

Sweet Springs opens to fanfare

Eclipse mania may (or may not) bypass CG



By Caitlyn May
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Excitement over the total solar eclipse expected on August 21 hasn't quite reached Cottage Grove. The event has garnered attention up and down Interstate-5 with camp grounds and hotels sold out for months and merchandise lining Main streets from Salem down to Eugene. It has also prompted entrepreneur-minded residents to offer their homes to eclipse seekers who were not able to grab up a coveted hotel or camp ground reservation. The movement has caused headaches in larger cities but according to Cottage Grove Planner Amanda Ferguson, residents hoping to make an extra buck off the eclipse in Cottage Grove are faced with both good and bad news.

things that repeat in nature." That's the good news. Alternatively, those hoping to rent out space for the eclipse in Cottage Grove may find a lack of interest from eclipse seekers according to city officials.

"We don't have a specific code for AirBnB and it hasn't risen to become an issue where we would adopt an ordinance," Ferguson said.

Both Ferguson and Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Travis Palmer have previously noted that Cottage Grove is not in the main path of totality for the eclipse and as a result, the demand for hotel rooms and viewing spaces is much lower than in Linn and Marion counties and elsewhere in Lane County. Likewise, city manager Richard Meyers noted that the city was bracing for increased traffic. "People may come here because they can't get to where there is totality but we're not expecting a lot. We're not in the path of totality," he said.

The company, marketed as a way for homeowners to rent out rooms or yard space to travelers looking for a deal, has garnered attention during the eclipse hysteria with several counties, including Marion, adopting new rules and regulations to manage the growing popularity of residents renting out their homes.

However, of the city's four hotel or motel establishments, three are completely sold out with employees noting that calls have been coming in since January. An employee at Relax Inn said the facility had a cancellation and within five minutes, the room was booked again by another party.

However, in Cottage Grove, residents are not bound by such rules.

The Oregon Health Authority has listed the eclipse as one of the state's current hazards along with air toxins and West Nile Virus. The organization has issued information on how to protect spectators' eyes as well as heat-related health information on its website which reads, "Up to 1 million visitors are expected to come to Oregon to view the eclipse."

"We do have a code that requires a conditional use permit for bed and breakfast establishments," Ferguson said. "If you have more than three rooms for rent than you need a bed and breakfast conditional use permit. But you don't need anything for a one-time event. The code is more concerned about

For more information on how to view the eclipse, please visit www.oregon.gov/oem/hazard-sprep/Pages/2017-Total-Solar-Eclipse.aspx.



On Saturday, July 30, Sweet Springs Family Farm opened its doors to welcome the community to the city's newest bed and breakfast. The facility offers events, farm parties, outdoor movie nights and gift shop. Visitors can wander the property and visit with the animals that range from geese to horses, and take advantage of the kids' play area or stay at the farm for a bed and breakfast experience. Located at 71393 London Rd., the bed and breakfast sits on acres of farm land and offers guests home baked bread, several lodging options and rest and relaxation in Cottage Grove.

Several community members came out to the farm to welcome the business to town including the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce which hosted the facility's ribbon cutting ceremony.

Photos courtesy Greg Lee.

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