

On to the semis!

The Cottage Grove Lions stole a win from Astoria on Friday in the toughest matchup for the football team all season. Cottage Grove entered the fourth quarter down 14-3, but Blake Sentman and the offense blew up with three touchdown passes to outscore Astoria 22-7 in the fourth quarter. The 25-21 win marks the first game the 10-0 Lions have had to come from behind to win a game this season. More game coverage can be seen on page 1B.



Cottage Grove Sentinel

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2016

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

VOLUME 129 • NUMBER 19

Council worksession explores tiny houses

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A plan to bring a village of tiny houses to Cottage Grove led to the formation of the Cottage Villages Coalition, a group that packed the Council chambers at City Hall Monday night to ask for the Council's support.

A worksession prior to the regular City Council meeting provided supporters an opportunity to present their plan in depth, and the Council heard from representatives of Square One Villages in Eugene — on which the Cottage Villages Coalition has modeled its project here — as well as representatives that work with the unhoused population in Cottage Grove.

Dan Bryant, Executive Director of Square One Villages, told the Council that the Coalition is seeking its support to pursue a grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust for about \$250,000, a grant that it's hoped could pay for one third or half of the cost of building about 14 tiny homes in Cottage Grove. Bryant said the Square One model can be used to build affordable housing at a quarter of its usual cost.

"The goal is to get people into stable affordable housing, but it's difficult to find affordable housing for many because it doesn't exist for small households," Bryant said. Many affordable housing programs cater to families, he said, meaning that the wait time for singles and couples that may otherwise be homeless can be up to five years or longer.

"We're working with people in Eugene that don't have five years to live, and they need to move from transitional to more permanent housing," he said.

The Cottage Villages Coalition hopes to bring about 14 homes ranging in size from 160-280 square feet to town, a village where renters would share common spaces in addition to their own dwellings, which they would rent for about \$250-350 per month.

Bryant said the Coalition is eyeing a piece of property in Cottage Grove, though negotiations kept them from giving more detail.

"We think it's ideal, a village of 14 tiny homes that could serve single individuals as well as small families," Bryant said. "It would be for the folks that are already in this community."

Alicia Ginsberg, village coordinator of the Eugene project, said that many of its residents are over 60 and get by on Social Security or disability income. She expects similar residents for Cottage Grove, and the Coalition is packaging its work in Cottage Grove into a toolkit that it is hoped can be used to assist small Oregon communities with similar projects.

Project Coordinator Andrew Heben said the village would be more than just housing, as its residents would have a say in how the village is managed.

"Some people think that such a congregation of people would result in crime or violence, but we've found the opposite is true,

Please see **VILLAGE**, Page 11A



Bugler Steve Pettit plays 'Taps' from the balcony to close out Friday's Veterans Day ceremony at the Cottage Grove Armory.

photo by Carolin Pettit

Cottage Grove reflects at Veterans Day ceremony

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Friday saw a strong turnout for the Veteran's Day Ceremony in downtown Cottage Grove. Supportive community members came to thank local veterans and their families. The ceremony consisted of an invocation followed by guest speakers. A local choir performed the song of each military branch as veterans from each branch stood when their respective song was played.

Mayor Tom Munroe, a veteran himself, was one of the guest speakers. Munroe spoke of the dedication

and sacrifice given by those who have served.

"They are ordinary people who responded in extraordinary ways in extreme times," Munroe said. Munroe and his wife recently returned from a trip to San Diego to visit his grandson, who is currently a Staff Sergeant in the Marine Corps.

The next guest speaker was Captain Mark Timmons of the 162nd Infantry Regiment of the National Guard. Timmons served a 10-month deployment to Iraq in 2009, of which he shared his experience.

Please see **VETERANS**, Page 11A



Capt. Mark Timmons, the Commander of HHC 2-162, chats after the ceremony with members of the public.

photo by Gordon Okumu

ELECTION 2016 Gowing elected Mayor, Ehler earns Ward II Council nod

Roberts retains at-large seat

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

City Councilor Jeff Gowing took a chance, and as Election Night took shape, it appeared that chance would pay off.

Gowing, who has occupied the Council's Ward II seat since being appointed to replace Lynn Miller in 2009, has confided that he had contemplated a run for Mayor back then, though he also said he's grateful for the grasp of the issues and City systems he gained during his years on the Council.

With his term in Ward II scheduled to expire on Dec. 31, Gowing faced a choice — run for reelection to his position and, likely, remain on the Council, or go for broke and run for Mayor, knowing that, should he not be elected, he would be off the Council completely.

The first round of election returns, coming in just

Please see **COUNCIL**, Page 11A

Pot tax passes, gas tax fails

The Cottage Grove City Council placed two tax measures on the ballot before local voters in the Nov. 8 election, and the popularity of each couldn't have been much more different.

The Council voted back in September to place a three-percent tax on purchases of recreational marijuana on the ballot, and it became clear as election results rolled in that the tax was a popular one, garnering two-thirds of votes to win easily. Meanwhile, a prospective three-cent hike in the local fuels tax, which funds street repairs, was defeated by an even higher margin.

In preparing the City's 2016-17 budget, City Manager Richard Meyers estimated that \$15,000 in revenue could be brought in from the recreational marijuana tax, though Meyers acknowledged that the number amounted to little more than a guess. Next year, the City will get a more concrete number regarding that revenue, as will the communities of

Please see **TAXES**, Page 11A

Cottage Grove woman will work to repay veteran she scammed

As part of her plea deal, Rita Amundson will make monthly restitution payments

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A 57-year old Cottage Grove woman will work to repay the 94-year old veteran she was convicted of bilking out of thousands of dollars as a result of a judgment in Lane County Circuit Court last week.

Rita Amundson of Cottage Grove was arrested in June after the man reportedly walked to the Cottage Grove Police Station to

inform police that he believed he'd been swindled. Amundson pleaded guilty on Monday, Nov. 7 to seven felony charges of theft and criminal mistreatment of the man that had allowed her to move in with him shortly after his wife passed away.

During her time caring for the victim, Amundson took over the man's finances, and her sister, 64-year old Teena Taylor, was also arrested in June after police determined that the sisters

had scammed him out of over \$90,000.

Cottage Grove Detective Doug Skaggs told the Sentinel in June that the sisters' use of the victim's money began soon after Amundson moved in with him. They were asked to purchase a car, Skaggs said, which they did, and they then convinced him that there would be no one able to pay for his burial expenses unless they were allowed access to his bank accounts, which they were given.

The title to the car the man authorized the ladies to purchase

did not end up in his name, police said, and \$19,000 was allegedly transferred soon after into another account. The sisters allegedly purchased another car with the man's money. Skaggs said the women were believed to be responsible for the purchase of "at least seven vehicles" using their victim's money, including a 2014 Subaru that they allegedly traded in to purchase an older vehicle and pocketed cash in the trade.

Skaggs said the victim's bank account had been brought down to a balance of \$500 from a total

of close to \$80,000 in about 3 1/2 months. He said the man took off on his own, walking the 1-1/2 miles from his home to the police station with the aid of a walker, when he learned of his situation.

As part of her plea deal, Amundson agreed to pay \$300 a month in restitution to the man, with the entire balance being due within six months of the completion of her sentence of five years' probation. Should she fail to pay, she will spend time in prison. Taylor is scheduled to plead guilty in December.



Rita Amundson

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