

Grieve *from A1*

also offers his clients the option to livestream memorial services.

In either case, physical distance can be a barrier to the therapeutic effect of a traditional memorial service.

“[It’s] really hard when you’re grieving because people want to be hugging and consoling their friends and family members,” said Lund. “Part of funerals and memorial services is the gathering – the coming together and the camaraderie.”

The policy of social distancing has added an-

other potential layer of grief upon those who are mourning, but Lund held praise for locals who have been tolerating the restrictions despite their pain.

“I think there certainly has been some disappointment, but I think people understand what the State of Oregon is trying to do with social distancing and I think they can see how valuable it is,” he said.

Aside from gatherings, the chapel also allows solitary moments with the deceased after the remains have been prepared for viewing.

“It’s something that for many people is very im-

portant to have happen – if they couldn’t be there at the time of death – just have that one last time to say good-bye,” he said.

While mourners are asked to keep their distance from each other, the funeral chapel, too, tries to make arrangements without sharing much physical space with its clients, preferring to do business completely electronically if possible.

Cremation services, for example, can be arranged start to finish remotely, said Lund, and a good deal of the other work can be done over telephone.

In cases where a client simply must come in, the funeral home allows en-

try by appointment only and takes pains to sterilize everything from pens to chairs as business is conducted from opposite ends of a long table.

On top of ensuring services follow the directives from the governor’s office, some staff at the funeral home may very well be working on the front lines of the pandemic.

With one death in Lane County due to a suspected COVID-19 infection (as of press time), the funeral home’s attendants are entering potentially dangerous territory each time they retrieve a body.

“It’s definitely very much on our minds,” said Lund. “People can expect

to see us wearing quite a bit more personal protective equipment than we would in the past.”

Lund said his funeral home attendants typically show up to handle bodies in regular clothes and latex gloves. As frontline workers these days, though, the attendants dress in disposable gowns, gloves, face masks and sometimes goggles.

At times, the job requires workers to enter private residences.

“If you were to go to a home where someone had died, everything in the home could be contaminated,” said Lund. “So, to be there for the community, we have to be sure that

our staff is healthy and well.”

Maintaining this balance of social responsibility, safety and care is now a regular task for Lund, who recalled a funeral service attended by only five people earlier that day.

“It met a need and it was definitely meaningful for those that were there, but I would assume that having more family and friends being there to collectively support each other would be more the ideal scenario,” said Lund. “We want to keep our community safe ... so we feel we have a responsibility to be mindful of this.”

LCC *from A1*

staff members that would primarily be affected by the layoffs, the two temporary employees,” said Grant Matthews, Associate Vice

President of Workforce Development at LCC.

While any loss of employment during such an uncertain time is unwelcome, the layoffs are unlikely to have a larger effect on the Cottage Grove campus,

as classes and face-to-face operations had already been put on hold.

“We’d already made plans to limit the activities at the Cottage Grove site,” Matthews said. “So, the layoffs don’t really impact those activities because we were already looking at suspending [them].”

As for permanent staff, many of their duties are on pause — like so many around the world — but they are nonetheless assisting in the rapid transition to distance learning so that courses may continue online.

“They continue to do work and provide support, both in terms of planning what steps we’re going to do next in Cottage Grove as things come back online, but then also helping other

departments across the institution as we reach out to students and reach out to programs and kind of keep things moving,” Matthews said.

Despite state directives for in-person classes to be suspended until April 28, LCC took a more proactive approach in extending their distance learning efforts through the spring term and expect most courses to continue in some capacity.

“The limitations [from the state] were that no classes could be face-to-face unless they were deemed critical for health and safety,” Matthews said. “So, we at Lane have interpreted that to mean some of our health occupation programs and they have been able to continue like nursing, EMT and some

others.”

The programs seen as critical will continue to operate on a face-to-face basis while all other courses were moved online beginning this past Monday (April 6). No programs offered at the Cottage Grove campus fell into this category, so students enrolled in programs locally should expect their education to continue online for the duration of the spring quarter.

“I think we’ve done a good job as a college to be a step ahead and make some decisions that provide a little bit more stability throughout,” Matthews said. “We really decided that, even though the Governor’s orders for remote learning extended to April 28, we really wanted to provide stability

for our students and instructors and just moved for the whole quarter so that we could get our minds around everything and move forward.”

Turner added in the initial announcement that employees who were laid off will have the first opportunity to reapply for their jobs if the roles return in the future as well as reestablishment of their accrued sick leave prior to losing the position.

Still, it was a difficult decision in a time rife with challenges, a point not lost on Turner.

“I’ve talked personally to people who have had these positions for 7 to 10 years, and it’s heartbreaking,” Turner said.



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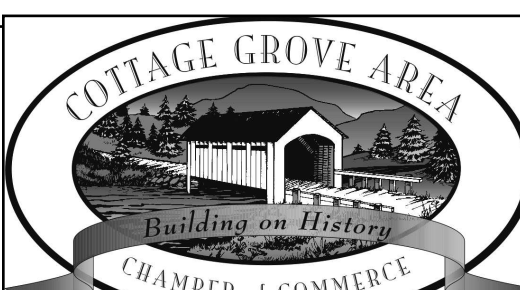
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