

**EDITORIALS**

**Student health center good for all**

As the finishing touches are put on the new Central Health and Wellness Center in preparation of its open house Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m., we want to extend a hearty thank you to all who made it happen, and ahead of schedule.

From the feasibility study — to see if a student-based health center was needed in Monmouth and Independence, and if it would be self-sustaining — to the collaboration between so many health partners; from Dalke Construction Co. Inc., who kept plans ahead of schedule, to all those who awarded grants to the project.

If you haven't heard about it, Central Health and Wellness Center will provide all students in Polk County — and, well, the entire community — with health, mental health and dental care.

Not to be confused with a free medical clinic, the health and wellness center will accept insurance, just like any other doctor's office. The medical side of the health center will be run by Salem Health. Capitol Dental will provide the dental services. Polk County will provide mental health services.

One thing that sets it apart is it will accept the Oregon Health Plan, where other doctors may not.

The services are needed, particularly in this county, where more than 70 percent of students in Central School District are on free and reduced lunches, meaning they are at or below federal poverty level. In Falls City, students on free and reduced lunches also is high. The poverty level there, coupled with the lack of local medical services, means this new health center will provide much-needed help for Falls City students.

Importantly, the center will bring infant-toddler care, with priority on children of teen parents. This will let teen mothers and fathers go back to the classroom to finish their diplomas without fear of providing adequate child care for their young ones. Western Oregon University's The Research Institute will provide the child care.

The result of so much collaboration between so many different organizations is a convenient, accessible, complete health care experience for our communities.

**Kudos to Falls City volunteers**

For a moment last week, we were holding our breath. A favorite part of the Fourth of July weekend in Polk County — Falls City Third of July celebrations — might not happen. Last minute plans had fallen through, but organizations in Falls City picked up the ball and ran with it.

We're glad to see people step up to keep this tradition alive for Falls City residents.

In fact, kudos to all the volunteers who work hard to make all of the county's celebrations so great. From Dallas to Monmouth to Independence, Polk County really shines on the Fourth of July thanks to the hard work and dedication of those volunteers. And a shout out to all our first responders and law enforcement who work to keep the peace on the holiday.

**PUBLIC AGENDA**

Public Agenda is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* via fax (503-623-2395) or email (ionews@polkio.com).

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24**

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 25**

• **Polk Soil and Water Conservation District** — 9 a.m., Walking R Ranch tour and public meeting. Polk SWCD easement committee will tour the ranch at 6895 Ohms Road, Monmouth.

• **Monmouth-Independence Networks (MINET) Board of Directors** — 7:30 a.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence.

**TUESDAY, JUNE 30**

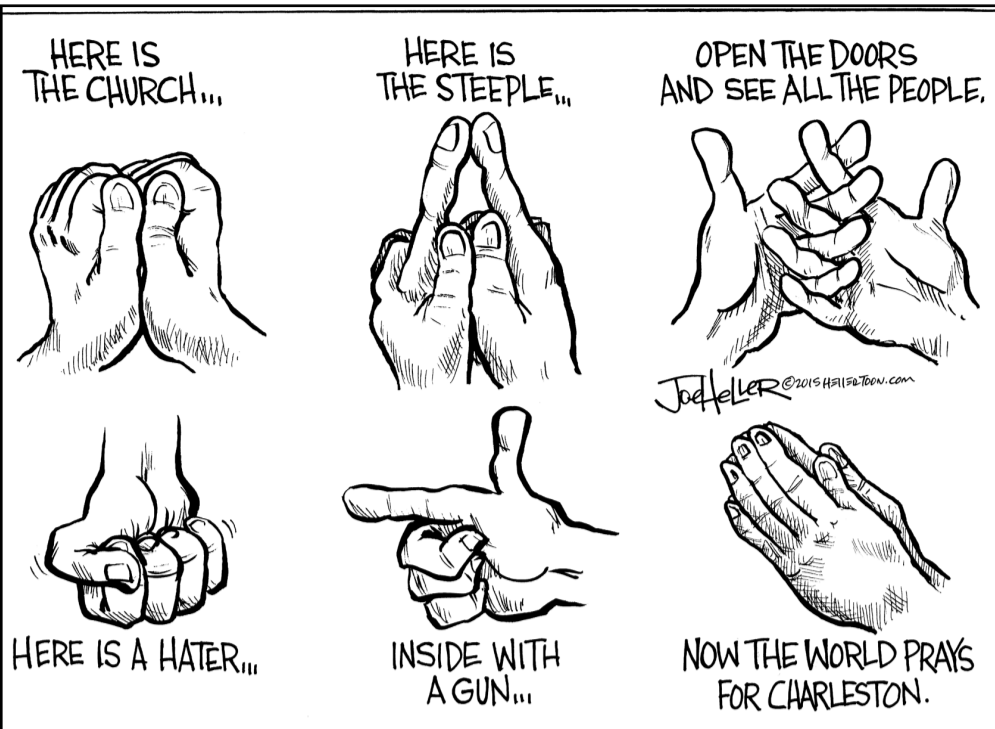
• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 1**

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

• **Monmouth Historic Commission** — 6 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.

