

# Cottage Grove Est. 1889 Sentinel



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## A look back at the Top Stories of 2020

As Cottage Grove readies to ring in a new year, *The Sentinel* takes a look back at some of the top stories of 2020, a year which brought with it a series of both proximate and nationwide hardships including the coronavirus epidemic, the loss of a Cottage Grove city councilor and smoke from wildfires which blotted out the sun throughout the region. But despite the challenges, the year also saw Cottage Grove's community rally to support its struggling local businesses, donate graciously to its local support groups and witness the opening of three new affordable housing projects for those in need. Here's look back at some of the stories that defined our community in 2020...

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD  
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FILE PHOTOS / COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

**Clockwise from top: Legion Cottages completed construction and took in its first tenants this month; the Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year award went to Coast Fork Feed Company and Brew Station for its community involvement; and the community said goodbye to Opal Nelson, one of its few remaining local "Rosies."**

**Chamber celebrates business, community leaders**  
(Jan. 23)

City officials, local residents and Chamber of Commerce members gathered Saturday, Jan. 18, in the Cottage Grove Armory for the 71st Annual Cottage Grove Area Chamber

of Commerce Installation and Awards Dinner. The Business of the Year Award went to a Cottage Grove business for outstanding achievement in good business practices and involvement in the community. This year's winner Coast

Fork Feed Company & Brew Station was awarded for its efforts to support youth and their families with walking and running events, promotion of the Cottage Grove area and other family events. "How lucky am I to work with the people I love most,"

said owner Dale Smith. "The beautiful thing about family is you don't have to give birth to all of them. And that's the case at Coast Fork Feed & Brew Station. We really are a family and I think that's what we bring to the community."

See YIR 5A

## Warming shelter holds open house

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD  
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The public got its first chance to see the city's Pallet Shelters up close on Tuesday during an open house event for the new Community Sharing Warming Shelter. City staff and program representatives were on hand to answer questions as people milled about the site on N 12th Street. "This is kind of a proving test that shows this will work as an emergency place," said City Manager Richard Meyers.

A collaborate effort between the city, county and local nonprofits, the program is replacing Cottage Grove's previous sheltering service for the homeless during freezing nights. Community Sharing assumed responsibility for the project this fall when shelter provider Beds for Freezing Nights stated it would be unable to provide its services this year. The sheltering nonprofit remains a supporting entity for the upcoming program, which is due to be ready for activation in January.

See SHELTER 7A

## Christmas meals served on-the-go

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD  
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With local churches unable to meet the challenge of serving their Christmas dinners to the community this year, Soup's On Kitchen Manager Karen Burrece and a small army of local volunteers stepped up to the plate last week to see the community was

well-fed. "It was quite an undertaking," said Burrece. "But when we all figured out that there was no community meal going to be available this year, we said we would take that on." While Soup's On generally serves an average of between 50 and 80

See DINNER 7A

Rotary members are making an impact in the fight against COVID-19 in our community. Rotary members around the world persevere. No challenge is so big that we can't make a difference.

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