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WEATHER

Sunny
with a high of 83 and a low tonight of 54.
Full forecast on A5

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The Grove sends off Class of 2021

In-person ceremonies returned this year for the graduating Class of 2021. A stark contrast to last year's drive-through graduations, the Cottage Grove and Al Kennedy high school ceremonies were brought back to life with handshakes, fist bumps and poignant embraces of young adults marking an important life milestone.

AKHS grads look to future, honor achievments

Graduate Isabella Dove (pictured left) celebrates with family after ceremonies on Saturday.

Joshua Cox (pictured right) proudly accepts his diploma from AKHS Principal Halie Ketcher.

PHOTOS BY DAMIEN SHERWOOD/ COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

By Damien Sherwood
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Al Kennedy High School (AKHS) seniors held their graduation ceremony in the school's open-air classroom on June 12, returning the celebration this year to its traditional proceedings.

Of 14 total graduates, a dozen attended Saturday's ceremony in an intimate setting of family, friends and school staff.

AKHS Principal Halie Ketcher started off the ceremony by acknowledging two empty chairs next the podium, symbolizing the loss of family or friends

see **AKHS** on A8

'Resiliency' and 'gratitude' celebrated by CGHS grads

DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Senior Juan Ramirez-Coronel enters the athletic field with classmates at the beginning of the ceremony.

DAMIEN SHERWOOD/COTTAGE GROVE SENTINEL

Students got creative with their graduation caps for their special day.

By Damien Sherwood
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Around 140 Cottage Grove High School (CGHS) graduates occupied the athletic field on June 12 as friends and family filled the bleachers to commemorate the graduation of the Class of 2021.

Graduates passed through a congratulatory gauntlet of teachers doling out handshakes and high fives on their way to the field.

Following a performance of the national anthem by

see **CGHS** on A7

Warmer, dryer trends point to fire risks

By Damien Sherwood
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Fire season has arrived and with drought conditions in several areas of the state, fire authorities are worried this summer may see more intense burns.

The season came as early as May 15 this year for some areas of Southern and Central Oregon, such as Klamath, Jackson, Josephine and Lake counties. It was also declared in Prineville and as far north as The Dalles, making it the earliest start in 40 years.

The Oregon Department of Forestry declared the start of the fire seasons due to fuel conditions, lack of spring rains, extreme drought and continuous fire activity.

On June 15, the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) issued a burn ban in Lane County.

Though the date is typical for the area and there has been a recent spate of rain, trends show that the region has been getting both warmer and drier over the years, according to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) data.

Cottage Grove meteorologist Scott Borgioli attested that the nation's continental West is overall getting warmer, experiencing a rise in the snowline and seeing earlier spring snow melts.

Borgioli recently conducted a special study to answer local agricultural concerns.

"I've been fielding a lot of questions from the local community …" he said. "People are asking 'Are we drying up?' and, 'Is Oregon burning up?' This prompted me to do a study, even though I've already been seeing these trends in my 20-plus years as a meteo-

see **FIRE** on A10

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