• **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.



**Stay safe as summer begins**

With schools out and warmer temperatures on the way — it may reach triple digits this weekend — it is important to remember to watch the roads for more pedestrian and bicycle traf-

fic. While you may have the right-of-way, it is more important to be safe than to be first.

Leave your pets at home rather than taking them with you and leaving them in the

car while you run errands.

Drink lots of water and stay out of the sun during the warm afternoons.

Don't forget to wear a life jacket if you head to the river for refreshment.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Public safety levy hurts city dwellers**

Yes, thanks to all who voted "yes" on the safety measure. I mean the ones that live in the city limits.

Thanks for causing our taxes to go up and get nothing out of the deal. People in the county need safety, but let them pay for it.

Their property taxes are significantly lower than in town.

There is a property in the county that is valued at over \$525,000, but their taxes are only \$2,200 per year.

I live in town in a 35-year-old house, and mine are over \$3,300.

They will go up well over \$100 for this levy, not counting the 3 percent yearly tax increase.

Why don't they raise the county property taxes to pay for county safety?

It makes no sense.

Ali Rion  
Dallas

**Youth club grateful for all the support**

To all those who support Dallas Riders for Christ — youth motorcycle club (DR4C).

I know this is not done enough, but I would like to say a big thank you to those in Polk County and beyond who help support DR4C youth.

Myron Kliever  
Dallas

Some of you have slipped by without a thanks for your act of kindness given and/or donations.

Also, thanks to those who helped in some way making the April car wash and our recent June garage sale a great success — it helps us continue this club in the community.

The DR4C team of volunteers is greatly appreciative of all your help, support and your youth that come to the club.

Myron Kliever  
Dallas

**Volunteers made all the difference**

The 2015 Independence/Monmouth Clean-up and Beautification Day on May 16 was a great success.

This year, we had a great turnout with more than 63 volunteers from our communities that performed many cleanup and beautification projects in both cities.

At the collection site, we had 158 residents from Independence, Monmouth and the county who deposited a total of 11.22 tons of yard debris, 3.41 tons of metal and 20.98 tons of garbage.

We were also pleased that the Independence Umpqua Bank joined us again to provide confidential shred service for our citizens through

Sue Albee  
Community Service Officer  
Independence Police Department

Recall Secure Document Destruction, which resulted in 5,000 pounds of confidential documents properly disposed of.

The day was made a further success by the great volunteers; Boy Scout Pack 38 removed more than two blocks of graffiti, and the Polk County Community Corrections cleared a major portion of the river bank in preparation for the annual Western Days Fourth of July fireworks at Riverview Park in Independence.

Several local businesses participated in donating equipment, food and their time for the volunteers and workers, including Brandt's Sanitary Service, Les Schwab Tires, Master Appliance, Roth's IGA and local pizza restaurants and coffee houses.

The public works departments from both cities personally assisted residents and also worked at the collection site.

We would like to thank all those who volunteered, making this day a true success for our communities. It is with the involvement of our citizens that help make our communities the wonderful places that they are. We hope to see everyone next year!

Sue Albee  
Community Service Officer  
Independence Police Department

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**WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?**

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. Longer letters will be edited.

Election-related letters of all types are limited to 100 words. Writers are limited to one election-related letter per election season. Election letters from writers outside of Polk County are not accepted.

Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period.

Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed. Attacks by name on businesses or individuals will not be printed.

Letters to the editor that are obvious promotions for a business, products or services will not be printed.

The *Itemizer-ObsERVER* does not guarantee the accuracy of facts presented by letter writers; dissenters are welcome to respond. Letter writers who disagree with other published letter writers should maintain a civil discourse and address the subject, not the author.

Letters, like all editorial material submitted to the newspaper, are edited for length, grammar and content.

Letters must include the author's name, address and telephone number. This includes letters submitted via the *I-O's* website. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only.

Letters must be submitted from individuals, not organizations, and must be original submissions to the *I-O*, not copies of letters sent to other media.

Letters of thanks to businesses, individuals and organizations are limited to 10 names. The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

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