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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2018

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## Stage set for Opal program expansions, additions

By Damien Sherwood  
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The Opal Center for Arts & Education welcomed its new executive director Michele Rose this month, preparing for a year of events that include old favorites and new additions.

Rose, who had served as acting director since last October, hopes to bring young people into the spotlight this year by expanding on the center's youth program.

"My main focus is to make it year-round program," said Rose. "So there's always something going on around here that involves kids."

Past iterations of the program have been show-specific, revolving around finding and training young actors for a chosen performance. Set to arrive this spring, the newly-dubbed Opal Young Performers program is opening its doors to youths from ages five to 18, promising a wide range of opportunities for participants. The program is intended to run the gamut of theater-related experiences including playwriting, musical scoring, set design and lighting.

"The whole thing. Not just the acting part," said Rose. "And we're trying to encourage young playwrights to write something and put it on our stage. Age doesn't matter. As long as you have motivation, there's a lot you can do."



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

**Michele Rose, new executive director at the Opal Center for Arts & Education, aims to give young people a spotlight as the theater focuses on the expansion of its youth program.**

As an introductory event, the youth program will hold a talent show May 3 and 4.

"We'll have kids of all ages participating in the talent show and one of the prizes will be a full scholarship

to our summer camp," said Rose. The summer camps, also part of the expansion, are week-long work-

shops that help young people hone their theater-related craft, See **Opal A6**

## Library introduces exoplanet exhibition

By Damien Sherwood  
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The Cottage Grove Public Library has successfully launched into the first month of its newest exhibition, Discover Exoplanets: The Search for Alien Worlds, a national traveling exhibition developed by the Space Science Institute's National Center for Interactive Learning.

"It's a free-standing exhibit that tells the story of NASA's search for exoplanets," said the library's Community Services Director Pete Barrell.

Surrounded by informational stands, four interactive kiosks invite users to learn about planets outside our own solar system on touchscreen interfaces.

"They're very user-friendly," said

See **Exoplanet A8**

## Armory closes for restroom construction

By Damien Sherwood  
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Saturday's Crab Feed hosted by Habitat for Humanity marked the Cottage Grove Armory's last event until April 13, highlighting a much-welcomed renovation of the building's upstairs restroom.

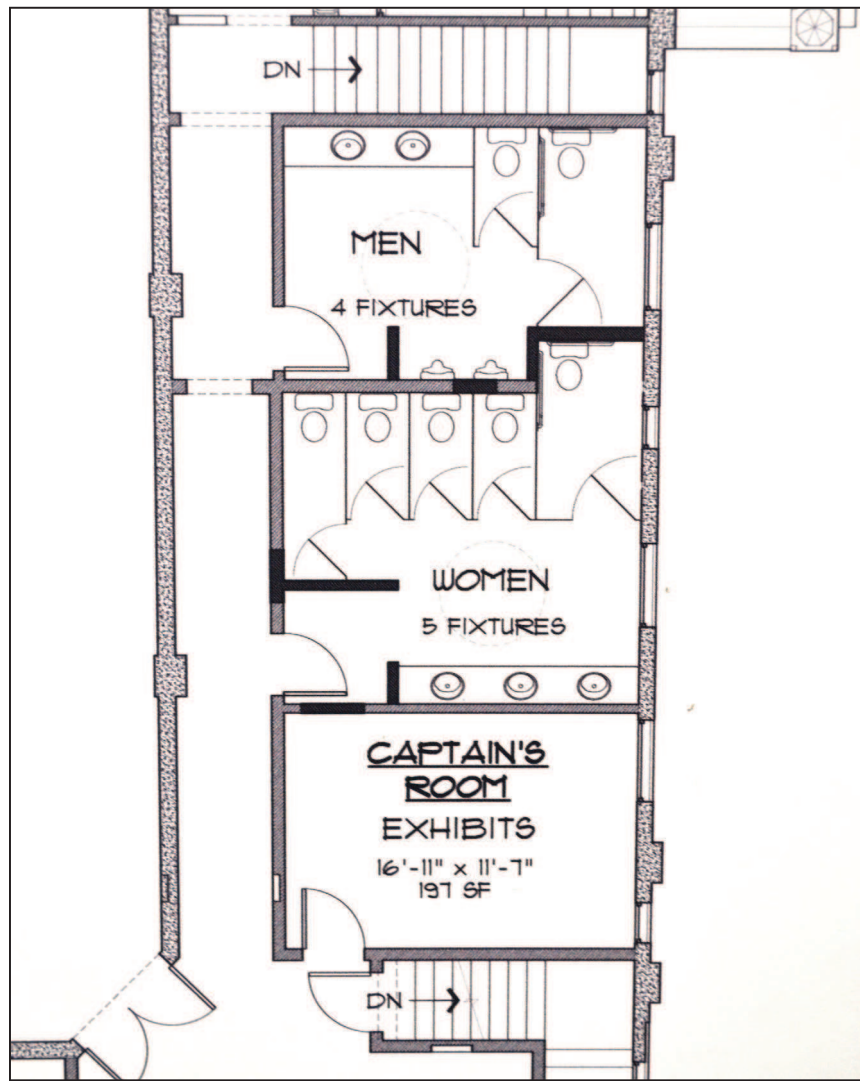
The project, estimated to cost between \$75,000 and \$85,000, will see the installation of two restrooms with multiple sinks, at least four toilet fixtures per room and isolated HVAC systems.

"It's going to be beautiful," said Meyers. "It will fit in with the 1930s décor and art deco look of the building. ... with modern plumbing and modern water supply and meeting the modern standards for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility."

The city's plan to realize the Armory as a community space has been a process of piecemeal changes to its internal and external structure, funded in part by renting out space and securing grants.

"Our vision is to put it back to what it was when it was constructed in 1931," said Meyers.

See **Armory A9**



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**A blueprint on display at the Armory shows plans for the new upstairs restrooms.**

## SLSD starts preparing for Latham closure

By Zach Silva  
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After January's decision to close Latham School at the end of this school year, the district now faces the realities that come with closing a school.

At the February South Lane School District school board meeting, communications coordinator Garrett Bridgens discussed the upcoming steps for the school. The most pressing of the issues discussed was where current Latham students will attend school next year. The district is in the process of re-drawing school district boundaries.

"One of our missions is to keep our neighborhoods together. If we have an area separated by a line, we have to determine where those are

See **Closure A9**

### COMMUNITY

**First Responder Brunch**  
Awards were given to first responders in recognition of their service to the city and surrounding area.



### COMMUNITY

**Titanic**  
Historical Society, and the Cottage Grove Museum, is hosting a presentation on the RMS Titanic

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VOLUME 131 • NUMBER 07



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