

Cottage Grove Est. 1889 Sentinel



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WEATHER

Sunny skies with a high of 55 and a low tonight of 31.
Full forecast on A5

County, local authorities take precautions for COVID-19 spread

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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With a first presumptive positive case of coronavirus in Douglas County announced on March 8, local entities have increased precautionary measures and released advisory statements for locals.

While national and local authorities urge citizens to take precautions such as good hand hygiene, they have also maintained that the spread of COVID-19 is not cause for panic.

“If confirmed cases develop in Cottage Grove, we will be following the recommendations from health authorities on what actions

to take. Those could range from cancellation of public meetings or closure of buildings to the public,” said Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers. “We want to be sure that we aren’t raising concerns to fear or panic — but we are exercising and instructing staff to take extra precautions to maintain a healthy environment for citizens and for staff.”

As of press time (March 11), the Oregon Health Authority has identified 15 cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in seven counties. None have been confirmed in Lane County.

On Sunday, Governor Kate Brown freed up additional state

resources by declaring a State of Emergency, which will remain in effect for 60 days.

Is it serious?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which cause a wide range of illnesses such as a common cold or more serious diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

COVID-19 is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

While most cases exhibit mild or moderate symptoms such as fever, coughing or shortness of breath, some may experience severe com-

plications including pneumonia, kidney failure or even death. Those over 60 or who have existing health problems are considered at higher risk.

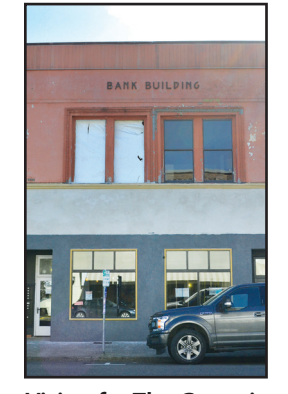
In the majority of cases, those who have caught COVID-19 have recovered in a matter of weeks. However, no vaccine currently exists to combat the virus, which has contributed to its spread.

While some studies give the virus a fatality rate as high as 3.4 percent, much of the data and research is considered preliminary.

Health authorities note that the number of cases may actually be

See **COVID 5A**

COMMUNITY — D



Vision for The Grove is more than building
D1

SPORTS — B



On to the Elite 8 for the Lady Lions.
B1

- **RECORDS**
Obituaries
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Final SLSD ‘Super’ candidates



As the search for South Lane School District’s new superintendent narrows, final candidates Yvonne Curtis (left) and Andy Dey answered questions Monday from a crowd of district staff, city officials and community members in a public question and answer session. The new superintendent is slated to be chosen this week and begin work on July 1.

PHOTOS BY DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

CG Chamber names Neigh as new president

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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The Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce has announced its new CEO/President, Shauna Neigh, to lead the organization.

Following the departure of Executive Director Travis Palmer in December, the Chamber board reviewed 11 applications, eventually settling on Neigh, who will begin employment with the chamber on April 1.

“We are very excited about the direction of the Chamber and our new CEO/President,” said Chamber Board Chair Danny Solesbee in a press release.

In Neigh’s eight years in Cottage Grove, she has worked as coordinator of the city’s Main Street Program and has been affiliated with South Valley Farmers market, worked with the Vision Keepers, served on the Chamber of Commerce board, and helped run a recycling program with local nonprofit EcoGeneration.

With the acceptance of the chamber position, Neigh is stepping down from her work in the city’s public works department as administrative assistant.

Though the title has changed, Neigh will be filling the shoes of Palmer, who held the position of executive director of the Chamber for eight years.

Neigh cited her admiration for Palmer’s commitment to community during his tenure.

“And that’s what I want to continue. I want to continue that passion for wanting to make this community move into its next steps,” she said.

Neigh said her first step will be to assess perceptions and programs the Chamber has created in the city, listening to opinions and hearing from businesses which are no longer a part of the Chamber.

“It’s very important to me to figure out the health of the program, so that’s what I’m going to do first,” she said.

Looking to the future, Neigh is interested in seeing the area benefit from more advertising.

“We have a cute downtown,” she said. “We have two lakes. We have hiking trails. We have the #1 family-friendly bike trail. ... So there’s a lot of other things we can tap into in tourism. And also the movie history. We need to tap into that movie history.”

Neigh said she is also looking at tapping into the area’s youth.

“We have such talent in our kids these days,” she said, adding that she would like to see a greater social media presence of the things Cottage Grove has to offer through the eyes of local youth.

Neigh moved to Cottage Grove from Ohio eight years ago and was taken with the community as soon as she and her husband drove through it.

“It was just the feel of the town. Just as soon as I got here, I knew,” she said.

Neigh previously worked for a software company handling document management, assessing the flow of paper and finding ways to make business a paperless process. After retiring from the industry, she said she sought a simpler life.

See **NEIGH 7A**

“We are very excited about the direction of the Chamber and our new CEO/President.”

— Danny Solesbee, Chamber Board Chair

2020 Census arriving by mail this week

The official Census count begins April 1

By MARK BRENNAN FOR THE SENTINEL

It’s time once again to stand up and be counted. Beginning today, March 12, Oregonians will start to receive “invitations” from the U.S. Census Bureau in their home mail delivery.

This invitation will ask that households go online to respond to a series of questions asking for household information regarding the ages, number of residents and gender of all of those living in each household.

The answers to these questions are critical to future programs and efforts in a wide variety of categories. Households can also contact the Census Bureau by phone or respond using traditional paper questionnaires.

The official count for this year’s Census begins April 1, but the federal government wants to get a head start on the process by providing an early opportunity for citizens to complete the Census survey.

The Census Bureau is required, by law, to collect information related to every person living in America every 10 years.

The information gathered in the 2020 Census will be used to determine action or spending on an array of issues which effect nearly every aspect of our lives.

Perhaps most importantly, seats in the House of Representatives are allocated by the number of citizens in a particular area of the state, which is referred to as a district.

See **CENSUS 6A**

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