

Polk County  
**Itemizer-Observer**

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**Voters say yes to levy**

*DA, Sheriff begin work to restore staff, patrol hours*

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The day after Polk County's public safety levy was approved by voters, District Attorney Aaron Felton had to shuffle his office's crammed schedule to attend that morning's budget committee meeting. Wednesday is grand jury day, and he had to find someone to fill in for him while he listened in on the discussion, which took about 90 minutes. That he had to do some creative scheduling illustrates why his office sorely needs the additional staff the levy will provide, he said. That help — also for Polk County's other public safety departments — will be on the way as voters in the county approved the levy by a 56 percent to 44 percent margin.

The five-year, 45 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value tax levy will provide additional staff in the DA's office (five), Polk County Sheriff's patrol (12), jail (5), and two more juvenile detention beds.

For Felton, the help can't arrive soon enough.

"Fortunately, I've been told I can begin the hiring process almost immediately," Felton said. "I'm pushing to get hiring notices out as quickly as I can."

Those notices will call for three deputy district attorneys and two administrative assistants. Felton believes he can be running with a full staff within a few months.

"I can't emphasize how critical this vote was," Felton said, noting it prevented a further decline of the law enforcement system in the county. "This is a very, very good decision made by the people of this county."

Polk County Sheriff Bob Wolfe said his office will take more than a year to get to full operations due lengthy training requirements, especially for new officers.

He hopes to have six officers — perhaps some already certified officers — on staff by year's end.

"It's going to be a lot of work," Wolfe said of hiring more deputies, but he's pleased to be able to "move forward instead of trying to figure out what I'm going to do next."

Wolfe said he met with his management staff Friday to decide how to proceed and get hiring notices out.

His office will resume 24-hour patrols by July 1, 2016 at the earliest.

Help in the Polk County Jail is also critical.

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JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
**Sgt. Bradley Holbrook hugs his son, Landon, 6, during a surprise homecoming Thursday. Holbrook, with the Oregon Army National Guard, had been gone for 11 months.**

**A welcome home**

*Hero Dad surprises son at Lyle Elementary*

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — As soon as Lyle Elementary School first-grade teacher Stephanie Hofferber read the final words of the children's book, "Hero Dad," her student Landon Holbrook glanced to his right.

With the words "My dad, my superhero" still ringing in the school's library, Landon laid his eyes on his own father, Sgt. Bradley Holbrook.

It took him a few seconds to realize what he was seeing. He hadn't seen his dad, a soldier with the Oregon Army National Guard, for almost a year.

But soon, he said, "Daddy," and ran into his father's arms, not letting go for a long time.

Landon's classmates, equally surprised, buzzed with excitement and followed the happy dad and son into the hallway before school staff scooted them back into the library to give the family privacy.

Holbrook, who coordinated Thursday's surprise homecoming with his wife, Jessica Holbrook, cherished seeing Landon and his 3-year-old son, Sawyer, for the first time since leaving last June. He could hardly stand waiting outside Lyle while Jessica and school staff set up the surprise.

"Oh my gosh, it's so great," Holbrook said of seeing his boys. "I was holding my phone just waiting for Jess to text me (to come in)."

Still seemingly shocked, Landon simply said having his dad home was "good" and that he missed him "a lot" while he was gone.

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JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
**Jessica Holbrook, Landon's mom, reacts as Bradley Holbrook walks into the library at Lyle Elementary School. Landon, center left, doesn't see him yet.**

"Can we play Xbox?" Landon asked his father when he was told he would be leaving school early to go home with his parents.

Jessica had mentioned to school staff months ago that she and her husband wanted to surprise Landon and they agreed to help. The plan took shape after Jessica picked Bradley up Wednesday.

"I had to hide him," Jessica said, noting Landon and Sawyer's grandparents took them for the night. "That was hard."

Holding back tears, Jessica said Thursday was everything she hoped it would be. "It was just such a relief to see him," she said. "It was definitely a moment we will remember."

**IN YOUR TOWN**

**DALLAS NEWS**

Thanks to a grant from Petco Foundation, the city of Dallas has launched a program to address the growing number of feral, or "free-roaming," cats who call the city home.

The \$10,000 grant will pay for a "trap, neuter, and return" (TNR) program, with the goal of preventing growth in the feral cat population.

To put the money to use, however, the city needs feline friendly volunteers to help trap and care for free-roaming cats. Once captured, they will be taken to be spayed or neutered, given vaccinations, and returned.

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**FALLS CITY NEWS**

Six candidates have applied for Falls City's part-time city manager position that opened when interim manager Jon Hanken accepted a job elsewhere in April.

The Falls City City Council will consider its next steps in a special meeting yet-to-be scheduled.

Falls City is looking for a manager to work 20 to 24 hours per week. However, at its May 18 regular meeting, the council added more options to consider, including contracting the position instead of hiring someone or even bringing in an intern to lend a hand.

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**INDEPENDENCE NEWS**

Headed into Central's softball team's play-in matchup against Ashland on Friday, Panthers coach Kendra George wanted just one thing: maximum effort.

Central answered the call, earning a 14-2 win. "They came on the field ready to play," George said. "The girls had a lot of good energy and were consistent the entire time. They had a lot of fun while they were playing and were there to compete and play hard."

Ryanne Huffman hit a triple in the second inning and a grand slam in the sixth to clinch the victory.

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**MONMOUTH NEWS**

Revenue for Monmouth Independence Networks (MINET) is expected to increase in 2015-16, but by about 7.4 percent, less than the 24 percent expected increase from last year.

The total annual revenue is expected to be \$4.886 million, compared to \$4.548 projected in 2014-15.

Chief Financial Officer Mark Thoenes said MINET's income from operations is expected to be \$999,926 in 2014-15, 25 percent less than the \$1.345 million the company made in 2013-14.

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**POLK COUNTY NEWS**

Three Polk County elected officials will receive raises in fiscal year 2015-16, while others, including all three Polk County Commissioners, will not see an increase in pay.

The county's budget committee made the decision on May 20, along with offering formal approval of the 2015-16 budget.

Those receiving raises are the Polk County clerk (6 percent), assessor (2.5 percent), and treasurer (6 percent). Pay raises were not approved for Polk County Sheriff Bob Wolfe and the Board of Commissioners.

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<p><b>THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK</b></p>	<p><b>wed</b></p> <p>Donate blood for the American Red Cross at Western Oregon University's Werner University Center. 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 77 Lo: 50</p>	<p><b>thu</b></p> <p>James2 Community Kitchen in Dallas provides meals to anyone who wants one in the community. 4:30-6 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 80 Lo: 53</p>	<p><b>fri</b></p> <p>Meet the artists at Tom Kunke Art Studio's exhibit, "Iconic Willamette Valley," open today through June 27. 6-8 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 79 Lo: 51</p>	<p><b>sat</b></p> <p>Find all your fresh vegetables and fruits for the week-end at two farmers markets in Independence. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 80 Lo: 55</p>	<p><b>sun</b></p> <p>Relay for Life — a 24-hour relay event — wraps up today, raising awareness and money to fight cancer. 10 a.m.-10 a.m. Free.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 77 Lo: 52</p>	<p><b>mon</b></p> <p>Celebrate National Say Something Nice Day, which is an effort to counteract bullying and the lack of civility and common courtesy.</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 71 Lo: 53</p>	<p><b>tue</b></p> <p>Head to Main Street Park in Monmouth for Polk County Bounty Market for all your baked goods and produce. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 70 Lo: 52</p>
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