



# Cottage Grove Sentinel

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Special

## Back to School Section Inside!



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WED 85°/54°  
For a complete six-day forecast please see page A5.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2017

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## Airport welcome center opens

By Zach Silva  
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With a group of supporters, donors and interested citizens gathered around, the Cottage Grove Airport Welcome Center officially opened its doors last Tuesday. The center, which cost just over \$100,000 and was all funded through local donations is a small building that features a bathroom, a mini fridge with water and a couch for pilots who fly into the Cottage Grove airport and need a place where they can relax.

The project, that was spearheaded by Nadine Kelly and her husband began, as anyone who was part of the planning process will tell you, "three years and eight months ago."

"We were at a... tourism meeting, back in January of 2014 and I just turned to my husband and said we need a bathroom [at the airport] and that's exactly how it started. We need a bathroom and now here,

Please see AIRPORT PG. A8

## Wildfires creep closer

By Caitlyn May  
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More than a dozen wildfires are currently burning in Oregon and Washington, causing poor air quality and evacuation orders in Douglas County.

As of Friday, August 18, the closest wildfire to Cottage Grove was burning in Lowell, just over 27 miles north of the city.

South Lane Fire and Rescue (SLFR) has sent an ambulance there as part of a contract with the federal government, according to SLFR Division Chief Joe Raade.

Lightning is said to be the cause of the fire which was detected August 10 and has burned over 2,000 acres.

The Milli fire in Sisters, Oregon has burned 3,000 acres thus far and crews there are expected to be joined by SLFR personnel

Please see FIRES PG. A9

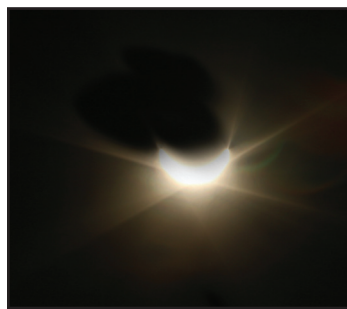


PHOTO BY GREG LEE

The sun eclipsed by the moon for just over one minute at 98 percent in Cottage Grove on Monday, August 21. The event drew in tourists to the state but failed to deliver on traffic jams and crowded to capacity cities. The last national total solar eclipse fell over the U.S. in 1918.

# There goes the sun

### After a year of hype, the total solar eclipse hits Oregon



By Caitlyn May  
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By 9 a.m., people began to trickle into the Best Western parking lot on Gateway Blvd. They were some of the hundreds of patrons who had bought rooms around Cottage Grove, creating booked hotels. Hours before, Dutch Bros. had recalled the eclipse glasses it had given out the sat before. Along Interstate-5, cars

pulled to the side of the road despite warnings from state agencies, roadside stops filled up and campsites that had been booked for months hadn't quite found capacity but were buzzing nonetheless. Businesses along Main St. emptied, bank tellers took to parking lots and folks strolling down the road paused as the temperature dropped, darkness fell and the sun vanished from the sky.

It was the moment the nation had been waiting for after nearly a year of hype and media coverage: the total solar eclipse.

The moon's shadow passed over the sun, blocking it out completely in Salem and other cities in the path of totality. For Cottage Grove, approximately 98 percent of the sun vanished and the phenomenon hit its peak

around 10:17 a.m.

The event had been long touted as the greatest tourism event to hit Oregon--the first state to be touched by the nation-spanning eclipse--this summer.

However, despite the hype, traffic jams and gas shortage did not begin last Friday as expected. Traffic kept an even flow and some campsites went unfilled despite reservations that showed a booked space.

While gas stations in Prineville and north of Cottage Grove reported gas shortages by Sunday, the gaggle of tourists did not seem to hit the city as of noon on Monday.

The reason, according to traffic reports around the state may have been that eclipse chasers left the state shortly after the sun emerged from the moon's

shadow.

Traffic reports had the Interstate-5 backed up with red traffic alerts by 11 a.m. on Monday with authorities asking the travelers to exercise patience with the clogged roads on their ride home.

The last solar eclipse to sweep across the entire nation occurred in 1918. The next total solar eclipse is set to hit on July 2, 2019--if you happen to be in Chile or Argentina.

For the next chance to spot the phenomenon in the United States, eclipse lovers will have to wait until 2024. By chance you miss that eclipse, the following years will allow the chance to see a total eclipse in the U.S.: 2045, 2052, 2078 and in 2079 there will be a total solar eclipse over the state of Maine.

## ODOT funds possible for Gateway



By Caitlyn May  
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During the Monday, August 14 Cottage Grove City Council meeting, Cottage Grove Mayor Jeff Gowing had to get something off his chest.

"If you're going to be on your phone the whole time, don't waste your city's money," he said in a message to city officials across the state he witnessed on their phones during break-out sessions at workshops and conferences meant to share information among public officials.

Luckily, for Cottage Grove, Gowing put his phone down at the most recent mayors' conference and looked up. He managed to connect with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) officials about the condition of the city's roads around popular tourist and, more noticeably, semi-truck traffic spot Gateway Blvd. The stop is located just off Interstate-5 and generates lunch-time rush hour traffic but it's the damage those semi-trucks cause that was at the heart of the conversation Gowing had.

Gowing noted that he has approached ODOT officials and they were receptive to the idea of joining the city to fund the repair of the road.

"It's somewhere between a meeting at a conference and a definite thing," Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers said.

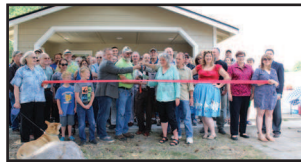
ODOT and city officials are set to meet this week.

If the opportunity falls through, Meyers said the city will move forward with plans to go to bid on repairs for Gateway as well as Mosby Creek Rd. The projects are far from the complete list of repairs needed throughout the city but after voters denied a gas tax increase ballot measure in November, city funds for such projects are low.

### COMMUNITY

#### Welcome!

Airport welcome center is open for business. PAGE A8



### EDUCATION

#### Back to school

All the news for a new school year at South Lane. PAGE B1

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## Coffee with the Editor Every Tuesday 12 pm

@ Backstage Bakery

### Come chat about the community!

