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Rex Fuller speaks with Western benefactor Fred Maurice at Fuller's community reception on April 7.

EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

WOU LEADER CHOSEN

Fuller will be Western's 23rd president in July

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — Rex Fuller doesn't want to wait until July 1, when he takes over as Western Oregon's 23rd president, to begin the first thing on his to-do list: listening and learning.

"I hope to be able to arrange for some of that during the transition days between now and July," Fuller said.

Fuller, 62, an economist and professor of public administration, has served as provost and vice president for the division of academic affairs at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Wash.

He said the Mid-Willamette Valley is a perfect fit. He and his wife, Susan, have already begun searching for a home in the Monmouth area.

A competitive tennis player and golf enthusiast, Fuller said Oregon has a great



Rex Fuller and his wife Susan enjoy a sunny reception at Western Oregon's Historic Gentle House on Thursday.

lifestyle.

More important than the geographical area, Fuller is excited to serve as WOU's next president.

Throughout his short

two-day tour and interview April 7 and 8, Fuller said WOU's commitment to student success was evident around every corner.

"During the interview

(process), the messages just reinforced each other," he noted. "They were different voices and different perspectives, but there was a thread that tied things together."

Students voiced their concerns using language describing hopes and dreams, while faculty talked about their work using words more commonly associated with educational professionals, but it all boiled down to one thing: a deep commitment on everyone's part for students to succeed.

Fuller is ready to honor Western's past while moving the university forward.

"I look forward to learning more about (WOU's core values) and then working with colleagues to say, what's the next level? What's the opportunity for us to take Western to one more level of distinction, because I think it's poised to do that," Fuller said.

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Medicare bill carries timber payments

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The U.S. Senate approved legislation including a two-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools program, which would bring \$185 million to Oregon.

The bill was signed by President Barack Obama's last week.

The extension was attached to legislation that addresses how Medicare reimburses doctors and other health care professionals for providing care to patients.

The Senate voted 92-8 to approve it, while the U.S. House of Representative passed it on a 392-37 vote in March.

"This extension ends months of uncertainty for Oregon's rural communities, who have grappled with on-again, off-again funding for roads, schools and first responders," said Sen. Ron

Wyden (D-Ore.). "Renewed county payments buy us time to build support for solutions that address the broader economic issues that plague too many of our rural areas."

So, what does that mean for Polk County?

Polk County Commissioner Craig Pope said the county is estimating Polk will see about \$400,000 for 2014 and \$700,000 for 2015, but those numbers could change when the details are worked out.

The 2014 payment, combined with \$388,000 received previously from the Bureau of Land Management, is down 5 percent from what the county received in 2013.

It won't plug the hole the county is trying to fill with a public safety levy that will appear on ballots next month. The levy would tax 45 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on properties, gener-

ating \$2.25 million in the first year alone.

Pope said the county will levy less to offset funding received in payments, and they should know the final amounts soon.

The legislation says the payments are to be sent 45 day after the bill is signed into law. Pope said there is a chance counties will receive the payments for both years in 2015 because of that clause.

This latest reauthorization was moved forward separate from requirements demanding increased timber harvests, a limitation that stopped an extension last year.

"There is clear momentum in Congress for the idea that we need the safety net — unencumbered with unrealistic logging levels — as well as separate legislation that gets the harvest up," Wyden said.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS NEWS

Dallas' 2015-16 budget increased slightly from the current fiscal year, but will essentially offer a "status quo" level of service.

City Manager Ron Foggin provided an overview of the city's proposed approximately \$39 million budget Monday night during a Dallas Budget Committee meeting. About \$10.4 million is in the city's general fund, which includes police, fire, finance, administration and community development departments.

"We are trying to keep up with current service levels," Foggin said.

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FALLS CITY NEWS

The appeal in the code violation case against Falls City's Akha Farm has been postponed until July.

Thursday, a pre-trial hearing was held in the case, with a trial slated for April 29. However, the trial is now set for July 7.

Falls City City Prosecutor Moe Brown said this week the delay in the trial is due to scheduling conflicts with Polk County Circuit Court.

Akha Farm owner Matthew McDaniel is appealing code violations he was convicted of last fall in Falls City Municipal Court.

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INDEPENDENCE NEWS

The Independence Police Department has been doing things right for a number of years, and now it is an accredited agency through Oregon Accreditation Alliance (OAA).

"One of the things we learned right away is we were doing really well," Lt. Rick Igou said about the process of accreditation. "We were already performing at the national standards."

To qualify for accreditation, law enforcement agencies must prove that they meet national standards based on best practices in 102 categories, for everything from oaths of office to job descriptions, high-speed chases to use of force.

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MONMOUTH NEWS

In the cool, sunny morning on Saturday, about 50 people picked up shovels in Madrona Park.

"Let's go plant some trees!" Monmouth Mayor John Oberst exclaimed.

It was Monmouth's celebration of National Arbor Day, and the 13th year the city has been named Tree City USA.

Volunteers young and older planted 26 trees in Madrona Park, including two large trees.

Community Development Director Mark Fancey gave tree-planting instructions before everyone got started.

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POLK COUNTY NEWS

Luckiamute Valley Charter School seventh-grader Chris Seiber wore his favorite pants to school on April 14. That was a mistake.

By the afternoon, he was covered in mud — along with the rest of his class. Dodging rain and hail, LVCS seventh- and eighth-graders helped staff from the Luckiamute Watershed Council (LWC) remove invasive ivy from Ritner Creek Park on Gage Road near Pedee.

"You should have made the announcement sooner," Seiber said to teacher Steve Diehl, referring to the warning about attire for the afternoon's project.

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THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue
	Helping Hands Emergency Food Bank provides food assistance to eligible community members each week. 10 a.m.-noon. Free.	A community health fair at Talmadge Middle School provides health screening and information and activities to all. 5-7 p.m. Free.	Enjoy an evening of art and cheesecake at Dallas Public Library. Live music also will be provided at this event. 6 p.m. \$5.	Cheer on Western students at their Relay For Life event. Celebrate survivors and join the fight against cancer. 6 p.m.-8 a.m. Free.	Grab your scrap-booking stuff and hit the Majestic to scrap for a cure, supporting Team Hope and Relay For Life. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. \$20.	The Dallas Chamber lunch topic is "Visual Content for Web and Social Media," presented by Marlin Brownell. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. \$10.	James2 Community Kitchen offers free meals to everyone in the community each Tuesday and Thursday. 4:30-6 p.m. Free.
	Mostly sunny Hi: 60 Lo: 38	Partly cloudy Hi: 59 Lo: 41	Mostly sunny Hi: 58 Lo: 40	Rain Hi: 60 Lo: 47	Rain Hi: 60 Lo: 47	Showers Hi: 59 Lo: 44	Showers Hi: 60 Lo: 41