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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017

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PHOTO BY GREG LEE

Former mayors and current mayor Jeff Gowing pose for a photograph during the second annual Mayor's Ball held on Saturday, October 14. Below, Gowing and his wife take advantage of the live swing band and take to the dance floor.

Marijuana money headed to cities

By Caitlyn May
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The city of Cottage Grove is finally getting its fair share of the pot.

The state announced early last week that \$85 million generated by Oregon's marijuana tax would be distributed to local municipalities after a year-long wait. Cottage Grove will be receiving \$42,502.80.

"It's in our account as a pending deposit," Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers said. "But we don't have any timeline yet on what that cov-

ers," he said, noting that the city received \$11,000 from local marijuana tax for the time period between January and May. "The state should have been sharing the money with the cities a year ago so is this from a year ago or a different time period? We don't know yet," Meyers said.

State law required 10 percent of the money to be given to counties for local law enforcement and an additional 10 percent was earmarked for cities

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MAYOR'S BALL

By Caitlyn May
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The first event ever held in the Cottage Grove armory was a

dance, in the summer of 1931.

Eighty-six years later in the chill of the first whispers of autumn, the storied drill hall found itself under a canopy of tulle and housing the who's who of the city.

The second annual Mayor's Ball brought out the tuxedos and gowns on Saturday night in an attempt to raise \$300,000 to renovate the exterior of the building in an ongoing restoration effort that will eventually see the entirety of the building made compliant with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and restored for use as a community center.

"We are in desperate need of space," development coordinator for the project, Christina Lund told the crowd. Lund was hired by the city a little over a year ago to steer the fundraising and restoration effort.

Since beginning the project, Lund said there has been 16 nonprofit events inside the armory as well as 25 grants applied for and more than 100 tours given. The windows in the drill hall have also been completed.

"This will be the living room of Cottage Grove," she said.

Before the building becomes a hub of community events, the city must complete the renovation, including lead abatement.

The city purchased the armory from the military in 2004. At the time, lead tests showed several areas that would need to be addressed. As recently as this year, the issue of lead exposure was fodder for public comment with at least four locations showing higher than legally allowed levels of the substance.

After re-testing the areas and determining that the lead-painted stairs were responsible for the higher levels of lead, the city spent nearly \$30,000 to clean the stairs and re-test

the areas.

"We tested five areas and do you know what our level was? Zero," Lund said, Saturday night.

According to Cottage Grove City Manager, the actual levels inside the armory did not actually test as zero, but rather below the lowest level the test evaluates.

Meyers said the levels would be kept low by housekeeping as the city continues to renovate the building with contractors licensed to remove lead.

Fundraising efforts have been continuous with donors being courted and events being held. This summer, the armory held its first ice cream social, serving more than 900 scoops of ice cream and giving the public the opportunity to see the building it may soon use for social gatherings.

The plan to transform the armory currently includes a slew of ADA upgrades including a new entrance with elevator ac-

Please see **MAYOR'S BALL PG. A11**

New lead tests on armory revealed

By Caitlyn May
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Another round of testing on the Cottage Grove Armory rendered lead levels of zero according to development coordinator Christina Lund.

Lund made the announcement during the second annual Mayor's Ball held on Saturday, October 14. However, testing levels revealed zero is not quite an accurate number.

The city tested five locations inside the building and according to Cottage Grove City Manager, the report did not show zero lead levels.

"It doesn't say zero because the test only goes to 10," he said. "We could have been zero or we could have been five but

it's well below the limit."

The latest tests come after the armory found itself the center of media attention which cited the city's methods in dealing with lead during the renovation process. A test conducted earlier this year, revealed that nearly every location tested during the time of the sale of the building had decreased in its lead level--except for one.

The area immediately in the entrance to the building had jumped from 49 in 2004 to 90 during the testing this year-- an issue Meyers said was caused by the lead painted steps just outside the door.

"It's conceivable that, with

Please see **ARMORY PG. A7**



SLFR heads to CA fires

By Caitlyn May
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Personnel from South Lane County Fire and Rescue (SLFR) have left for California.

Four members of SLFR--including chief John Wooten and division chief Joe Raade--have been deployed to the Santa Rosa area as part of the Lane Strike Team.

They join approximately 11,000 firefighters from around the country (including five strike teams from Oregon) working to contain the wildfire that has claimed the lives of nearly 40 people and injured more than 100 others.

The origin of the fires burning in California's wine country are still unknown. However, the Public Utilities Commission

reported on October 12 that it would investigate PG&E--a power company that services the area--for its possible role in the wildfires.

Stories have emerged from California detailing the severity of the fires including heartbreaking tales of individuals seeking refuge in their swimming pools, cars catching fire as they flee and family members lost to the flames as the fires continue to claim houses and lives.

SLFR released a statement via its social media saying, "SLFR, as part of Lane Strike Teams one and two, continue to be engaged on the lines of the fires in the Santa Rosa area. These are fast moving, dynamic fires. We

Please see **ARMORY PG. A9**

Construction on 6th St. to begin

Residents will see work start on 6th and Mosby Creek Rd.

By Caitlyn May
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Cottage Grove residents will soon see their commute around down become a bit more lively.

Construction on the 6th St. and Mosby Creek Rd. is set to begin on October 23. However, the construction is not expected to close any of the main roads in the city,

but rather, take up just a portion of the road, letting vehicles pass by and no doubt, cause rubbernecking.

According to planning and community development manager Faye Stewart, crews will begin digging out soft spots on the road. A second week of construction will see the pavement ground down and replaced. Weather permitting, the project should be completed by November 9.

The Request for Proposal returned a cost of \$427,365.36 for the project, not including the cost of flaggers. The funds were moved from covering bridge repair after the state legislature passed a landmark transportation bill that will see money flow into the city's coffers in January to replace the money meant for repairs to several bridges around the city.

COMMUNITY
Carousel
The carousel makes its community debut. **PAGE A3**



HEALTH
LGBTQ support
South Lane Mental Health offering LGBTQ support group for youths.. **PAGE A8**

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Coffee with the Editor
Last Thursday of the month
12 pm
@ Backstage Bakery
Come chat about the community!

