

YAC will visit Salem again for 'whippets' bill



By Caitlyn May
cmay@cgsentinel.com

When Karen Munsel spoke before the city council, she told them about the nitrous oxide canisters being sold at local smoke shops and about how the cheap, easily accessible habit had affected her personally. She told them something should be done about the dangerous habit effecting local teens and while she spoke, the youth advisory council representative was paying attention.

After relaying Munsel's story and discussing the issue with city administration, the Cottage Grove Youth Advisory Council approached representative Cedric Hayden. Now, as the legislative session readies to begin turning bills into law, the youth advisory council will see its efforts pay off.

House Bill 3030 has passed the house and will move onto the senate with a few minor changes. The age to purchase the canisters has moved from 18 to 21. The youth advisory council is expected to testify a second time on the bill, requesting that the location of the canisters be altered as well.

"They would ask that they not be sold in smoke shops because why? Why are they being sold there?" Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers asked. "Anyone looking to use them for baking is not looking for them in a smoke shop."

"It's cheap," Meyers said of the high. "We may also ask to clean up the language a little in the bill," Meyers said. Currently, the bill singles out use as inhaling directly from the canister. However, teenagers are not technically inhaling from the

canister. Instead, they are utilizing a "cracker" that punctures a whole in the canister which fills a balloon that is affixed to the other end and the user inhales from the balloon.

"It's easy, it's cheap and it lasts about 10 minutes so you keep doing it over and over again. The issue with that is that eventually you can replace all the oxygen in your lungs and asphyxiate," Meyers explained.

The youth advisory board is expected to discuss the issue at its next meeting and on Tuesday, May 8, the youth board is expected to travel to Salem to testify on the issue again. This time, in front of the senate and with Munsel.

"It's great for them, they're excited," Meyers said. "They saw a law through the entire process."

Are you ready?

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Ten homeowner safety tips for protecting your home from wildfire this season



With fire season approaching, homeowners and communities can make their homes safer from wildfire by reducing flammable materials and creating more defensible space around their property.

The following information has been released by the Pacific Northwest region of the U.S. Forest Service. These ten safety tips can help firefighters and protect homes and neighborhoods from wildfires:

Clear leaves and other debris from roofs, gutters, porches and decks. This helps prevent embers from igniting your home.

Remove dead vegetation and other items from under your deck or porch, and within 10 feet of the house.

Screen in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.

Remove flammable materials (wood piles, propane tanks) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.

Wildfire can spread to tree tops. Prune trees so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground. Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.

Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose

of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.

Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair the shingles that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.

Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.

Enclose eaves and screen soffit vents using 1/8 mesh metal screening to prevent ember entry.

Every year, wildfires burn across the U.S., and more and more people are living in areas where wildfires pose a risk. Nearly 45 million homes abut or intermingle with wildlands and more than 72,000 U.S. communities are now at risk. By working together, residents can make their own property - and their neighborhood - much safer from wildfire.

The Firewise Communities Program encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners to prepare their homes from the risk of wildfire. The program provides resources to help homeowners learn how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together to take action now to prevent losses.

South Lane Fire and Rescue has noted that while residents may feel safer after a particularly wet winter, it's often when the department receives the most calls.

Because vegetation has grown more in some cases and residents feel more comfortable than they would if the winter had created a dry season, it is not unusual for residents to become restless in their behavior around campfires or private burning in their yards.

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PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.
South Lane Fire & Rescue • 233 Harrison Ave, Cottage Grove 541-942-4493 • 55 South 1st Street, Creswell 541-895-2506



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