



City Beat — 5A  
SLSD tops grad list — 3A  
Cycle Oregon coming — 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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## Tiny homes cause big uproar

Plans for 13 tiny homes drew a crowd of neighbors, exchange of information



Cottage Village Coalition and Square One Villages held a town hall meeting on Jan. 28 to discuss their plans to develop a 13-tiny-home village for low-income renters.

BY CAITLYN MAY  
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A proposal to construct a low-income housing village on Madison Ave. earned the attention of approximately 30 neighbors during a town hall-style event aimed at addressing fears and concerns about the project.

Cottage Village Coalition teamed with Eugene's Square One Villages to conceptualize a tiny home village to address the growing need for affordable housing in the city. The group, which has spent just over a year working on the project, researched several pieces of available land for the development before settling on the Madison lot. However, homeowners in the area vented

their frustrations during the Jan. 28 meeting when Cottage Village Coalition members insisted residents were "being brought in at an early stage of the project." According to coalition member Valeria Clarke, several reasons went into the decision to hold off on notifying residents of the neighborhood that the land was being considered. "We didn't want to interfere with buying the land and maybe have another company or developer swoop in and certainly be able to outbid us financially," she said.

Current plans for the village are still being sorted. Few answers were available for attendees of Saturday's meeting, adding to the frustration of residents who fired questions at coalition members and raised con-

cerns over several aspects of the project.

The coalition submitted the idea of constructing 13 tiny homes on the property, each with their own kitchenette and restrooms. An existing shed and house would serve as a community center and possible apartment for an on-site manager. The number of residents was unclear with representatives from Square One Villages and Cottage Village noting that it designs would most likely suit a "single mother and child."

Square One nodded to its Opportunity Village located in Eugene as a rough estimate for comparison with the development planned for Cottage Grove. While Opportunity Village is not located in a residential area and serves primarily homeless indi-

## CG schools \$1.7 million in the hole for new year

BY CAITLYN MAY  
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The new legislative session begins today, and with it comes a slew of issues for lawmakers to grapple with including a reported \$2 billion shortfall for the state's budget. Included in that financial hole is the funding for local schools. According to superintendent Krista Parent, South Lane School District could be facing a gap of \$1.7 million.

Governor Kate Brown's proposed \$8 billion dollar budget would leave South Lane short \$1.3 million. The subsequent budget released by Ways and Means creates an even bigger hole of \$1.7 but according to Parent, the current service level budget would still see a \$400,000 gap due to five physical education positions that are previously been funded through grants.

"It costs about \$100,000 for one day of school in South Lane School District," Parent said. "And we're a people business so 86 percent of our budget is people. We have 400 employees, we're the largest employer in the community so we'd have to cut 18 days of school to wipe out the \$1.7 million deficit and you can't cut 18 days of school."

Cutting school days is just one of the solutions the school district is cutting but it's a fix that comes with its own set of challenges. Students in grades nine through 12 are required by law to be in school 990 hours a year. If school districts drop

below that level, they are given what is essentially described as a warning and must not drop below the level the following year. However, due to several winter storms in the area and the potential for more, South Lane may end up below the 990 hours this year.

"We're in a situation right now where if we have more snow days then we're going to have to make a decision about that, but right now we're still ok because we have a calendar that gives us some room," Parent said. "We don't want to get in the penalty box this year because we're going to need to cut days for next year and we may need to cut enough days that it will drop us below those instructional hours."

Other cost-cutting ideas currently include an increased cost for extra curricular activities for students and a possible reduction in staff.

Currently, South Lane School District employs 400 people and while Parent hopes that if the budget calls for a decrease in staffing, it can be done through attrition.

"We're looking at cutting positions and my goal, as it is ever year I've been superintendent is, to not have to lay people off," she said noting that retiring employees may help ease the budget burden.

The legislature is expected to complete its work within 120 days but the budget it approves will span two years.

"We don't like any of these options," Parent said. "None of them are good for kids."

"We would not be serving people from Eugene, bussing them in. This is for Grovers."

viduals, working plans would have Cottage Grove's development function in some of the same ways.

