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SPORTS
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Douglas libraries to close June 1

All branches will cease operations due to budget shortfall



Residents protest against library closures. Photo submitted by Joe Ross.

By Caitlyn May
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The Douglas County Board of Commissioners has ordered the closure of the county's library system, citing budgetary constraints.

Branches in Canyonville, Drain, Glendale, Myrtle Creek, Oakland, Reedsport, Riddle, Sutherlin, Winston and Yoncola will no longer be operational as of April 1. The main Roseburg branch will close June 1.

"As a result of declining timber receipts and dwindling reserve funds, the board is tasked with making very difficult decisions to ensure that basic public safety needs and other essential services for the community are met," said Douglas County Commissioner Chris Boice of the closures.

The 2017 budget for the library was set at \$1,354,398 which included a general fund contribution of \$625,048. However, the county opted to spend the majority of the budget in the first half of the fiscal year with the hope that voters would approve a bond measure to create a special tax district to fund the libraries. Ballot Measure 10-145 would have mandated 44 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. That measure was voted down by over 50 percent of voters.

According to the county, eight

full-time employees, along with 18 part-time and 12 on-call positions were notified of the pending closures on Jan. 9.

Residents have been aware of the possibility of the closures since the failure of the ballot measure and have addressed the county commission at several public meetings.

Under Oregon Revised Statute 357.621, the commission must hold public hearings prior to abolishing or withdrawing support from public libraries.

During the Jan. 9 meeting of the commission, Boice told concerned residents, "Know this: We as your commissioners know the benefit of a library in the community. We understand who uses it and what they use it for. This has never been a question of the libraries' importance. It's always been a question of funding."

At the time, Boice had made public three possible plans for the future of the libraries.

The first plan would have the county operate the library system under the current budget and see an immediate decline in library services as a result. The second option, dubbed the "90 day plan" would call for the libraries to continue offering the same level of service for 90 days before slowly reducing services. The third plan would call for additional funds to be transferred to the library from

Please see **LIBRARIES PG. 6A**

Tiny houses back on the table for E. Madison Ave.

By Caitlyn May
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"How can you be transparent when you hide things?" That was the question asked at the March 2 meeting of the Cottage Village Coalition and the question buzzing around the neighborhood of Madison Ave.

The street houses the property proposed for a "tiny home village" aimed at alleviating the affordable housing shortage in Cottage Grove. However, due to what the coalition cites as "legal reasons," some of the neighbors say they have been left out of the loop and questions regarding the logistics of the planned community have gone unanswered.

The latest confusion stems from the location of the village with the coalition sending an email to neighbors on Feb. 27 saying, "Dear Madison Street neighbors, we want to thank you for your input and interest in the Cottage Village Coalition's plans to create an affordable housing village in our community. At this time, we have decided to broaden our search for property in which to construct the village and are not pursuing

developing the property at 1430 E. Madison." The email was sent by coalition member Valeria Clarke, whose own home borders the Madison property. On March 1, Clarke told The Sentinel the reason for no longer moving forward on Madison could not be disclosed but that the group, was in fact, not moving forward on the property. However, a press release sent by coalition member Allan Jones noted that the group had received a \$200,000 grant and that, "The Cottage Village Coalition has not yet chosen a site for this project. They are looking at sites of approximately one acre for 14 tiny homes. A site on Madison Ave. has been under consideration but the group has decided to keep the search open."

At Thursday's meeting, when asked about the confusion over the Madison property, the group said it had not "abandoned" the property, but instead, had tried to "phrase" the message in the press release in a way that still included the property as being on the table. As of March 2, the contract for Madison was still open and the closing date had been moved to March 8.

Please see **HOMES PG. 6A**

RYLA kids report to Rotary Club

By Caitlyn May
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The Rotary Club in Cottage Grove has sent more students to RYLA than any other club in the district.

The camp, also known as Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, works to introduce young leaders of the community to the task of service and community engagement, developing the leaders of tomorrow. According to Rotary, the camp's mission is to teach students how to build communication, develop strategies to become a strong leader, learn from community leaders and peers and form lasting friendships.

On Thursday, March 2, the students selected for this year's RYLA camp reported back to the local Rotary club to discuss their experiences and thank the club for their efforts in sending them. No student pays the high fees associated with the sleep-away experience. Instead, the local Rotary club handles the bill.

For more than an hour, students shared the day-to-day happenings of RYLA camp with Cottage Grove's service club.

They spoke of being separated into "species groups" and learning to work with students they had not met prior to arriving at camp. Each group was responsible for pitching a service project and for the local students, the projects ranged from a new take on food donation to traditional means of fundraising. Each student commented on the camp's ability to coax them from their shell, expand their understanding of leadership and overcome their fears of public speaking.

The group told Rotary of nightly talent shows, team building exercises and other activities meant to examine leadership.



On Friday, March 3, children from Aprovecho took to the streets of Cottage Grove to protest in favor of environmental health, equality and other issues. The group was lead by Heather Greene of Aprovecho who teaches an after-school program for elementary school children. The group started at Backstage Bakery on Main St. before heading to All America City Square Park, better known as Opal Park for a sit-in.

HISTORY
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As Cottage Grove heads towards a population of 10,000, see where we started. **PAGE A8**



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Coffee with the Editor
Every Tuesday 12 pm
@ Backstage Bakery
Come chat about the community!

