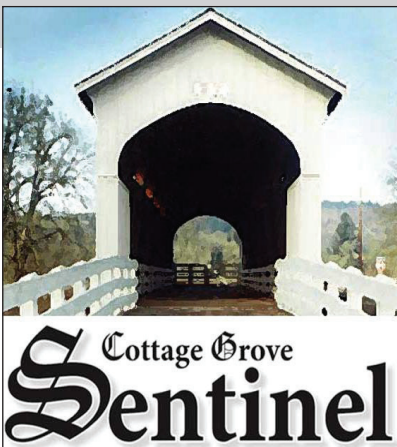




Let turtles cross the road

ODFW biologists advise Oregonians to be on the lookout for turtles on roadways, bike paths or trails. During the months of May through July, female turtles begin searching for suitable nesting grounds to lay their eggs.

“It’s not uncommon to see female turtles on land at this time of year as they leave the water to lay their eggs,” said Susan Barnes, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Biologist for northwest Oregon. “If you see a turtle on land, the best thing to do is let it continue on its path. Don’t try to return it to water.”

It’s fine to move it off a road or trail (if it is safe to do so,) but put it on the other side, pointed in the same direction it was headed.

Barnes, a co-chair of the Oregon Native Turtle Working Group, works to conserve Oregon’s turtles year-round. “Our native turtles are in decline, so anything we can do to help makes a difference,” added Barnes.

She suggests the public can help by reporting turtle sightings on the Native Turtles of Oregon website or through iNaturalist or HerpMapper, mobile applications that can be downloaded on your smartphone or other mobile device.

“This helps us identify the locations of our native turtles as well as invasive turtles that we may try and remove,” said Barnes. Turtle sightings also help ODFW and their native turtle conservative partners decide where to conduct visual surveys for turtles, to collect more information about turtle at a particular location.

Oregon has only two species of native turtles: the western painted and the western pond. Both are both protected by state law; it is illegal to take them from the wild and to keep them as pets.

Non-native turtles include red-eared sliders and snapping turtles. It is illegal in the state to buy, sell, possess or release non-native turtles. Red-eared sliders are relatively easy to identify. Most have red “ears” (markings) on the side of their heads.

If you are in possession of a non-native turtle, contact your local ODFW office for guidance.

Both the western painted and western pond turtle are included on the State Sensitive Species List (ODFW 2016) as “Sensitive-Critical” and highlighted in the Oregon Conservation Strategy as a priority species in need of help. Population declines are due to habitat loss, degradation of nesting areas by invasive plants, illegal collecting, disease and competition from non-native turtles.

SLSD prepares for 2020-21 budget woes

By Nick Snyder
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In an email sent to South Lane School District (SLSD) staff and families on Monday, May 18, Superintendent Yvonne Curtis outlined the most recent developments in how the global COVID-19 pandemic will impact local education and SLSD operations.

The Student Success Act (SSA) was passed during the Oregon Legislature’s 2019 session and, once fully implemented, was set to inject \$2 billion every two years into statewide education beginning in the 2020-21 school year. SLSD was expected to receive \$2.3 million in 2020-21 through the Student Investment Account (SIA) portion of the initiative, but coronavirus closures of all kinds and future economic uncertainty have put those

plans in serious doubt.

“Even as we closed schools and began providing new services during the coronavirus pandemic, we hoped for these increased investments in schools,” Curtis said in the email. “As we close the ninth week of staying home, we face a new reality ... The anticipated new state investments in school supports are no longer expected to make their way to Oregon Schools in full, if at all, next school year.”

Curtis specifically pointed to rising unemployment throughout the state – due to COVID-caused layoffs and business closures – as a factor which will significantly impact tax revenues and public budgets in the coming months and years. It may leave Oregon schools in a dire economic state for an undetermined amount of time.

In a press release issued on

May 18, Governor Kate Brown addressed the coming budgetary shortfalls.

“With many Oregon businesses restricted or shut down, travel suspended and jobs lost, we expect the revenue that we receive to fund state services will also be significantly reduced ... Our early discussion indicated this impact could be a reduction of \$3 billion for the current budget period. We are exploring all available options to weather this recession, and I have directed state agencies to prepare prioritized reduction plans equaling a 17-percent reduction for the upcoming fiscal year as a planning exercise to explore all options.”

For their part, Curtis and the SLSD district office announced in the email upcoming efforts that will aim to lessen the financial impact of these budgetary cuts for

next school year.

