

Cottage Grove

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a low tonight of 39.
Full forecast on A5

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Lane among six counties moving to COVID ‘High Risk’

By CHANTELE MEYER
FOR THE SENTINEL

On Tuesday, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced updates to county risk levels under the state’s public health framework to reduce transmission and protect Oregonians from COVID-19. The framework uses four different risk levels for counties based on COVID-19 spread — extreme risk,

high risk, moderate risk and lower risk — and assigns health and safety measures for each level.

Effective April 23 through May 6, there will be 23 counties in the high-risk level, three at moderate risk and 10 at lower risk. Lane County is one of six counties that jumped to high risk, a marked change from its lower risk status.

Other counties in the high-risk designation are Baker, Benton,

Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Coos, Crook, Deschutes, Douglas, Jackson, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Tillamook, Wasco, Washington and Yamhill.

As case counts and hospitalizations increase and counties qualify for higher risk levels, increased safety measures for businesses and activities will resume.

“As we face more contagious

variants and increased spread of COVID-19 in our communities, the best way to protect yourself and others is to get vaccinated,” said Brown. “Until you, your family, your friends and your neighbors are fully vaccinated, it’s also critical that we all continue to wear masks, maintain physical distance and stay home when sick.”

See **RISK 7A**

All in an Earth Day’s work



DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Dorena School held an all-day Earth Day event on April 14. Staff, students and their families dropped by Harms Park, Row Point and Bake Stewart park for litter pick-ups and garden work to improve the health of native plants like the state plant, the Oregon Grape. At Bake Stewart Park, an educational presentation from the Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council covered natural science topics such as the importance of pollinators to local plants.

Remaining assistance funds marked as utility grants

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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Cottage Grove’s Small Business Emergency Loan Program funds are finally drying up as about \$17,000 has been earmarked for distribution into the community in the form of utility grants for small businesses.

The City of Cottage Grove, partnering with Community Lending-

Works, has made the last of these funds available through the Small Business City Utility Assistance Grants program.

Applications will be accepted until Friday, April 30 at 11:59 p.m. and can be found online at communitylendingworks.org/emergency-grants-cottage-grove.

“This will completely wipe out the fund,” said City Manager Richard Meyers of the small business

grant and loan program, which was set up last July.

The Small Business Emergency Loan Program launched last year as a \$100,000 fund to help Cottage Grove businesses weather the economic hardships created by COVID-19 restrictions.

Predictably, the grant portion of the program found more popularity than the loans and the seeming hesitancy for small businesses to

take on more debt recently triggered the city to work with Community LendingWorks to convert the loans to grants.

Eligibility for the last of the aid money requires the following criteria be met by small businesses:

- Be located and headquartered within Cottage Grove city limits;
- Have no more than 20

See **GRANTS 6A**

Cottage Grove Carousel passes inspection milestone

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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The Cottage Grove Carousel passed its inspection on April 16, marking another milestone in the decades-long effort bring the attraction to Cottage Grove.

“It gives us the satisfaction of knowing that it’s a safe ride,” said Friends of the Cottage Grove Carousel President Alice Nowicki.

Though the attraction is deemed safe, it may be some time before the public enjoys its use as funding, land and COVID-19 challenges still must be hurdled.

Even following its opening, an agreement with the original owners, the Cash family, stipulates that the carousel must be in operation for two years before ownership changes hands to the nonprofit.

The carousel has been housed in

the Cottage Grove Industrial Park in the King Estate warehouse since October 2018 when Ed King, CEO of King Estate Winery, offered a portion of his space as a workshop.

Following years of construction and electrical work, the carousel’s latest certification from International Leisure Consulting, Inc. has validated years’ worth of hard work invested in making sure the carousel is safe and ready for the

public.

And just what does a carousel inspector inspect?

“Everything,” said Nowicki.

The inspector had previously supplied the group with a checklist that would meet his inspection standards and the project reportedly passed with flying colors.

The carousel nonprofit’s next

See **CAROUSEL 8A**

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