

EDITOR from A7

gave me a quick primer on how the city and a lot of its infrastructure operates. And that relationship, that openness has continued throughout.”

For him, it was about making connections in Cottage Grove. This was relatively easy due to something unique about the area itself.

“Cottage Grove, there’s something in the water,” Sherwood said. “When someone puts their shoulder to the wheel, there is a tendency for people to rally. There’s already a deep connection among people in the community to support each other that I can build from.”

He added that in Cottage Grove, “the more you invest, the more return you get.”

As Sherwood got better acquainted with the area and built connections, this proved more and more true. Not only was he once a month appearing on KNND’s “The Beeper Show” with host Cameron Reiten, he and his team were meeting once a month with local school districts and connecting with the fire and police departments. These open lines of communication helped Sherwood feel grounded in the community and invested in its success.

“They’re all willing to work very closely with the paper, which is something I really appreciate about them,” he said. “I had access to all these people constantly. And they were willing to just sit down and have really long, involved

conversations about how everything worked. ... Of course, it takes a while to learn a whole community, so there’s always more to network and more to learn.”

Sherwood also wanted to restore trust in both journalists and in *The Sentinel*.

“As opposed to metropolitan newspapers, community newspapers have a deeply intimate role. It’s more than just to build, but to cultivate deep relationships with the community that allow us to be a reliable source for people to lean on,” he said.

One example of cultivating relationships came from a developing story from Cottage Grove High School and a student hazing incident.

“It was a very shocking moment for the community,” Sherwood said. “There were a lot of rumors circulating through not just social media, but other news sources. They didn’t seem to have all the facts. So, when this broke, it was a sloppy job. I had to spend another couple of weeks of chasing down all of the rumors and misinformation.”

One of Hickson’s sayings is, “Never be in a hurry to serve bad food.” As a restaurant chef, he had learned the importance of taking time to make sure quality and presentation were included with every dish he served. He applied the rule often in the newsroom, and Sherwood took it to heart.

He relied on the good relationship between *The Sentinel* and the school district, established through monthly meetings and past coverage, to identify the correct information.

“The article we wrote basically squashed all of the rumors and got all the truth out there. It presented the story in a way that, even if people weren’t satisfied with what happened to the perpetrators, they at least understood the context for it a little bit better. They knew which information to trust and which not to,” Sherwood said.

Right away, the rumors on social media disappeared.

“The circumstances weren’t great, but I felt really good about our ability to help the community heal from some devastating news through learning about it truthfully,” he said. “I felt really good about being responsible with information.”

A Community Newspaper

Due to Cottage Grove’s housing situation, Sherwood lived out of the area for his first two years at *The Sentinel*. During the pandemic, he was finally able to move closer to the community.

“In March, I moved into a place just outside of town. I’m right where I need to be, right next to the action,” he said. “That makes a huge difference when it comes to covering anything that pops up that needs my immediate attention. ... I’m looking forward to being able to enjoy this community in a more intimate way than I was able to from another city.”

With a couple years as a journalist under his belt, Sherwood now has a new way of defining himself outside of his role at the news-


see EDITOR on A9



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www.6thandgibbs.com
 - Calvary Baptist Church**
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Pastor: Riley Hendricks
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The Journey: Sunday 5:00pm
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420 Monroe St • 541-942-8565
Sunday Service: 10:30am
 - Cottage Grove Bible Church**
1200 East Quincy Avenue
541-942-4771
Pastor: Bob Singer
Worship 11am
Sunday School: 9:45am
AWANA age 3-8th Grade,
Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm
www.cgbible.org
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541-942-4851
Lead Pastor: Kevin Prueff
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Youth Wednesday 6:30pm
cgfirstbaptist.com
 - First Presbyterian Church**
467 S. 10th St • 541-942-2612
Rev.: Karen Hill
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Sunday School: 10:00am
fpcgrove.com
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United Pentecostal Church
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Sunday - 10:30 am
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Confession: 4 PM to 5 PM
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Sunday 8 am
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