

Community News

Cottage Theatre holds new script contest for summer youth production

Jan. 31 is the deadline for local writers to submit entries to Cottage Theatre's first new script contest.

The theatre is seeking a playwright collaborator to help craft its 2020 summer youth production. For more than a de-

cade, Cottage Theatre has provided a unique opportunity for local youth to participate in a summer theatre camp where they learn singing, dancing and acting.

This has been accomplished through technique classes, where

students learn the craft of those three major elements of theatre, coupled with producing a full-length production with lights, costumes, props, etc.

Since 2007, Cottage Theatre's summer youth production has been an

original melodrama written by Cottage Grove resident Keith Kessler.

But since Kessler is directing both "Arsenic and Old Lace" and "Elf: The Musical" for Cottage Theatre in 2020, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to let others take a crack at

writing an original script for CT's talented 12- to 14-year-old performers.

Scripts are to be approximately 40-50 pages, with roles for 25 young actors.

Additional details and submission requirements can be found on the the-

atre's website at www.cottagetheatre.org/new-script-contest or by calling 541-942-8001.

The winning playwright will receive an honorarium of \$500 as well as tickets to the July 2020 production.

New local weight-loss group to host open house today at Methodist Church

TOPS Club, Inc. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly5M), the nonprofit weight-loss support organization, will hold an Open House Thursday, Jan. 2, from 10 to 11 a.m., at the United Methodist Church, 334

Washington St. The Open House is free and open to the public. Activities at the open house will include two inspirational guest speakers; the reigning Oregon State Queen and a former

State Queen. There will also be door prizes.

Founded more than 70 years ago, TOPS is the only nonprofit, non-commercial weightloss organization of its kind. TOPS offers an individu-

al approach to weight loss and overall wellness, with thousands of chapters in the U.S. and Canada.

Members learn about nutrition, portion control, meal planning, exercise and more at weekly

meetings.

Consistent group support, health education and recognition are all key components to successful weight management. TOPS members collectively lose nearly

300 tons of weight each year.

For more details about the open house, contact Joanne Farris at 541-649-1530.

Second phase of four-phase statewide gas tax now in effect under HB 2017

The second of four planned increases in the gas tax went into effect Jan. 1, 2020.

The increase is part of House Bill 2017, the "Keep Oregon Moving" legislation passed by the Oregon Legislature in 2017.

Gas Tax Increase Schedule:

- \$.04 - Jan. 1, 2018
- \$.02 - Jan. 1, 2020
- \$.02 - Jan. 1, 2022
- \$.02 - Jan. 1, 2024

The total after all four phases will be 10 cents by 2024.

For the first time, Oregon lawmakers set requirements that ODOT and Oregon cities and counties must meet in order to trigger the increase. The Oregon Transportation Com-

mission sent the Legislature a report outlining how ODOT and local governments have met those requirements on Nov. 26, 2019.

Two more 2-cent gas tax increases in 2022 and 2024 are also on deck — but only if ODOT meets additional accountability requirements.

Requirements met I-205 Projects

The gas tax increase was tied to ODOT completing two specific projects to help address congestion on I-205.

• I-205 Corridor Bottleneck (\$15.5M). ODOT paved portions of I-205 and constructed new lanes between interchanges in the

Sunnybrook and Johnson Creek areas to improve safety and reduce congestion.

• I-205 Active Traffic Management (\$15.2M). ODOT installed signage giving motorists real-time information about travel times.

Road & Bridge Condition Reports

ODOT worked with Oregon cities and counties to produce a website detailing the condition of the major roads and all Oregon bridges. The site grades the major roads in and through communities as good, fair or poor so people can see what they're getting for their increased taxes.

How the money will be spent

Of the nearly \$60 million this increase will raise, 20 percent goes to Oregon counties, 30 percent to Oregon cities and 50 percent to ODOT. ODOT will use its share (\$27.9M) of the funds for:

- Highway maintenance (\$1.7M)
- Bridge projects (\$11.2M)
- Seismic projects (\$8.4M)
- Preservation and culvert projects (\$6.7M)

"Accountability ensures that our state and local transportation agencies are spending taxpayer dollars wisely," said Governor Brown. "In this report, Orego-

nians can see exactly how we are building a transportation system that supports economic development, reduces congestion and related vehicle emissions, and creates more sustainable, livable communities," Brown said.

"The Commission is proud of the excellent work ODOT has done to date to implement the 2017 transportation legislation," noted Oregon Transportation Commission Chairman, Robert Van Brocklin. "The additional funding that we will see beginning next January as a result of ODOT's work will allow us to make important new investments, including projects to

reduce Portland area traffic congestion.

It will also allow us to build new and preserve existing transportation investments in every region of the state.

"We look forward to continuing the work we have been charged with undertaking to keep Oregon moving."

This first increase would raise the Oregon gas tax from 34 to 36 cents a gallon. The federal tax is 18.4 cents a gallon. Oregon's counties and cities are allowed to add their own local gas tax as well.

At full implementation in 2024, Oregon's gas tax will be 40 cents a gallon, still less than the gas tax in either Washington or California.



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