Aqualion girls' water polo benefits from lasting bond, page 1B



## Local boy makes good

CGHS alum takes top BIA forestry job, page 3A



## Walk your wheels

New signs issue a warning, page 6A

# 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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## Cottage Villages Coalition envisions 'tiny houses' for area's unhoused

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Local residents concerned about those without a place to live in Cottage Grove have banded together in the hope of providing stable housing for those in need.

The Cottage Village Coalition envisions a group of about 15-20 "tiny houses" that can be home to those who might otherwise be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Coalition has partnered with Square One Villages, which has founded a similar village in Eugene; initial funding was obtained through a grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust.

The group includes many of the organizations and individuals who have regular contact with Cottage Grove's unhoused population, typically through outreach such as the Sunday soup kitchen spearheaded by Sharon Jean or through Community Sharing, which provides housing assistance in a brutal local housing market. The group first coalesced through the efforts of the First Presbyterian Church's Urban Social Justice Committee.

"For those who have a lot of contact with the unhoused, it's an act of caring," Jean said. "You can see and read about the need in Cottage Grove, and it's time for us as a society and as a community to pay attention and do something."

Colgan said that Community Sharing provides vouchers for local housing assistance but receives between 35 and 50 applications for just a dozen available locations. Often, she said, vouchers are given to individuals or families that are then unable to find a decent place to live in Cottage Grove, likely a byproduct of an extremely tight rental market.

"Affordable housing isn't affordable for many in Cottage Grove," she said.

Providing services to the homeless has been an ongoing effort for many community volunteers, but the Coalition believes in a "housing-first" model.

"You can't focus on improving your life if you're worried about what you're going to eat," Colgan said.

Square One Villages received a grant to focus on a rural community and chose Cottage Grove, according to Project Coordinator Alicia Ginsberg. Ginsberg said the Emerald Village in Eugene rents tiny houses for about \$250-350 per month, with many residents over 60 years of age and subsisting on their Social Security checks and a startling number of homeless teens. She envisions a similar situation in Cottage Grove, though the Coalition knows that crafting a solution specifically for this community is important.

Please see **COALITION**, Page 10A



photo by Jon Stinnett

City Councilor and at-large candidate Kenneth Michael Roberts (far left) addresses a question from the South Lane School Board at a discussion at the CGHS library Monday evening.

## School Board, candidates connect

Discussion offers a chance to explore relationship between City, SLSD

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Members of the South Lane School Board sought common ground and talked partnerships and key issues with Cot-

tage Grove's candidates for Mayor and City Council Monday night.

The Cottage Grove High School library was the site of a roundtable discussion that drew the School Board and candidates together to talk shop in advance of the Nov. 8 election. Mayoral candidates Jake Boone, Jeff Gowling and Mike Fleck answered questions from moderator and South Lane Communications

Please see **DISCUSSION**, Page 10A

## Officer recognized for efforts to save 18-month old

A Cottage Grove police officer was recently recognized for his efforts to save an 18-month old boy.

Officer Jason Cross was awarded the Medal of Distinction by Chief Scott Shepherd at the City Council's Oct. 10 meeting. Shepherd explained that Cross responded first to a call for an ambulance on Sunday, Aug. 21, contacting the boy's grandparents, who explained that the boy had stopped breathing but had begun to breathe again. While Cross was assisting the family, Shepherd said the boy's breathing stopped again, at which time Cross administered blows to his back to start his breathing once again.

"Officer Cross received a nice letter from the family thanking him for his quick response and for helping the family remain calm," Shepherd said. "The boy is now doing great."

Nicki Tanton said her son, Makai, had had a seizure but had previously been choking. She was not with her son at the time but heard about the incident when the family brought Makai to the Emergency Room at RiverBend where she works.



photo by Jon Stinnett

Officer Jason Cross received the Medal of Distinction from Chief Scott Shepherd at the Oct. 10 City Council meeting.

