

Races from A1

opened doors to less restrictive social gatherings.

As Lane County was still listed under “low” risk status as of Saturday, tickets were sold to accommodate only 50 percent capacity of the Speedway.

Fans were asked to stay home if displaying any symptoms or were feeling ill and masks were required in the grandstand and concession areas when not eating or drinking or if people were not able to socially distance.

The event marked the first step toward a “return to normal” for the Speedway, which saw its new ownership under Boyce facing a challenging last year.

Boyce’s timing was less than ideal – she purchased the Speedway just as the COVID restrictions set in. Despite years of experience running the operation for the previous owner, nothing could have prepared her for the resulting shutdown and the restrictions were a major blow to the business.

“Last year was pretty rough,” she said. “We did open for about 11 races. Normally, we run closer to 40 events.”



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

The season opener saw an enthusiastic turnout as fans had been prevented from watching the few races that took place last year due to COVID restrictions.

Depending on weather, the Speedway’s season usually starts around the end of March or beginning of April and runs until September or October. Last year, it opened in July – but only to drivers. And without fans, the Speedway didn’t have much revenue to speak of.

“So we operated pretty much at a loss for the entire season,” said Boyce. “But we felt like it was important to be open so that our drivers could be here to race and it would keep them going. We wanted to make sure that they were getting to

be here to do what they love and we could keep them in the sport.”

The Speedway didn’t

opt for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, either, as staff weren’t employed at

normal capacity. “And the last thing I wanted was another loan,” said Boyce. Fortunately, the Speedway was able to absorb the hit until it finally opened its doors to spectators again on Saturday. Though operating at just 50 percent capacity, Boyce said things seems to be heading in the right direction financially. “Our grandstands hold 4,000, so 50 percent capacity is right at 2,000 and that’s a pretty good night for us,” she said.

See SPED 9A

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To our valued readers:
Help small businesses affected by coronavirus right now, including ours.

Businesses of all sizes have been hit hard in this challenging new age of social distancing and self-isolation, but the blow has been catastrophic for small operations that rely on in-person transactions. There are many ways to help, like purchasing gift certificates or memberships, and yet there are many service-type businesses that don't have that option.

As we look to a new year, we're celebrating what connects us as a community, and what we can do to support our local businesses!

THAT'S WHY WE CREATED THE SUPPORT LOCAL TOGETHER CAMPAIGN.
The Support Local Together campaign will help local businesses who have to choose between promoting their business and paying the electric bill. It will also help support the *Cottage Grove Sentinel*, who has seen a strong decrease in advertising revenue, but an increase in readership.

IT DOES TWO THINGS.

- 1. Funds advertising dollars for local businesses**
Your financial support will go directly to fund advertising that our local businesses need to stay top of mind.
- 2. Supports local journalism**
By becoming a supporting member, you are helping to replace some of the advertising revenue the *Cottage Grove Sentinel* has lost due to the pandemic.

HERE IS HOW TO SUPPORT:

- Call 541-942-3325 x 1200
- Make a donation of your choosing.
- Choose a specific local business that you would like the advertising credit to go to, or leave that blank and we will designate it to a business we know needs help.

Our community is small but generous and we recognize there are many great organizations, like ours, that could use your help.

We believe the vast majority of our readers have always shared our view of the value and necessity of a strong local media and are willing to provide support equal to two or three cups of coffee a month to secure its future.

Thank you in advance for doing your share to secure a strong local economy in the community we are proud to serve.

Gary Manly
General Manager
gmanly@cgsentinel.com
541-942-3325 x 1207

Yes, I would like to become a 2020/21 Support Local Together Sponsor
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Mail sponsorship form to: **Cottage Grove Sentinel Supporter**
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