

DRIVING *from A1*

conditions make their seasonal change.

“We especially want to remind people who will be driving in rural Lane County this holiday season,” said Senior Transportation Planner Becky Taylor. “Our rural county roads are often winding and narrow with little room to recover if you leave your travel lane. Sadly, there are several county roads with high numbers of serious inju-

ry or fatal crashes, including London Road south of Cottage Grove, which is our first Safety Corridor and the focus of several education and engineering efforts.”

The London Road Safety Corridor was established on July 4, 2021 and will remain in effect until July 5, 2023.

To reduce DUII, speeding and the number of people killed and injured, Lane County partnered with Oregon Department of Transportation and South Lane

County Fire and Rescue (SLCFR) to designate London Road as a Safety Corridor, which doubles traffic fines and involves overtime enforcement of traffic patrol.

Lane County states that “more people have been killed or seriously injured on the first seven miles of London Road between Cottage Grove and the lake than most roads in Oregon.”

Countywide, DUIIs have become a growing concern as the county reported this year a 55 percent increase in such substance-involved fatal-

ities and serious injuries since 2017.

Among six accidents on London Road between 2014 and 2018, half were fatal, half resulted in serious injury and all involved DUIIs.

Lane County has applied to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to reduce the speed of the first three miles of London Road to 45 mph. If ODOT approves this request, Lane County will install 45 mph speed limit signs.

London Road isn’t the only dangerous road in

the area. SLCFR data shows that other rural roads including Cottage Grove-Lorane Road, Row River Road and Highway 99 have pronounced rates of vehicle accidents.

The county offers the following tips about impaired driving to make sure the holidays are spent safely:

- Plan ahead for a sober driver to safely drive you to your destination. As with drunk driving, it is essential that drug-impaired drivers refrain from driving a vehicle.
- Passengers should never ride with an im-

paired driver. If you think a driver may be impaired, do not get in the car.

- Do you have a friend or family member who is about to drive while impaired by alcohol or drugs? Take the keys away and arrange to get them home safely. Don’t worry about offending someone — they’ll thank you later.

- If you see an impaired driver on the road, call 9-1-1.

To learn more about the London Road Safety Corridor, visit online at www.lanecountyor.gov/lrsc.



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FOOD *from A1*

saw the need, they stepped up to see the dinner continue its long tradition this year as well.

Taddei also said he was also inspired by his own family’s tradition of volunteering with Vaverka and the passing of his own mother.

“She wouldn’t want me to stop doing anything just because she’s gone,” he said.

Organizers chose the First Presbyterian Church as their venue, but have also received a donation from the Catholic Church to keep the event going.

“And we wanted to make sure that every dollar went to food,” said Taddei.

Placing a bit of faith in the community, much of the food has been pre-purchased by organizers, who expect to be reimbursed later as the rest of the donations roll in and all is accounted for.

“So we just went for it, knowing what we need will show up,” said Munsell.

Donations have come in the form of cash or even gift cards for local food providers.

“And to this day, I know that we have enough to reimburse everybody,” added Taddei.

Organizers have stored away some 100 pounds of potatoes, 13 turkeys, gravy, butter and many other items.

Taddei also credited the Houtz family with making 40 pumpkin pies from scratch, which will be baked on Christmas Eve.

Keeping all the goods fresh for Christmas presented its own challenge, but local businesses and institutions such as Axe & Fiddle, Grocery Outlet, the Methodist Church and Western Oregon Exposition stepped up to offer their freezer space.

Taddei added that the City of Cottage Grove has even offered support for the event.

The community response has been robust, the organizers said, and they feel prepped for the big day, though said they would still

be happy to accept someone who wants to commit a few hours to helping out.

“We’re probably pretty good on in the building volunteers because we’ve got to keep that to a minimum,” said Munsell. “So, what really what we’re hoping for is that we can find a few people in the community that will call us that have a neighbor or know someone who is willing to pick up a couple hot meals that we’ve set up already by appointment and deliver them after two o’clock.”

Those interested in receiving a Christmas Community Dinner are asked to drive up 3rd street and follow signage. In the church’s parking lot, volunteers will step up to vehicle windows, take orders and deliver dinners back to the vehicles.

The day after, on Sunday, Soup’s On will serve any leftover food from this event.

“With food as sparse as it seems to be for a lot of people, we just don’t want a bunch of food to go in the trash,” said Munsell.

Taddei and Munsell said they also hope to see the community gather in per-

son for next year’s Christmas Dinner.

Meanwhile, the United Methodist Church served up its free Community Christmas Dinner on Sunday (Dec. 19) consisting of vegetable soup, roast turkey, stuffing, vegetables, mashed potatoes, gravy, a roll and dessert.

With those bellies filled, local food pantries Community Sharing and Rural Organizing Project (ROP) have also saturated the community in holiday food options this week.

Community Sharing served its annual Holiday Food Box, which was distributed in a drive-through fashion on Dec. 20.

The ROP, having attained its food pantry status earlier this year, offered a holiday line-up for those who signed up to shop the pantry from Dec. 21 – Dec. 23.

The holiday grocery offerings include all of the festive meal fixings for traditional Anglo and Latino meals, including chicken, broth, potatoes, onions, stuffing, cranberry sauce, celery, butter and cooking oil, rice, masa and banana leaves.

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