“As we await more concrete financial information expected next week, South Lane School District is already slowing down hiring and spending, discussing furlough days and anticipating layoffs as we develop budget contingency plans,” Curtis wrote.

As schools have transitioned to online distance learning, making the average school day look very different, SLSD — and several districts in Lane County and Oregon at large — will be furloughing all staff four days over the final four weeks of the school year in an effort to save money for the fall.

Both of the district’s union groups support the decision as a necessary measure to guard the financial health of the district

See **BUDGET 2B**

Getting back in action



PHOTO BY DAMIEN SHERWOOD/CG SENTINEL

Warm, sunny weather and a slow reopening of area businesses and facilities brought out tennis players and pickleballers alike to the courts at Coiner Park last weekend. After two-plus months of inactivity due to stay-at-home orders, many residents are eager to get back outdoors.

CGHS announces graduation plan for seniors

Despite the abnormal circumstances due to coronavirus school closures, South Lane School District and Cottage Grove High School (CGHS) have found a way to honor their graduating seniors.

Last Thursday, May 21 CGHS administrators announced a graduation plan for Sat., June 6 that will allow seniors to celebrate in their caps and gowns and receive their diplomas while still honoring social distancing guidelines.

The graduation ceremony will consist of three parts: an online ceremony to be held before all other events; a grad cruise to the school

ending with diploma pick-up; and an optional picture in front of the school at the end of the cruise.

The online graduation ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. on June 6 and will feature speeches by CGHS valedictorians and principal Kevin Herington as well as the reading of all graduate names. A link to the online festivities is yet to be announced.

Following the online event, students and their family members are invited to congregate – safely in their vehicles – in the back parking lot of CGHS beginning at 1:30 p.m. before starting the cruise at 2 p.m.

Vehicles will travel to the front of the school where graduates will receive their diplomas in front of the gym while remaining in their cars. Afterwards, each senior is welcome to exit their vehicle and have a grad picture taken in front of the main school building before exiting the parking lot and concluding the graduation cruise.

Leading up to the ceremony on June 6, CGHS has also outlined several other important dates for seniors and their families:

- Senior scholarship night: online, Wed., May 27 at 6:30 p.m.
- Senior awards night: online,

Tues., June 2 at 6:30 p.m.

- Cap and gown handout: Thurs., June 4 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Baby videos: online, Thurs., June 4

In addition to the announced dates of graduation festivities, CGHS has also outlined a number of safety protocols during each stage of the events for graduates and other attendees to ensure that the event complies with coronavirus-related public health concerns.

Staging:

- Remember to pick up name

See **GRADUATION 2B**

Yard of the Week

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Week of May 21st Winner is: **1598 Elm**

Yards will be selected each week by nominations. To nominate a yard you can call City Hall (942-5501) or Chamber of Commerce (942-2411)

Limited camping returns to state parks June 9

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) will offer limited camping at many state park campgrounds starting June 9. State park camping closed statewide March 23 in an effort to contain the spread of coronavirus and limit travel, especially to smaller communities and rural areas.

A list of which campgrounds will open June 9 is still being finalized. That list will be published on oregonstateparks.org by the end of May. Not all parks or services will be available. Most of the campgrounds opening accept reservations, but some first-come, first-served state park campgrounds may open as staff and funding are available.

Those campgrounds that do open will honor existing

tent and RV reservations starting June 9, and will accept new reservations from one day to two weeks in advance, instead of the usual nine months in advance. Reservations will still be made through OPRD’s contracted vendor, Reserve America at <https://oregonstateparks.reserveamerica.com/>. RV and tent campers without reservations will be welcome at open campgrounds as space and staffing permit.

Reservations for most yurts and cabins, and group camping and group day-use, are still subject to cancellation. Visitors holding those reservations will be contacted if a cancellation is required.

Two main forces determine when a state park campground can open. Some communities, such as the north

coast, are not yet ready for overnight visitors from outside their area.

A more widespread factor relates to funding. The Oregon State Park system is not funded by taxes, but by revenue from park visitors, a small share of the Oregon Lottery, and a portion of state recreational vehicle registrations. The revenue needed to operate state parks has fallen drastically since March, meaning one of the most popular state park systems in the country is being operated by about half the usual staff.

With a skeleton crew and limited means to hire more, there will be far fewer staff available to help visitors and address common problems such as noise and pets. Trash,

See **CAMPING 2B**