



Cottage Grove Sentinel

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POLITICS

STUDENTS LEAD PROTEST



Approximately 30 students from Cottage Grove High School walked out of class on Friday, Feb. 17 to protest the appointment of Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education. See page 9A for complete story.

CRIME

Banner Bank Robbed

Suspect sought in two robberies

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove Police are still investigating after a man wearing what police describe as a "shaggy black wig" robbed Banner Bank in Cottage Grove late last week. The call came in just after 2 p.m. noting that an unidentified male had gotten away with an undisclosed amount of cash.



He was reportedly wearing a dark-colored hooded sweatshirt and a yellow baseball cap. He escaped on foot.

The same suspect is said to be a person of interest in a separate bank robbery in Grants Pass that occurred on Feb. 1.

The FBI is assisting Cottage Grove with the investigation but the department is asking anyone with information as to the identity of the suspect to contact detective Shawn Branstetter or detective Tamara Miles at 541-942-9145 at either extension 134 or 137.

The suspect was described as being a white male adult, 5'09" tall, 170lbs, with a beard and black horned rim glasses.

Carousel restoration underway

By Caitlyn May
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The decades-old effort to bring a carousel to the city's Main St. has a new group of volunteers: students. Cottage Grove High School art students have undertaken the task of restoring the carousel animals as part of their advanced art class set to last through the spring.

"They started about two weeks ago," said Russ McGuire, a member of Friends of Cottage Grove Carousel, the volunteer group attempting to raise enough interest and funds to bring the attraction to Main St.

Students are currently working on four animals, including three horses and are expected to begin painting next week.

"Right now, they're just sanding and then once they get the base coat it will be another three to four weeks. It's a slow process," McGuire said.

The animals have been in a storage shed for over 20 years after Cottage Grove resident Judy Cash fulfilled a lifelong dream by purchasing the attraction.

"A gentleman passed away and left my husband and I some money," she noted previously. "We didn't know it was coming and so when it did, he went to England and bought a tank. I went to Virginia and bought a carousel."

Initial efforts began when Cash first made the purchase but tapered off until recently.

The group has researched possible locations for the attraction, compiled sample architectural drawings and moved forward with fundraising efforts and grant applications.

The efforts to bring the carousel to Main St. have hit a snag in regards to funding. According to McGuire, money isn't quite flooding in for the cause.

"It just hasn't come in yet. Those grants are taking their time."

In the meantime, students will continue restoring the animals through the remainder of the school year. Once they finish the four animals they have, McGuire will supply one or two more.



CG to combine public works, community development

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers recently made a decision. He will not be filling the position left vacant by retired community development manager, Howard Schesser.

"I will not be filling that position," Meyers said. "Instead, I'll combine those two departments."

The two departments include Schesser's community development and the city's public works department. Current head of public works, Jan Wellman informed Meyers that he will be retiring at the end of March.

The search for Schesser's replacement has been ongoing with several candidates applying and interviewing for the position.

Meyers noted that the move will save the city some money and some rearrangement will be necessary.

"We'll have one head and then divisions, which is already happening in public works," Meyers said, adding that the move would benefit the community.

COUNTY

Lane County speaks to rural economic development

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce members heard a presentation last Wednesday, Feb. 15, concerning economic and community development in rural Oregon. The presentation, given by Lane County Community and Economic Development Officer Kim Thompson, centered on opportunities for the county to work more closely with rural areas and communities.

The "Rural Prosperity Initiative," according to Thompson is a targeted approach by Lane County to utilize staff time and resources in rural areas.

Economic development varies from city to city and differs greatly from metropolitan areas to rural communities. According

to Lane County, rural communities are faced with a unique set of challenges that include communication and coordination, capacity and expertise, infrastructure, quality of life factors, vision and lastly, a perception of invisibility. In a handout distributed at the chamber meeting, Lane County describes rural areas as not being well connected with the county and other rural areas, which leads to missed opportunities. It also explains a lack of existing services in some rural areas such as grocery stores, affordable housing and basic human and health services. During Wednesday's meeting, Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Travis Palmer asked how Cottage Grove could further the Rural Prosperity Initiative.

"I think the best way is through county and city collaboration.

Keep me involved in the projects that are happening in Cottage Grove," Thompson said. "Invite us to the table, so we can find opportunities for you as we are out networking. We all need to have Cottage Grove's two-minute elevator (marketing) speech down. Lane County Economic Development needs to know what's most important to this community in order to share that message as we are out marketing Cottage Grove."

While the Rural Prosperity Initiative is not a new program, Thompson has been brought on board to aid in its implementation and notes that several factors can contribute to a community's slow or troubled economic development. For some communities, she said, broadband Internet is a deal breaker while others lack access to natural gas.

Please see RURAL, PG. 10

COMMUNITY

U.S. Senator Wyden

Senator Wyden visited Eugene to host a town hall. PAGE A3



SPORTS

Girls take second

Lady Lions beat Junction City. PAGE B1

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Coffee with the Editor Every Tuesday 10 am

@ Backstage Bakery

Come chat about the community!

