



Cottage Grove Sentinel

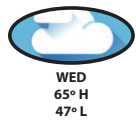
SOUTH LANE AND DOUGLAS COUNTY'S MOST AWARD-WINNING NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1889



SPORTS
Teams ready for spring, seniors profiled and a heartbreaking loss for UO.

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MAKING GOOD



Cottage Grove Mayor Jeff Gowing helps planning commission Alan Widener and other volunteers clean-up discarded greenhouse material on Saturday, April 1 during a work day aimed at readying a former inmate camp in Veneta for its new residents: veterans suffering from PTSD.

Council members, veterans, volunteers and a mayor came together on a Saturday to roll up their sleeves and transform a detention center into a house of hope.

By Caitlyn May
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The road to get there is long. A steady climb up a winding, narrow country highway and just when you think you've gone too far, there's another handful of miles to go. The journey is both real and metaphoric for the men and women who will eventually inhabit the former work camp at 21600 Siuslaw River Rd. in Veneta. The county shut the inmate program down in 2008 leaving the building to the spiders and mice but a new effort is being made to transform the walls of confinement into a springboard for newfound freedom.

"I told my wife when I retire, I'm going home to the camp." Dan Buckwald served as a law enforcement employee at the camp when it still housed inmates. He watched the low-risk offenders build greenhouses, cook meals, tend to the property and blossom.

"The city has distractions. The sirens, the lights, the drugs," he said. "Here, you're watching elk graze."

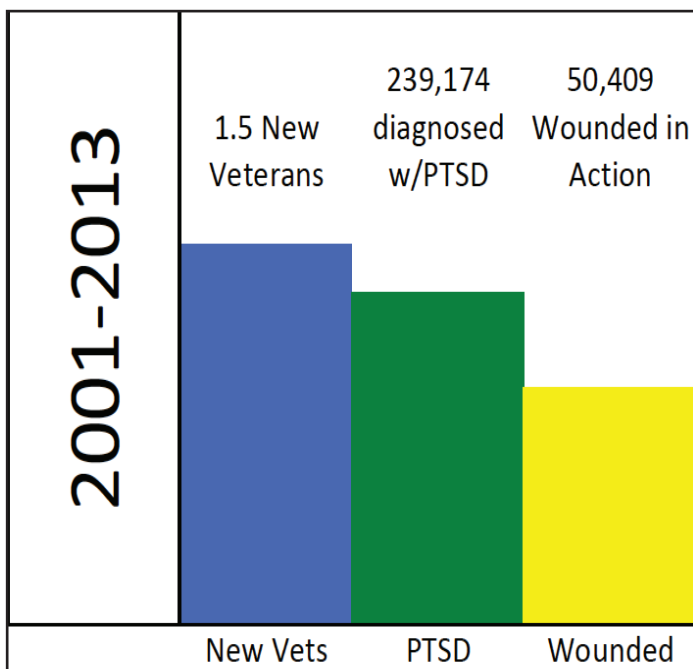
Buckwald is part of the team at Veterans Legacy that is working to rebuild the camp as part of a broader goal: to rebuild veterans down on their luck and looking for help. The group won the right to lease the property from the county for five years and is in the process of ironing out the details of what will become a transitional space for veterans to gather themselves again either from combat or the subsequent damage it causes including PTSD and the self-medication that sometimes follows.

"We want to give them a place to be," said Veteran's Legacy board member Mark Oberle. "We want to give them a sense of camaraderie, vocational skills and a place they can come back to, a support system."

The program is hoping to start with five veterans but can house up to 50. Individuals will be recommended to the new camp by clinic professionals but, according to Oberle, outside influence stops there.

"What we don't want is for a judge to say, 'either you're going to jail or going to the camp.' We want it to be voluntary, we want people who want to get better," he said.

Therapists and councilors will be more than welcome, they'll be a part of the program. Of the handful of buildings, in various states



of disrepair, there is what used to be a classroom. A large gathering space with individual one-on-one, closed door areas that the group hopes to utilize for concealing sessions with several agencies already on board to help.

"We have Goodwill of Lane County offering to help with vocational skills and job applications," Oberle said. "We want them to know what's a credit score, why is it important, they'll get their food handler's card but the concealing that's important. They will continue whatever formal counseling they have been doing."

