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WEATHER

Cloudy and showers with a high of 53 and a low tonight of 46.
Full forecast on A5

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New minister at Christ Church.
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Lady Lions poised at top of Sky-Em.
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City, county prepare for critical Census

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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With the 2020 census around the corner, coordinators in Lane County and Cottage Grove are ramping up preparations and outreach efforts for the decennial survey.

“This census will be very important for the State of Oregon as we may be able to acquire additional congressional seats,” said City Manager Richard Meyers. “It’s also very important for us in funding that we receive, the hospital receives and the school district. Even nonprofit organizations receive funding as a result of the count.”

While the city has partnered with U.S. Census Bureau staff to find ways to reduce the non-response rate for the community and improve

the accuracy of the local count, the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) is tasked with making sure that all addresses in the county have been verified.

“We are that point agency for the

Wilson has volunteered to coordinate a “complete count committee” for the county to optimize accuracy.

“It’s really important, especially for smaller cities,” said Wilson. “We’re talking SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program), Medicaid, Medicare, educational funds, school lunch programs, Head Start, WIC (Women, Infants and Children), Section 8, children’s health insurance.”

“This census will be very important for the State of Oregon as we may be able to acquire additional congressional seats.”

—Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers.

county to make sure that we are communicating with the Census Bureau about the addresses in Lane County so they can do a correct count,” said LCOG Executive Director Brenda Wilson.

In addition to her role at LCOG,

Invitations to respond to the census online are scheduled to appear in Oregon mailboxes March 12 through March 20. Toward the end of that month, reminder letters will be sent out to

See **CENSUS 8A**

SLSD selects superintendent candidates

Board reviews “wide range” of candidates

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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The South Lane School District (SLSD) board and screening committee have completed the first phase of the district’s superintendent search process after whittling a large pool of candidates down to a select few last Thursday night.

“We got a good, wide range of candidates,” said Board Vice-chair Alan Baas. “They were good applicants. It was challenging to make our decision.”

The superintendent position has been occupied in a temporary capacity since July 2018 and is currently held by Interim Superintendent Yvonne Curtis.

The screening committee, which is comprised of school staff, parents and community members, convened with the school board in executive session on Jan. 30 to review 20 applicants for the position.

“I think we had a really good selection of the community here,” said Board Chair Sherry Duerst-Higgins of the screening committee.

Oregon School Boards Association Executive Search Consultant Steve Kelley guided the group through a discussion of the “strengths and concerns” of each applicant.

The board eventually settled on a list of seven by the end of the session, but it later released a statement confirming that five candidates had accepted an invitation for a first round of interviews.

The interviews are scheduled to take place

See **SLSD 11A**



NICK SNYDER/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

The expansion of the YMCA program will include students from Bohemia, Dorena and London schools.

Three schools added to YMCA program

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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In partnership with the South Lane School District, the Eugene Family YMCA has expanded its Cottage Grove afterschool program at Harrison Elementary School to include students from Bohemia,

Dorena and London elementary schools.

“This level of expansion would not be possible without transportation support by South Lane School District,” said YMCA Youth Development Director Holly Kriz-Anderson. “Our robust partnership with South Lane School District is what makes growing our services

so quickly in a new community a reality.”

The expansion includes a new busing transportation system, effectively offering services to all elementary schools within the South Lane School District.

Though growing, the program has struggled to meet enrollment

See **YMCA 10A**

Creswell woman pleads guilty to animal neglect, given probation

This past Tuesday, Feb. 4, 49-year-old Creswell resident Gwyneth Davies pleaded guilty to 11 counts of Animal Neglect in the second degree (misdemeanors).

Davies was charged in connection to an October 2019 search warrant where 61 horses were found to be below minimal health standards and were removed from her property, where she ran a horse boarding business.

The horses were evaluated by a veterinarian prior to removal and taken to another location for further evaluation and care.

Additionally, several deceased horses were found on the property.

Sadly, three of the horses were in such poor health that they did not survive following their removal by authorities.

Most of the remaining horses that had been boarded on the property were returned to their owners after proof of ownership was established and the horses were determined to be medically stable. Four horses are still being held pending the resolution of criminal

charges against their owners, Raina and Erica Ott, who also lived at the

ing horse ownership, which may not have been possible if the case had gone to trial.

“One of main goals in this case was to ensure this type of neglect doesn’t occur again...”

—Lane County Sheriff Cliff Harrold

property.

The plea agreement, which contains several stipulations Davies must follow, allows the State to place restrictions on Davies regard-

The agreement restricts the number of horses Davies can own to four and places her on bench probation

See **PLEAD 11A**

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