

To all who attended and gave of their time, talents and resources for the 2019

COTTAGE GROVE MAYOR'S BALL

We offer a heartfelt

THANK YOU!

Your contributions bring us closer to the complete renovation of the Cottage Grove Armory's iconic exterior.

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We also wish to offer a very special Thank You to the Faye and Lucille Stewart Foundation for its contribution to the evening's paddle-raise proceeds, and to our terrific Guest Speaker, MJ Hegar.



PHOTOS BY GREG LEE/FOR THE COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Attendees to last Saturday's Mayor's Ball place bids during the live auction (above); Maj. MJ Hegar (left) and Commissioner Heather Buch pose with a signed copy of Hegar's book (right).

Ball from A1

the Armory's first event sporting a new 40-foot flag pole before its facade, a contribution to the city by donor Steve Stewart.

For the second year in a row, recycled plastic fabrication company PakTech was the title sponsor of the event. The company opened a branch in Cottage Grove in 2016 and boasts of having kept more than 400 million milk jugs and juice jugs out of landfills since 2012.

General Manager Scott Diehl gave his thanks to the room.

"From the beginning, we've been welcomed into this community and it's a privilege to give back by supporting this building," he said.

In a highlight of the night, keynote speaker Maj. MJ Hegar took the stage to a standing ovation.

Hegar expressed her appreciation for the warm Cottage Grove welcome she'd experienced during her stay in town.

"We've never seen anything like this, a town that cares so much about its community," Hegar said,

a Texas resident "I'm going to take what I've learned from your amazing leaders and try to spread that throughout Texas."

Hegar gained national prominence after publishing her book "Shoot Like a Girl" in 2017, which chronicles her military record and subsequent foray into politics. For her service, Hegar was awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross for Valor.

With some brevity, Hegar recounted her story on the stage Saturday night.

Hegar was commissioned into the Air Force in 1999. As an accomplished helicopter pilot, she served three tours in Afghanistan and flew more than 100 combat search and rescue missions.

While co-piloting a helicopter on a Medevac mission, her aircraft was damaged by enemy fire, forcing an emergency landing. Hegar was injured by shrapnel during the attack, yet aided in the successful extraction of her team and other soldiers.

Following the event, Hegar was medically disqualified from flying due to a



serious back injury and the military's Combat Exclusion Policy prevented her from applying for ground combat positions. In 2012, she joined a lawsuit as a lead plaintiff, arguing that the military's policy was unconstitutional as it barred women from being assigned to certain organizations based on proximity to direct combat.

The policy was repealed the following year, marking a historic victory for female military members.

Proceeds from signed copies of Hegar's book on Saturday night were donated to the Armory's restoration.

The night was also a celebration of the Armory's history and the progress made in its reconstruction in recent years.

The city received possession of the Armory in 2010 after its decommission. It has since hosted dances, concerts, birthday parties, weddings and many other events. This November, roller skating is coming back and the Eugene Opera plans to use it for rehearsals early next year.

City Manager Richard Meyers stated that the building's restoration was, in effect, a project in conservation, citing 4,800 sacks of cement, 230,000 feet of lumber, 13,500 feet of maple flooring and 20 gallons of linseed oil as just some of the material used to originally construct the building in 1931.

"By reusing this building, those don't go back to the landfill," Meyers said.

On September 15, the city completed its final mortgage payment on the building and, in symbolic celebration, Mayor Jeff Gowing and Meyers shredded the mortgage documents on stage.

"The Cottage Grove Armory is now 100 percent completely and totally owned by the citizens of Cottage Grove," said Gowing to applause.

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