

Cottage Grove: A Look Back

The current population of Cottage Grove stands at 9,795. Once the city hits 10,000, a slew of changes must be made to accommodate the new population as mandated by state law. Our water system will be updated, our trash collection will change and our neighborhoods will grow just a bit more. But before we officially reach that magic number of 10,000, let's take a look back at how we got here. Over the next year, The Sentinel will feature this column once a month examining the milestones that made Cottage Grove the vibrant, historical town it is today. With the help of the local historical society and the stories of those before us, we will visit the decisions, construction and consequences of the city's growth. From its beginnings as Slabtown to the mining craze, to the impact of particular local families and their contributions, to the installation of Interstate 5, local chain stores and the construction and housing crash. In 30 years, Cottage Grove has developed its own style and voice but in the days before we find ourselves stretching towards the future again, let's take a look back at how we became Cottage Grove: The city on the verge of 10,000.

By Caitlyn May
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The story goes that George Ramsey and James Johnson killed an "Indian." They did it in Roseburg and no one knows says why. It was 1863. By the time they stopped running, they made it to Calapooya Mountains. It was by accident that they found the gold.

They call it the "Discovery Phase" now but in 1864 through 1880, things were just growing at the Bohemia Mining District. In the 16 years that we now describe as one of the three eras that define the development of the district, more than 100 claims were staked and the Miner's Code of Laws was adopted.

Long after the gold was gone and the seekers came down from the mines, Cottage Grove continued to grow, partly due to the golden foundation the mining industry helped create.

A year after George and James sought refuge from their own sins in the area, prospectors turned out for their chance to find their own shiny piece of the future. They utilized sluice boxes and discovered high-grade ore with values estimated at \$30,000 a ton. They discovered mine after mine including the Musick Mine, Champion and Annie. The first telephone line came via Frank Jordan. The first signs of a lull, via 1919.

Before the lull, though, the mines funded life in Cottage Grove. The Musick Mine was particularly active for at least eight months, growing into a small city complete with a chute, sawmill and bunk-

houses. Descendants of Musick Mine's workers still call Cottage Grove today, in part because of the financial windfall the mines created for the city just 35 miles southeast.

Life was good. Mostly until 1929 for reasons that, unlike the "Indian's" apparent crime that warranted death, have long made the history books.

In 1939, Higgins and Hinsdale leased the district again and created a new floating mill at Champion Mine leading to the discovery of gold, silver, lead, copper and zinc.

Today, much of the past is in disrepair. The gold, less than valuable if it can be reached. But for visitors, the Bohemia Mining District still provides a view.



Armory lead threats exaggerated, no public health risk

By Caitlyn May
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Despite recent reports to the contrary, there is no immediate health threat being caused by lead and asbestos levels in the

Cottage Grove Armory. Also, local officials and organizers are not worried.

"We knew there would be asbestos and lead when we purchased the building," Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers said, noting the recent story in a Eugene media outlet that alleged lead tests raised concerns about health risks.

Moreover, Meyers said the city no longer tests areas of the building while doing restoration work.

"We just treat it as if there is lead paint. It's an old building and we're going to assume there's lead," he said.

The city purchased the armory in 2010 and received a hygiene assessment that reported lead and asbestos in the building.

Of all the areas that tested positive for the dangerous substance, none of them were located in the firing range, despite regional media outlets coverage of the issue in other armory locations.

"Where they would shoot the guns, at the end of the space, they poured new concrete that is six inches thick," Meyers said, noting that if the ammunition contained traces lead, it was properly sealed under the latest layer of concrete and no longer a threat to the public's health.

Reports concerning the building's high lead levels note that the kitchen counter tested positive for the substance. However, the reports do not take into account the current use for the areas, according to Meyers.

"That hasn't been used as a kitchen in decades. It was used as storage when it was tested," Meyers said. "In fact, when the guy who was doing the windows was here, he was using it as a workspace too."

Vintage Window Restoration, the company tasked with replacing the aging windows, was certified and licensed to handle lead and, according to Meyers, all companies that work in the building will need the same credentials.

"They're trained in how to dispose of it," Meyers said, noting the companies specialized equipment.

While the armory has tested above acceptable levels of lead in some locations around the building, Meyers said other explanations for the positive tests exist.

"One spot tested high but it's right along the double doors and right outside the double doors were painted stairs and that paint, no doubt, had lead in it," he said.

The continued restoration of the armory, according to Meyers, will take into account the positive tests but he noted that reports which claim worry over health concerns are exaggerated.


Plans for the armory's future were released earlier this year with organizers revealing a second, street-level entrance, an elevator and other upgrades that would bring the building into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act. Also on the list for restoration are the building's restrooms and main entrance.

The building is expected to serve as a community center and has already played host to a chamber banquet and retirement celebrations.



Despite reports from Eugene that note worry over armory lead levels, the city says all precautions are being taken. Pictured: Vintage Window Restoration completing the armory's window project. Photos courtesy of Facebook.





Center for Massage Therapy

Elizabeth Chandra LaHusen
Thank you to all of my clients
for your many years of support.

**I have had the pleasure to serve you
and wish you continued health
and peace of mind.**

**Even though I am retiring
I look forward
to our continued friendships.
Warmly, Chandra**

Nicole will continue to schedule clients.



ALLIGATOR AUCTION

**SATURDAY - April 1st
11AM-4PM**

**Aprovecho/Stove Tec Big Foot Two Door Cookstove, 1
Door cookstove, Firefly Lantern cookstove
and stainless steel super pot.**
**48 inch glass top dining table and four chairs,
glass front display gun cabinet, gold & white Tiffany style
hanging light fixture, metal outdoor adjustable bar table,
clothing & jewelry, Ashley moss green rocker/recliners,
dog food, local food certificates and
Shilo Inn & Oregon Gardens lodging**
Many items in KNND's front window.
**To get a bidder number call KNND
between 2-5 pm at 541-942-2468.**
**KNND Alligator Radio trade auction is
Saturday, April 1st from 11am until 4pm.**



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A percent of the proceeds to benefit South Lane Dental Clinic