

Polk County Itemizer-Observer

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Mike Ainsworth may very well be Polk County's biggest and most dedicated Oregon Ducks football fan. JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

DELIRIOUS DUCKS

UO football's championship game run gives locals 'Duck Fever'

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Mike Ainsworth can remember when he was a senior at Central High School in 1973, there were four Oregon Ducks fans — in the entire school.

"Back then, if you beat Idaho, that was a good year," he said. "How things have changed."

No kidding.

Four decades later, the Ducks will play Ohio State for the national title Monday in Arlington, Texas, in the first championship game of the College Football Playoff era.

Ainsworth, a Polk County commissioner — and once

Playing For A National Title

Who: Oregon Ducks (13-1) vs. Ohio State Buckeyes (13-1).

What: College Football Playoff National Championship Game.

When: Monday, 5:30 p.m. (PST)

Where: AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas.

TV: ESPN.

Radio: KXTG-AM 750, KXTG-FM 102.9.

Point spread: Oregon favored by 7 points.

long-suffering Ducks fan — will be there with his wife, DeAnn, to cheer on the team. He was at the Rose Bowl for the national semifinal playoff game in Pasadena, Calif., on New Year's Day to see Oregon's win. Ohio State defeated Alabama in the other semifinal to punch its ticket to the title game.

To see the Ducks in a sec-

ond national football championship game in four years — Oregon lost to Auburn 22-19 in 2011 — is a pretty nice reward for the loyalty he's shown the team over the years. Ainsworth has had season tickets for more than 30 years. He ran into one of the three other Oregon fans he went to school with at the Rose Bowl.

"We reflected on what it was like 42 years ago when we were seniors in high school — we never thought this would ever happen," Ainsworth said. "It's fun because we watched some pretty bad football when we first got season tickets."

See DUCKS, Page 2A

More changes in store for fair

County showcase going to three-day format starting in 2015

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — The Polk County Fair Board has voted to shorten the annual county fair by one day, removing Sunday from the schedule and going to a three-day event starting with the 2015 fair.

The board voted unanimously at its December meeting to make the move, citing a pattern of low attendance and lackluster revenue on Sundays.

"After reviewing our financials for the last few years, this change made good business sense," said Anna Scharf, chairwoman of the Polk County Fair Board. "The fair needs to be profitable, and the fourth day was the day that was not accom-

plishing that."

Comparing the number of tickets sold for Saturday — the highest attendance day — to Sunday, the drop off is substantial. During the 2014 fair, Saturday attendance was nearly 3,600, while Sunday's was 1,800. In 2013, it was almost 3,700 on Saturday compared to 2,000 on Sunday. The revenue picture painted the same stark contrast.

"If you look at Saturday's total gate (revenue), Sunday brings in half the revenue as Saturday," Scharf said. "People want to get out of there. Vendors want to go home. The kids want to go home."

In fact, in recent years there has been a decline in vendors willing to stay at the fair for Sunday's final day.

See FAIR, Page 5A



Fairgoers will have one less day to enjoy the carnival rides and other attractions at the Polk County Fair after the fair board decided to shorten the event to three days. EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer file

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS NEWS

With final approval granted from the Dallas Planning Commission, Dallas Retirement Village is moving forward with plans for 40 to 63 more independent living apartments and a new community center.

The expansion will take place in two phases on a 5.3-acre empty lot on Northwest Jasper Street, adjacent to current DRV facilities. Phase 1 plans call for building a complex with one-bedroom and two-bedroom units and a 20,000-square-foot dining and activity lodge. One-bedroom apartments will be 850 square feet and two-bedroom units will be 1,500 square feet.

»Page 3A

FALLS CITY NEWS

The Falls City Fire Department has been granted nonprofit status by the Internal Revenue Service, allowing the agency and its firefighters to continue a long tradition of donating to community causes.

For decades, firefighters with the Falls City department have donated their "points" money to charitable causes, such as Falls City High School, fire victims, or to pay for community Halloween or Christmas parties.

However, about a year ago the practice that allowed for money to be collected and donated to community activities came under fire in Falls City and at all other fire departments across the country.

»Page 2A

INDEPENDENCE NEWS

What, exactly, does a 200-year-old parrot think about, and how does it act? Just ask Molly Hare, 10, who plays Polynesia in Pentacle Theatre's annual fundraiser production of "Dr. Dolittle," opening Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at Central High School.

"I had to learn to make parrot sounds and do parrot movements," she said, giving off a "caw-caw!" that would make one think a bird was in the room.

For being 200 years old, Hare said her character is still pretty active, moving around the stage a lot.

It's the old bird who tells Dolittle, played by Lorenz Bilbo, that if he cared to, he could learn the language of animals and talk to them himself.

»Page 13A

MONMOUTH NEWS

Many fees for the city of Monmouth were revised for the first time since 2008 at Tuesday night's city council meeting, pending council approval.

Most of the fees increased slightly, with some new fees added.

Fees that were increased were based on personnel costs, City Manager Scott McClure said.

"Personnel costs went up a bit, which is normal," he said. Fees established by the city "shoot for cost of service," he added.

In the police department, one fee went down substantially: the cost for photocopies.

»Page 9A

POLK COUNTY NEWS

Monmouth Elementary School kindergarten teacher Samantha Henderson has the names and photos of her smiling students posted on a two-sided board in her classroom. One side is her morning class roster; on the other, her afternoon class.

Henderson, like many other kindergarten teachers, leads two half-day sessions, each about 2½ hours long.

That may change next year in Polk County school districts — and others across the state — as schools prepare to offer full-day kindergarten in 2015-16 following the passage of House Bill 248 in 2011.

»Page 14A

| THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK | wed | thu | fri | sat | sun | mon | tue |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|-----|
| Up for a game of Scrabble? Join the fun at the "Scrabble with Betty" gathering at Independence Public Library. 1 p.m. Free. | Ash Creek Arts Center hosts a reception for "The Inhabited World" at MaMere's Bed & Breakfast in Monmouth. 5-7 p.m. Free. | Rainbow Dance Theatre performs "LumiDance" during the Smith Fine Arts Series at WOU's Rice Auditorium. 7:30 p.m. \$11-\$28. | Grab your partner and head out to the Guthrie Park Community Center for an old-fashioned country-style dance. 7 p.m. \$5. | The Pentacle Theatre stages its final performance of "Dr. Dolittle" at Central High School in Independence. 2 p.m. \$15-\$20. | Help save a life by making a donation during an American Red Cross blood drive at Calvary Chapel in Independence. 12:30-6 p.m. Free. | Dallas High's girls basketball team opens Mid-Willamette Conference play by hosting Woodburn. 7 p.m. \$5. | |
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| Fog: Mostly Cloudy Hi: 51 Lo: 37 | Fog: Mostly Cloudy Hi: 53 Lo: 40 | Showers Hi: 50 Lo: 41 | Mostly Cloudy Hi: 50 Lo: 39 | Showers Hi: 49 Lo: 42 | Chance of Showers Hi: 52 Lo: 40 | Mostly Cloudy Hi: 53 Lo: 37 | |