

He's on his way!

Santa's plans and other holiday happenings, beginning on page 3A

# 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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## SECOND AT STATE!

The Cottage Grove Lions set off to Hillsboro on Saturday morning to play in the 4A State Championship game. The team was escorted through town by the Cottage Grove Police Department and South Lane Fire and Rescue, along with a convoy of fans. An estimated 200 Lion fans filled Hillsboro stadium, creating a supporting and "roaring" atmosphere for the team. This has been the second time in four years that Head Coach Gary Roberts has taken his team to the State Championship game, and the Lions went into this game 11-0. At right, quarterback Blake Sentman drops back to pass. More coverage on the State Championship game can be found on page 1B.



photo by Sam Wright

## Council supports tiny houses, sets pot tax, talks safe routes to school

BY SAM WRIGHT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Cottage Grove City Council approved a resolution to set a three-percent tax on purchases of recreational marijuana of three percent on Monday evening. An ordinance of an intergovernmental agreement to bring in the state's Department of Revenue to collect the tax was also discussed. Citizens voted to allow the City Council to set a tax of up to three percent on the sale of recreational marijuana in the Nov. 8 election. The Council was set to pass the three percent tax until Councilor Jake Boone brought up an interesting point about the percentage.

"Since it allows us to go up to three percent, could we put it at two percent to possibly entice more shoppers to come into town?" Boone asked.

The question was met with arguments from both sides. Some felt having the percentage lower would not only entice recreational marijuana shoppers to buy in town, but also hinder the resurgence of the black market. However, a general consensus was met that one percent would not make much of a difference. Currently the state levies a 25 percent tax, but after local governments passed their own taxes, the state has agreed to lower the state tax to 17 percent, putting the overall tax on recreational marijuana at an even 20 percent.

Another topic that had a significant amount of public input was safe routes to school. City Engineer Ron Bradsby reported that there is a lack of safe sidewalks and crosswalks around the city, especially around schools. Lincoln Middle School Assistant Principal Emily Wren stated that safety just outside that campus has been an issue among parents and faculty.

"We've had someone going

only about 10 miles per hour almost hit four boys because there's no real safe place for them to cross near the entrance," she said.

Bradsby presented a list of multiple locations in which there is no sidewalk or a sidewalk is in unusable condition.

"In some places there is a curb, but no concrete pathway to walk on," he noted.

An issue with the repairing or building of sidewalks is that, according to city code, owners of property adjacent to these sidewalks are responsible for having and maintaining such sidewalks. The City would be responsible for other areas and crosswalks. The Council moved to begin the process of building or fixing all of the listed areas and will inform property owners that they have six months to amend the walkways adjacent to their property.

Up next was the issue of affordable housing. The Cottage Villages Coalition has asked for financial support of up to \$15,000 to start a low-income housing project in Cottage Grove. The Coalition works with Square One Villages out of Eugene, which has received positive feedback.

Councilor Jeff Gowing stated that he "knows the people heading the project" and has faith in their abilities to make it a positive impact economically (and even aesthetically). The Council moved to support the Cottage Village Coalition's project, 5-1.

City Manager Richard Meyers was up for his annual performance review as well. With a flurry of positive feedback on Meyers' performance over the years, Councilor Mike Fleck motioned to authorize Mayor Tom Munroe to modify his contract with compensation toward a two-percent cost of living increase and two-percent cost of insurance increase. The motion passed 6-0.

## 'NOT JUST FOR SENIORS'

South Lane Wheels says its rides are for everybody

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Speak with just about anyone who helps provide or utilizes the services of Cottage Grove-based South Lane Wheels, and they'll tell you the same thing: Though seniors make up a large portion of the public transportation system's ridership, advocates of the system — from its executive director to its frequent riders — point out that a ride on its buses does not come with an age requirement or restriction.

"There is no eligibility requirement," said Executive Director Ruth Linoz. "It's been challenging to get the word out to the community that riders don't have to be a certain age."

Headquartered at 1450 Birch Ave., South Lane Wheels offers two basic methods for helping Grovers get around. Its Route-Around-Town makes a circuit of Cottage Grove's hotspots from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and a reservation for door-to-door service from one's home to various locations in South Lane County and even the Eugene-Springfield area can be made with a phone call to 541-942-0456 anytime from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Recently, one South Lane Wheels driver, Bill Traylor, offered this reporter a lift around Cottage Grove to see what the Route Around Town is all about.

"The biggest crowd gets out early in the morning," Traylor says, adding that the period around noon, which he's dubbed the "quiet zone," is often the slowest part of his route. On this day, Traylor is driving the bus known by drivers and riders as "Blue," whose paint job was designed by a local



photo by Jon Stinnett

Driver Bill Traylor welcomes Elsie Lohrey onto a South Lane Wheels bus.

artist and whose hydraulic noises add extra color to the near-constant conversation going on inside.

Early on, it's clear that Traylor, an affable sort, shares quite a rapport with his riders, and while we make stops at Bi-Mart, Walmart and elsewhere in a long loop around Cottage Grove, we chat about everything from baseball to politics and beyond. Each subsequent rider joins the never-ending conversation.

"From the first day I started driving here, they've treated me like family," he says. "As I've learned the route, I've also learned the town."

Soon, Elsie Lohrey comes aboard, as she has once or twice weekly since South Lane Wheels began offering its services.

"I like it," Lohrey says of the ride. "It's great for people who don't have a car. I talk it up wherever I go."

She describes South Lane Wheels as "very accommodating."

"If you've been shopping and have trouble carrying something, whether it's groceries or whatever, they can help out," she said, adding that drivers also aid with wheelchairs

and make other accommodations.

Lohrey says she hopes that, as ridership continues to increase, the hours for the Route Around Town can be extended.

"It's a great resource, especially in the winter," she says. "I'm not a person who can just sit in the house all day."

South Lane Wheels has operated in Cottage Grove since 1983. In the past, it has utilized volunteer drivers on its routes, though these days Linoz said its staff of five drivers has been extensively trained, each has passed a background check and has a commercial driver's license. Last year, these drivers carried a total of 12,902 riders on one-way trips.

Linoz said that the process for booking a door-to-door ride with South Lane Wheels is strictly reservation-based and is begun by contacting RideSource, through which it contracts to provide its services, at 541-682-5566.

"You can call way in advance, and you can cancel anytime up until the morning of your ride," she said.



Sentinel file photo

The lack of crosswalks and sidewalks near schools like LMS was a topic of concern Monday night.

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### WEATHER



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