## Fertilab's 'Big Mix' offers a way for business startup hopefuls to connect

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Recent Thursday mornings at Backstage Bakery have featured talk of a brighter future for area entrepreneurs.

David Youngentob, Director of Innovation for Eugene-based business incubator Fertilab, said that the 10 a.m. meetings are the company's first foray into a community outside the metro area and aim to "rustle people out of the bushes" who may be interested in starting their own business in Cottage Grove.

"We're hoping to concentrate and stimulate entrepreneurship in this community," Youngentob said. "The challenge is to be true to the identity of Cottage Grove while helping its business community discover what's next for its future."

Mapping the future includes taking a "hard look at the area's strengths and local assets" to try and identify a "local brand" that can be marketed beyond Cottage Grove, Youngentob said.

"We hope to create enough collisions between entrepreneurs to let them decide what that identity might

be," he said, adding that recent outreach also aims to identify business owners that are ready for Fertilab's business startup clinic. Efforts in Cottage Grove come about through a partnership with this town's Community Development Corporation.

The Thursday meetings are designed to help those nurturing a startup business share information and ideas. At the most recent event, Kim Johnson, owner of the Cottage Grove Public Market on 10th Street, discussed some of the finer points of business law with attorney David Brabender of the Endeavor

Law Group, which specifically aids startup businesses. Caleb Wilsey shared several of the unique juices he's developed as the innovator of Oregon Organics, and life coach Geoff Cohen talked about how he helps people.

Fertilab is planning a larger, cocktail-style event called "The Big Mix," which Youngentob said will offer business owners a chance to connect in addition to presenting a short pitch about their business. The Big Mix takes place Thursday, Oct. 27 from 7-9 p.m. at the Cottage Grove Armory.

## Ballot Box



The lowdown on the fall election's ballot measures

## Measure 98

Funds dropout prevention and career and college readiness programs in Oregon's high schools

Supporters claim the measure will foster positive outcomes for the state's high school students; there is no organized opposition

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The State of Oregon spends less to educate each of its students than the national average, and it receives a poor return in the form of the second-lowest high school graduation rate nationwide in 2013.

Measure 98 would require the state legislature to spend at least \$800 annually per high school student to expand career technical education opportunities, college-level courses and dropout prevention. The \$800 would be adjusted each year for inflation and population. The measure aims to fund these programs through economic growth, not new taxes. Schools would have to apply to receive these funds.

Polls indicate that a majority of voters support Measure 98, as do both of Oregon's candidates for governor. There is no organized campaign in opposition, though some have questioned the viability of and ability to fund an initiative that ties these programs to economic growth, particularly since times of budget cuts at area schools are not far in the rearview mirror.

In Cottage Grove, the South Lane School Board favors Measure 98, according to Board President Sherry Duerst-Higgins, who lauded the effort to invest more heavily in vocational training. Peter Zuckerman, Communications Director for the Yes on 98 campaign, pointed to a study by EconNorthwest stating that South Lane School District would receive an estimated \$762,489 for programs funded by Measure 98 should it pass.

Cottage Grove's progressive Blackberry Pie Society has issued a "You Decide" recommendation for Measure 98 "due to too many unanswered questions," according to spokesperson Leslie Rubinstein.

"We think it's a wonderful idea for school districts to be able to apply for \$800 per student in extra funding for vocational-technical education, college-level classes and dropout prevention," Rubinstein wrote via email. "However, Ballot Measure 98 requires the money to be taken from the state's general fund, which is something like an end-run around the legislature. It leaves us with no idea about what will not get funded, especially if Measure 97 does not pass."

The Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce's Legislative Committee recently discussed and voted to support Measure 98. Executive Director Travis Palmer said the Chamber supported the measure because it "does not remove funding from something else," though he added that Oregon's high school students are "grossly under-funded."

"All students in grades K-12 are funded the same, even though it costs more to educate a high-school student than a kindergartener," Palmer said. "This measure is a way to start to fix that imbalance."

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