

Polk County
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Picnic tables get facelift

Dallas teenager fixes up 50 aged tables at city park

By **Jolene Guzman**
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — If you are sitting at a new-looking picnic table at Summerfest's Breakfast in the Park this July, thank 2015 Dallas High resident Matthew Dindinger.

Dindinger recently completed his Eagle Scout project, refurbishing 50 picnic tables in Dallas City Park. He raised money, bought materials, and with the help of volunteers, replaced the wood on the picnic tables — over the course of about two weeks.

"I wanted to do something to help out the community," Dindinger explained of his extensive project.

He said it started smaller. He just wanted to build a few tables for Kingsborough Park and contacted the city to see if that was possible. That's where the idea came up of refurbishing tables in the much bigger Dallas City Park.

Dindinger agreed and the project grew from there.

"It went from six to 50 tables, which is a big difference," he said.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Matthew Dindinger leads a group of volunteers on his Eagle Scout project to replace 50 of the aging picnic tables in Dallas City Park. He also raised money to buy materials.

Indeed, Dallas Parks Supervisor Ron Lines said he's more than impressed with Dindinger and the amount of time and professionalism

he brought to the project. "It was an undertaking," Lines said. "He actually did very well."

Eagle Scout projects are a test of leadership, and in Lines' opinion, Dindinger scored high.

Dindinger had to collect donations — The Dallas Rotary Club, host of Breakfast in the Park, contributed about 75 percent of the cost — to purchase materials from local retailers and organize a work crew. Then he had to learn to take apart and put back together the tables, and apply a weather sealant.

"He was like a project manager," Lines said. "He had to see the project through from beginning to end. He was very professional

when he left the park. He didn't leave a mess. There was nothing to do when he left."

Lines said Dindinger was able to negotiate deals on materials that reduced the cost of repairing the tables to \$35 per table, lower than the \$40 to \$45 he estimates if the city tried to do the same thing.

And the city would have had to soon. The wooden tabletops and benches on some of the tables were well overdue for replacement.

Lines said the city was trying to figure out a way to repair them when Dindinger approached staff with his idea. At the end of the project, he repaired about half of the tables in need of TLC.

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JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer
Maryanne Shinkle, left, and Logan Breece attach table frames to new tabletops and benches during a work party.

Public to take a peek at clinic

Central Health Center readies to welcome public on tours

By **Emily Mentzer**
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — It's been more than a year since students in Falls City have had access to medical care in their own city.

Since the nurse practitioner's office there closed in May last year, there has been no health care available in town, said Jack Thompson, Falls City School District superintendent.

"It's been difficult," he said. "The last couple of years, we've had the dental van come help the kids out, but we have not had any health care available to the kids. There's a lot of people in our community who don't have access to cars to get their kids to the doctor."

With the opening of the Central Health and Wellness Center, all that will change.

The school-based health center, which will host an open house for the public from 4 to 6 p.m. on Thursday, will provide health and wellness services



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer
Buzz Brazeau and Brent DeMoe tour the infant-toddler center on Thursday.

es — including dental and mental health — to students in Polk County, as well as the community in Monmouth and Independence.

"It will make a big difference," Thompson said. Plans are underway

between Central and Falls City to provide school buses to get Falls City students to the health center on a regular basis, where they can get immunizations, or check on a sore throat.

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IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS NEWS

The Dallas School Board adopted its 2015-16 budget with the addition of more staff, thanks to a better-than-expected May state revenue forecast.

The Oregon Legislature promised to dedicate a percentage of unexpected revenue in the forecast to schools when it approved the 2015-17 K-12 budget, which it split 50-50 over the two years. In the past, funding was split 49-51 to account for cost increases.

Dallas set aside \$565,000 to compensate for the even split.

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FALLS CITY NEWS

The show must go on — and it will on July 3 in Falls City. Last-minute changes threatened Falls City's Fourth of July celebration, but several organizations have stepped up to take over pieces of the event so it can go forward as planned.

Planning to use the event as a fundraiser, the Falls City Boosters opted not to proceed with organizing the annual tradition earlier this month after learning it could not charge admission to the event without incurring more liability.

Falls City city leaders were able to pull together to keep July 3 on track.

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INDEPENDENCE NEWS

Work began on June 15 to ready the old Valley Concrete site to market to developers.

Independence City Manager David Clyne said at the June 9 city council meeting that the city will do some basic cleanup of the riverfront property, including grading the site, and has hired consultants to help recruit the right developer.

Chris Zahas of Leland Consulting Group said he is interested and intrigued to help the city find a buyer of the 20-acre parcel of land, which cost the city \$800,000.

Zahas added that the economy is getting better, making it easier to attract developers.

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MONMOUTH NEWS

Customers of Monmouth Power and Light will see a decrease in their bills effective July 1. A 3 percent decrease in rates was approved at the June 16 council meeting.

"We're a public entity," said City Manager Scott McClure at the meeting. "We don't need to make a profit. We're generating enough cash on an annual basis."

The power and light fund will still maintain a 36 percent contingency to use in case of emergencies, McClure said, meaning the fund will still be in good shape with the decrease in rates.

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POLK COUNTY NEWS

The Polk County Board of Commissioners was scheduled to adopt the county's 2015-16 budget at 9 a.m. today with minor changes to what was approved by the budget committee in May.

The biggest changes will be in the general, public works and behavioral health funds. Each will receive minor increases.

In the general fund, County Administrator Greg Hansen estimated the amount the county will receive in the second installment of the two-year extension of timber payments approved by Congress earlier this year.

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THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue
Grab your yoga mat and get ready to find balance at Rogue Farms during Yoga in the Hopyard. 6 p.m. Free.	Get your bicycle checked for free by Veal's Bikes Plus at Bounty Market at the Academy Building lawn. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.	Arc of Polk County hosts a dance and karaoke night for folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities. 6:30 p.m. \$3.	Head down to Independence to cheer on the folks competing in the Independence Sprint Triathlon. 9 a.m.	It's going to be a hot one! Head to the Dallas Aquatic Center or Independence Community Pool; stay hydrated and cool today.	Celebrate National Camera Day by breaking out for a hike and snapping some pictures along Rickreall Creek Trail in Dallas.	James2 Community Kitchen offers free meals and company at St. Philip Catholic Church to all who are hungry. 4:30-6 p.m. Free.	
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