

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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Sol Path Collective makes for musical market (A6)

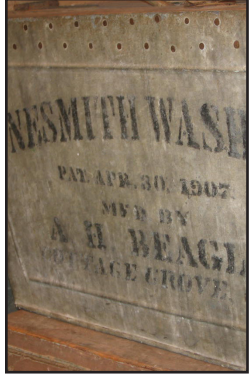
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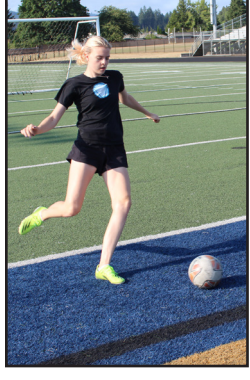
Partly cloudy with a high of 100 and a low tonight of 64.
Full forecast on A5

Nuggets of History



The Nesmith Washer
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SPORTS & REC



CG girls soccer under new management
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Redwood removal completed

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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Last Thursday (Aug. 5), Wright Tree Service completed the removal of two redwood trees on the corner of Chestnut Avenue and North G Street.

The project was done over two separate days of limb removal and cutting the trees into sections from the top down.

The redwoods were transported to the city shop where they will dry out for about a year before being processed and used for public projects such as park benches.

The city held a neighborhood meeting under the trees in June to discuss their removal.

The trees had over time damaged both the adjacent road and sidewalk due to the massive root systems, causing a violation of city code and even threatening the neighboring house's foundation.

The roots extended into the city's sewer line on Chestnut Avenue and the storm catch basin had stopped functioning correctly as well.

In discussion between city staff and the Urban Forestry Committee in May, the committee said that it supported see **REDWOOD** on A11



Two old redwoods were removed from a residential corner last week and transported to the city shop for storage and eventual milling.

ACE charter school sets sights on old Harrison building

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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Just three years after closing its doors to students for what seemed the final time, the old Harrison Elementary School at 1000 South 10th Street may be opening up to a new chapter.

On Aug. 18, the Cottage Grove Planning Commission will consider granting

Academy for Character Education (ACE) charter school a conditional use permit for the property. The green light from the commission would begin a process that could see students in the halls by the start of the school year in fall of 2022.

The tuition-free public charter school is sponsored by the South Lane School District (SLSD) and

takes a unique approach to education with a hybrid of in-person and at-home learning.

"We're really a niche school with a lot of parent input and a lot of parents teaching," said Principal Starr Sahnnow.

The charter school is now going into its 15th year of service and has grown from an initial student population of around

30 to its current population of 150.

Over the years, the school has adapted to this growth by seeking out new spaces to hold classes and store materials. Including an off-site storage building in Oakridge, the school is currently spread out among five separate buildings in the area.

"For us, it's just a matter of finding a space where

we can house our school in one location," said Sahnnow. "We are a very textbook-heavy school, so a lot of our off-site storage is textbooks in the curricula that we use."

A New Place for ACE
After an exhaustive search of several other buildings within the South Lane district, in which the

see **ACE** on A9

Middle Fork Complex fires continue to grow

By DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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Smoke rolled into the valley and through the Cottage Grove area earlier this week as the Middle Fork Complex fires in eastern Lane County saw a sudden overnight spread.

The Middle Fork Complex is comprised of 12 lightning-caused wildfires on the Middle Fork and McKenzie ranger districts in the Willamette National Forest. The fires began on July 29 after lightning strikes in the area, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

The complex includes Kwis, Gales, Ninemile, and Knoll fires.

"Each of the fires are burning in timber in areas of steep and rugged terrain and as the fires burn through the dry heavy fuels, fire intensity will periodically increase causing development of visible smoke columns," stated a Forest Service update on Monday.

Over Monday night this week, the fires grew by more than 1,700 acres and on Tuesday, Governor Kate Brown invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act to free up additional resources to fight the fires. As of that afternoon, the fires had expanded to more than 5,000 acres and were just 2 percent contained as a whole.

Evacuation notices were also updated on Tuesday and included a Level 2 (Be Set) notice for part of Oakridge.

Firefighters are currently prioritizing the Kwis Fire, due to its proximity to Oakridge.

There are 671 personnel, 19 fire engines and 6 helicopters assigned to the complex.

Forest visitors are advised to avoid Olallie Campground, Deer Creek Hot Springs, and dispersed campsites near the springs.

County authorities have asked the public not to approach the closure area as fire crews are working to re-

see **FIRES** on A11

Governments require return to masks

Lane County, State of Oregon release health advisories about rising COVID-19 cases

On Aug. 10, the Lane County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved an Emergency Public Health Advisory requesting that all individuals, businesses and employers wear masks in indoor shared public spaces, regardless of vaccination status, due to the current unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases within Lane County.

Similarly, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown held a press conference Wednesday, Aug. 11, to issue two new health and safety measures. The vaccination requirement for state employees and statewide indoor mask requirements seek to address the spike in COVID-19 hospitalizations being driven by the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant.

"Oregon is facing a spike in COVID-19 hospitalizations — consisting overwhelmingly of unvac-

cinated individuals — that is quickly exceeding the darkest days of our winter surge," said Brown. "When our hospitals are full, there will be no room for additional patients needing care, whether for COVID-19, a heart attack or stroke, a car collision or a variety of other emergency situations. If our hospitals run out of staffed beds, all Oregonians will be at risk."

In accordance with the Emergency Public Health Advisory, the City of Cottage Grove also issued a statement on Aug. 10 that all employees and visitors to city property will be required to wear a mask until further notice.

The Lane County Commission serves as the local Board of Health. "In the past 24 hours, 264 positive cases were reported in Lane County — the highest one-day total for the county since the pan-

demic began," the board wrote in its announcement. "The number of individuals being currently tracked as infectious within Lane County is the highest by a factor of two as compared to the previous high during the winter surge of November 2020 to January 2021."

On Aug. 9, over 590 individuals were in hospitals in Oregon, with more than 150 in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds. The number of hospitalizations of Lane County residents with COVID-19 is exceeding daily counts observed during the winter surge and stressing the capacity of the local hospital system.

Lane County, as Oregon's second largest regional hospital hub, is also receiving patients from other counties in Southwest Oregon.

Lane County Public Health

see **MASKS** on A8

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