

**Hunger from A1**

started by local letter carriers who noticed needy families along their route. "We started this food drive just as a goodwill gesture," said Meier. "All your customers become your friends after a while."

Former letter carrier Mark Nelson was among the few who started the program in Eugene in 1983 and, though now retired, still volunteers his time to seeing that families get fed during the winter holidays.

"I pitched it to a committee of about 12 of us," he said of the food drive's origins. "It was all in-house."

In its first year, three families received food donations from their letter carriers. The next year, nine families benefited.

Seeing the potential for growth, Nelson began asking for donations along his mail route and from local businesses. In 1985, the program was officially endorsed by the main office and was so successful that about 4,000 pounds of leftover food had to be distributed to various local nonprofits.

As the project grew, local carriers turned to Food for Lane County to help with organizing and sorting the thousands of pounds of food coming in each drive. The nonprofit food bank also helped guarantee that each community's donations stayed within that community.

Before long, more cities throughout Oregon began adopting the program, each mail district taking upon themselves to join the effort.

"Everyone who bought into it started it where they are," said Nelson. "It was like Tom Sawyer painting the fence. I would go out there and pitch it, say how much fun it was and people would do it."

By 1993, the program was adopted nationwide by the NALC and is now billed as the largest one-day food drive in the country. Since then, it has raised well over a billion pounds of food.

Countywide, the drive averages around 100,000 pounds a year.

For its food drive this spring, Food for Lane County reported that Cottage Grove brought in 3,960 pounds of donated food.

That number is lower than previous drives, though the November drive tends to bring in more donations.

"I think people are just in a bigger giving mood in the fall," said Stefani Roybal, community and donor engagement coordinator at Food for Lane

County. In 2018, Cottage Grove collected 5,484 pounds during its November food drive and 6,920 pounds the year before, said Roybal.

While the food drive generally meets collection goals countywide, Meier speculated that Cottage Grove's dip in recent years might be due to a sense of futility.

"I think people are getting burnt out with the homeless situation," said Meier. "But one in three kids in Lane County is food insecure. And that's unacceptable."

Nelson has seen generosity extend from every rung along the socioeconomic ladder and is optimistic the food drive will continue to have impact.

"I feel like the reason it works is because the poorest person can still give a can," Nelson said. "I've had homeless people give to this food drive."

Rural areas can be particularly sensitive to the

need for food donations. There are arrangements between the letter carriers, Food for Lane County and the local pantries like Community Sharing to address the issue.

Hilltop Food Pantry in the Crow-Applegate area and Community Food for Creswell are in the Food for Lane County network, serving their respective

communities. "I think that especially in the rural areas where people can't access support systems quite as easily, this drive is even more important," said Roybal. "For a lot of people, Community Sharing or Community Food for Creswell might be their only place to get help and so we want to keep those

shelves stocked as well as possible." The USDA estimates 1.2 pounds of food equates to a meal, indicating Cottage Grove's November food drive last year served about 5,766 meals in the community. "It really does touch people," said Nelson. "It has an amazing ripple effect."





**GREAT FOOD**  
Daily Specials  
40+ Craft Beers  
To-Go Orders Welcome  
**541-636-3692**

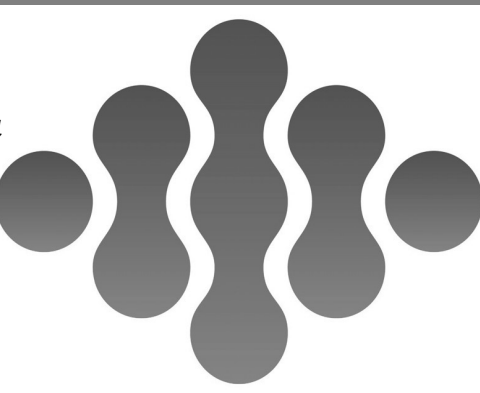
**OPEN**  
11AM-10PM  
EVERYDAY




**85944 Hwy. 99S, Goshen, OR 97405**  
[frenchysgoshe.com](http://frenchysgoshe.com)

**COME EXPERIENCE OUR NEW LASER**

*Dentistry without anesthesia*



S O L E A




**BRENT BITNER, DDS**

**DENTISTRY WITH FAMILY IN MIND**

CALL US TODAY!  
**541.942.7934**

350 E. WASHINGTON AVENUE • COTTAGE GROVE  
**WWW.CGSMILES.COM**



Cottage Grove  
**Sentinel's**  
**CYBER MONDAY**  
**HALF PRICE**  
**GIFT CARDS**






**Monday, December 2, 2019**  
Call or Stop in to the Sentinel between  
**8:30am to 4pm**  
to purchase Gift Cards at HALF PRICE!!

\*(while supplies last)  
Call 541-942-3325 x1200 or stop in at 116 N. 6th Street,  
Cottage Grove

Keep watching your Cottage Grove Sentinel.  
Gift card list will be updated daily on the Cottage Grove Sentinel's Facebook page!  
Final gift card list will be published Wednesday, November 27, 2019.  
Some of the participating businesses include:



OLD MILL FARM STORE

HOLIDAY BAZAAR



**F**ill out the form below to have your organization's holiday bazaar included in the bazaar listing in the Cottage Grove Sentinel each Wednesday during the holidays. Cost for this service is \$48.00 for a 1x3 advertisement, 50 words or less. Please enclose check or money order if mailing in this listing.

Call us at 541-942-3325 for more information.  
*Deadline is NOON, Thursday for the following week's publication.*  
Must be pre-paid to be accepted.

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF EVENT: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

FEATURED ITEMS OR ATTRACTIONS:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**Cottage Grove Sentinel**

116 N. Sixth Street • P.O. Box 35 • Cottage Grove • 541-942-3325