

Saturday Event to benefit Swinging Bridge



COURTESY PHOTO

City workers close off the entrance to the historic Swinging Bridge, which a local group is working to re-open to the public.

By Caitlyn May
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When Skye Hefner was a baby, her grandmother would strap her to the infant seat on the back of her bicycle and cross the Swinging Bridge in Cottage Grove. When they would make it to the other side, the toddler would tell her grandmother what a good job she had done.

"She was scared of it (the bridge) but she'd hold her breath and take me," Hefner said. "I don't remember, because I was so little but she said I would tell her she did good."

Years later, when Hefner returned to Cottage Grove and found the Swinging Bridge closed, she had one reaction. "I was like, 'Noooo,' because it has so many memories for me," she said.

This Saturday, Hefner hopes to contribute to the ongoing effort to save the bridge after it was deemed unsafe by the city's engineer.

The South Lane Women's Network is still new and was formed after Hefner asked her friend Kristine Sweezy if she would be interested.

"We put it on Facebook and now we have 140 members," she said.

Before forming the group, Hefner was a member of another networking group that was based in Portland but had meetings in Eugene. "For those who are moms, if you live in Cottage

Grove and work in Eugene and you have to come home and take care of the kids and then drive back to Eugene for the meeting, it's a lot so we wanted something local," she said.

The purpose of the group is to promote businesses in Cottage Grove but

raised by the Friends of the Cottage Grove Swinging Bridge.

"We got permits to close the road so we can have dancing in the street," Hefner said. Music will be provided by the Rockin' Reveleers and DJ Diva Kat, food trucks will be parked outside

and a 50/50 raffle will be held. The event begins at 10 a.m. and is scheduled to run until 6 p.m. on Saturday.

Dana Merryday of the Friends of the Swinging Bridge will also be present with the group's rope bridge for kids to try.

The latest estimates to repair the bridge were close to \$1 million with the city of Cottage Grove announcing it was in the process of applying for several grants to fund the project. The bridge has been closed since the fall of 2016.

The South Lane Women's Network will be donating the proceeds from the event to the Swinging Bridge and Hefner said the group welcomes any woman in South Lane to join. Meetings are held twice a month and membership is free.

"We get started in a business and when someone is first starting in business, that's when they're looking for networking and if they find it, they find out it costs money," Hefner said. "When you just sunk all your money to start a new business, it's hard to hand out \$30, \$40 a month or \$7, \$20, \$100 a year, it's a lot."

This Saturday, the South Lane Women's Network will hold a free event at the Cottage Grove Armory in the hopes of adding to money already raised by the Friends of the Cottage Grove Swinging Bridge.

also to give new businesses a step up and existing businesses a supportive hand.

"We're here to show that businesses in Cottage Grove exist," Hefner said. "Because everyone knows that you can go to Eugene or Springfield and find everything. Since I started the group, there's so many businesses I didn't even know were in Cottage Grove and it's been amazing. We don't have to go to Eugene or Springfield."

Earlier this year, some members of the group attended a benefit hosted by Friends of the Cottage Grove Swinging Bridge and decided it was an effort they wanted to get behind.

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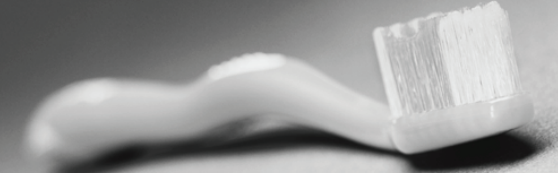


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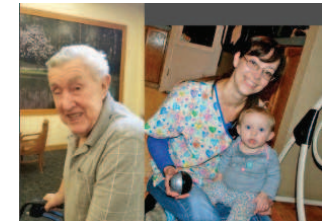
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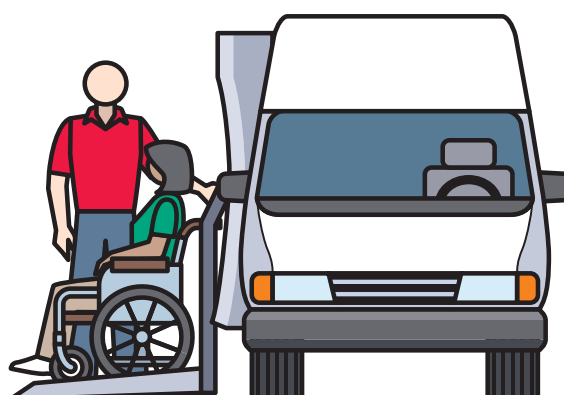


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