Residents of the Cottage Grove development would have to go through a strict application process to be considered for one of the homes and once selected, they would have to sign a community standards agreement. However, representatives from Square One noted that residents within the village are self-governing. Exact policies were not available with representatives from both organizations citing the fact that the project has not moved far enough along in development to have hashed out the details of utilities, community governing and several other aspects of the village.

"This is for people who have to move out because they're mother is moving in and they don't have first and last month's rent. These are people who are currently renting elsewhere, typical renters," Clarke said.

Final details concerning rent have not

been ironed out with estimates currently set at \$250-\$300 per month. The target renter includes individuals on Social Security, minimum wage workers and those in danger of losing their housing due to ever-rising rental rates around the city.

While both organizations agree they looked at other properties around the city including space behind Safeway, the Madison lot met the requirements of their project with public transportation close by.

However, the Madison property is not without its issues to address before construction can begin. Annual flooding overtakes a portion of the property, often flooding into neighboring yards. An easement would mostly likely be required for the back end of the property where a large tree stands in the way.

The project would have to meet all city requirements.

The group, with help from a grant obtained by Square One Villages, put an of-

fer on the property which was accepted in December. Several residents raised their concern that the project was moving ahead before notifying property owners but Clarke said illness in the group, the holidays and fears over other developers moving in on the property kept the coalition from sharing the news any earlier.

Some of those present at Saturday's meeting inquired as to whether or not the group planned to move forward with the development if community support was lacking. After several answers circulated the room, the group settled on the fact that they would consider community support and may be willing to re-sell the property if, for some reason, they could not complete the project. Clarke, whose own property borders the project implored those present at Saturday's meeting to keep an open mind and invites interested residents to attend the group's meeting the first Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. at the Presbyterian church.

## CG parks may close

Senate Bill 504 may cause issue

BY CAITLYN MAY  
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The Oregon League of Cities has released its list of top legislative priorities for the 2017 legislative session and one bill specifically, has caught the attention of Cottage Grove officials.

Senate Bill 504 (SB504) would alter the limitations of

recreational liability concerning public lands. Essentially, the bill fails to address the issues caused by a recent supreme court decision that excluded city employees from the recreational liability shield and allowed individuals injured during recreational activities in a public park to sue city employees. barricades sometimes walk off, the barricade was gone," Cottage Grove City Manager

See Parks pg. 11

## SLSD to consider "sanctuary" status for undocumented kids

BY CAITLYN MAY  
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On Jan. 28 President Donald Trump issued an executive order banning individuals from seven countries including Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Libya for 90 days. Reports of separated families and green card holders being detained at international airports ignited social media and national news shining a spotlight on a controversial issue.

In Oregon, several cities, universities and school districts have declared themselves "sanctuary cities," essentially refusing to report or reject residents based on their immigration status. As a result, the Trump Administration has threatened to withhold federal funding.

"We are going to put this on an upcoming board meeting agenda," said Krista Parent, South Lane School District Superintendent. "We have been asked by a number of individuals to put this in front of the school board and whether or not we have an interest in becoming a sanctuary school district."

Nationally, there are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants. In Cottage Grove, that number is more difficult to pin down. Oregon overall estimated 170,000 undocumented immigrants within its borders in 2010. That number has fluctuated with the recent turmoil in Syria and Governor Kate Brown's public assurance that Oregon would continue to accept refugees as other cities turned those who fled the war torn region away.

According to Parent, there is not a noticed bump in the population of students from Syria. However, she did note, "We have a number of kids, especially in the last few years, who are here from Guatemala and in some cases, are undocumented."

The process of becoming a sanctuary city or school district is murky at best. While the University of Oregon and several other districts in the region have moved forward with declaring themselves a sanctuary against federal orders, South Lane School District is gathering further information.

"We don't know all the details of what it means to be a sanctuary school district and so we need to do some learning of our own but we are going to be talking about it," Parent said. "We understand

See Sanctuary pg. 11

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### WEATHER



Partly cloudy

HIGH 47  
LOW 36

### CONTENTS

Calendar.....3B  
Channel Guide.....5B  
Classified ads.....5B  
Obituaries.....2A  
Opinion.....4A  
Public Safety.....5A  
Sports.....1B



6 18134 42405 2

1 Dollar

Coffee with the Editor  
Every Tuesday 10 am

@ Backstage Bakery

Come chat about the community!