Call to Action

"I damn near cried when I came back here," Buckwald said. He stands overlooking the back half of the camp that he once saw thrive with classrooms and meticulously kept gardens. He brushes the notion away and points off into the distance where the tree line hides an additional 30 acres.

Please see **VETS PG. A11**

Paktech readies for opening in CG

By Caitlyn May
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According to Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers, PakTech is ready for business-almost.

"It looks spectacular. That building has never looked that good," Meyers said.

The company had divided its renovation into building improvements and tenant im-

provements and as of this week, the first half of the project is completed.

"They've done the improvements to the building they would have to do if anyone were to move in," Meyers said. "Now, they'll start working on getting the specific equipment in, the equipment the tenant, or they, will need."

Paktech will be utilizing half of the build-

ing and reserving the other half for possible future expansions. Currently, improvements were made to the half the company intends to use immediately. The roof, however, is completely new.

"They didn't re-roof just half of the building," Meyers noted.

The project, according to Meyers, is still on schedule to open later this year.

The Armory: The whole truth

The EPA, city council, OSHA and the city manager respond to Eugene news report of implied mismanagement and public health risks

By Caitlyn May
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"How dare they compare us to something like that," Richard Meyers said of a recent report from a Eugene media outlet which declared the city

of Cottage Grove was not conducting comprehensive lead surveys on the armory.

The comparison was made between the city's armory and others around the state which have been closed by the U.S. military until lead can be addressed in the facilities.

"Those readings were 38,000 and 31,000," Meyers said. "Our highest reading was 345," he said of the initial lead testing completed in 2004.

It is Meyers contention that the city is in no way endangering residents by inviting them to use the armory without conducting expensive testing. The city is, however, addressing possible lead levels with Meyers noting that while it does use over the counter test strips, every contractor is certified in lead removal and no further testing is being done because the city assumes the presence of lead and acts accordingly.

"Not testing before renovating is fine if you're going to treat everything as if it has lead in it by default," said city councilor Jake Boone. "We're not testing because we're assuming everything has lead." He also noted that the areas found to contain lead were cleaned prior to the building being handed over to the city.

"There might be means to worry if lead was introduced after that. But it hasn't, he said.

As The Sentinel reported previously, the most likely source for lead dust, the gun range, has been fitted with new concrete.

"The gun range went away in the 60s," Boone said. "Unless there's some reason to think that between 2004 and now someone was putting lead in the building, there's no grounds to believe we should expect to find more lead than was there."

Mark Peterson of OSHA noted that city employees would be required to follow strict procedures in handling lead. Penny Woos McCormic of Oregon OSHA also noted that the regulations are tailored to adults with an eight-hour exposure.

"When it comes to Oregon OSHA, we handle worker safety so our jurisdiction isn't the general public but they need to protect their workers," he said.

OSHA standards note that, "If your employees will be working on a home that was built before 1978, the best thing to do is hire a certified lead-based paint inspector or a risk assessor, who can tell you if lead is present and how much is there. Lead paint test kits are also available, but they may not be 100 percent reliable."

Please see **ARMORY PG. A6**

Planned Parenthood temporarily closed

By Caitlyn May
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Locals visiting the local Planned Parenthood location have been met with locked doors and a full answering machine leaving more

questions than answers.

While the office has only been operating one day per week, the organization has seen the Cottage Grove location has closed its doors--temporarily.

"We have been in the process of updating our staffing and licensing for the Cottage Grove location and will reopen soon," a representative from the organization said. "We don't have an exact date at this time."

The closure of the local office comes just as the federal government announced a congressional vote which defunded the program.

Planned Parenthood provides women's health services including access to mammograms and testing for sexually transmitted diseases. It also performs vasectomies, citing 10 percent of its patients as male. Despite rhetoric noting that the organization provides abortion at taxpayer costs, the Hyde Amendment prohibits tax dollars for the use of abortion in all cases other than incest and rape or if the mother's life is in immediate danger. However, the organization does use Medicaid dollars for other ailments and 43 percent of its revenue relies on federal funds.

COMMUNITY

"Butt-pickers"

Two residents clean the streets of cigarette butts.
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GOVERNMENT

Retiring Jan Wellman

The city's public work's director hangs up his hat.
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Come chat about the community!

