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Michelle Johnstone, Dallas School District's new superintendent, took over the job July 1.

**HAPPY TO BE HERE**

*Johnstone delighted to be at helm of Dallas School District*

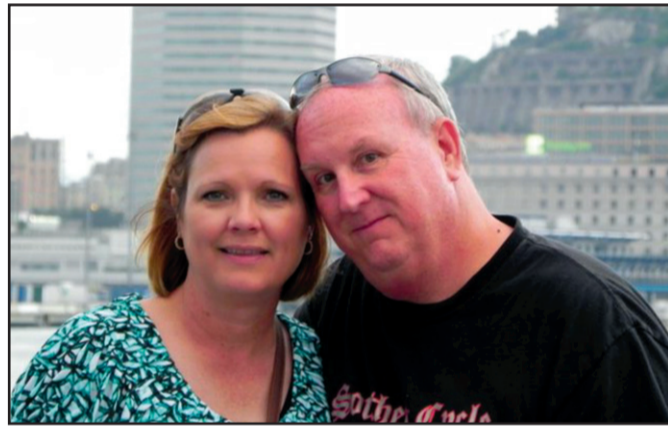
By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — After her first interview for the superintendent's job in Dallas School District, Michelle Johnstone wasn't too confident about her prospects.

The next day, the district's superintendent search coordinator, Greg McKenzie, called her to ask how the interview went.

"I really like it (Dallas), but I don't think I did very well," Johnstone recalls saying to him. "He said, 'No you did fine. Keep it up.'"

He was right. Johnstone was named a finalist and invited for a second interview and visit. She knew right away she wanted to work in Dallas. It didn't take the board much longer to come to the same conclusion. She was hired in March to take



Michelle Johnstone, left, and her husband, Bruce, are excited to spend time exploring Oregon and their new home of Dallas. They already have made trips to the coast.

over the job July 1, beginning her 19th year in education.

Now after her first weeks, Johnstone couldn't be happier her gut feeling about the first interview was wrong.

"Dallas is amazing and I

have absolutely been delighted at every corner," she said.

Johnstone, 52, said she always wanted to pursue a career in education, it just took her some time to get there.

She got married soon

after high school and had three kids, Sue, Bekkie, and Mark. Eventually, she felt it was time to go back to school to fulfill her goal of becoming an educator.

"I was one of those late bloomers. I think I was ready at that point. I don't think I was one of those kids who could have gone to college right out of high school," Johnstone explained.

She wanted to become a teacher, and later an administrator, "to change the future for children," and it wasn't long before she realized just how much of a difference education — and educators — could make.

Her first teaching job was at Kemp Elementary School in Commerce City, Colo. The school was in a tough part of town. She took it purposefully.

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**Successes, struggles in first session**

*Evans talks about what went well, what didn't during freshman term*

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

SALEM — The first Legislative session for representatives Paul Evans (District 20) and Mike Nearman (District 23) is under their belts.

With it brought some victories, challenges and disappointments.

The *Itemizer-Observer* followed up with both representatives to find out what they thought of it all. Nearman did not respond.

Evans said it was a historical session because of both internal and external events.

"Our transition of governor, internal politics between rural and urban, and an end game largely between the House and the Senate," all presented some challenges, he explained.

The difference between the House and the Senate was illustrated when the \$30 million Capitol bonding measure failed. Members of the Senate,

many of whom have been elected longer than those in the House, had been a part of the conversations and assumed the bonding would go forward, Evans said.

"The House, Republicans and Democrats, were concerned about the message it would send if we were putting money into the Legislature rather than schools or seismic investments or other bonding because of electoral consequences across the country," Evans said. "The fact of the matter is we can do both."

He said the bonding is important, particularly when Oregon experiences that 9.0 earthquake.

"Everyone knows this building is something more than just a building," he said. "There are certain symbols that we need back up and running again."

Five bills were presented regarding Measure 91, the legalization of recreational marijuana, passed by voters in

November. Evans said he voted no on all of them.

"The people of Oregon voted on the Measure," he said. "I may not have understood or agreed with some elements of it, but I didn't want to get in the way. Most members (of the House and Senate) tried to do a very good job of refining it, but sometimes when the committee gets together to make a horse, it ends up with a camel. I didn't want to be a part of that."

When it came to investing in education and veterans, Evans is pleased with his progress.

"I think the state of Oregon will look back on this session and say we did a lot of really important investments," he said. "We put close to \$300 million in seismic investments between schools and public buildings; we created a state resilience officer (emergency preparedness); we put about a million more dollars into veterans outreach."

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**IN YOUR TOWN**

**DALLAS NEWS**

Joe Card Jr. loved flying. He took a thrilling plane ride with famous "barnstormer" and stunt pilot Tex Rankin in 1937. Card saved money for a year to begin flying lessons at Salem Airport, learning a half-hour at a time until he earned his pilot's license.

Saturday at 10 a.m. Dallas remote control plane group Dallas Wingdingers RC Club will rededicate what remains of the airpark. The event will include the first take off of a plane — albeit remote control — from the airpark in years.

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**FALLS CITY NEWS**

Without more financial support, Falls City's July 3 fireworks show may not happen in 2016.

Jenn Drill, a Falls City city councilor, said at its latest meeting the Falls City Fire Department board decided it would not put on the show without more support from the city or other sources.

Drill said the department would need at least \$3,000 in outside support to make the show financially feasible in 2016. This year's display cost \$7,000 and donations taken on July 3 amounted to \$400.

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**INDEPENDENCE NEWS**

Talmadge Middle School will get a larger freezer next year.

Cec Koontz, Central School District business manager, said at Monday's school board meeting that the food service budget had money to increase the storage capacity at the middle school.

"We're going to double the freezer capacity at Talmadge, which will be a huge benefit to them," she said. "They serve a lot of kids there. It's great to be in a position to make those huge investments."

The high-end freezer will have a copper condenser rather than plastic, so it will last much longer, about 20 years rather than eight or nine, Koontz added.

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**POLK COUNTY NEWS**

After long absence, a rodeo is back in the lineup for the 2015 Polk County Fair.

Wild West Events, based out of Creswell, will be bringing in a group of professional cowboys and cowgirls to compete in bareback and saddle bronc riding, barrel racing, bull riding and mutton busting. The last time the fair had a full rodeo was in the late 1990s. After that, the fair hosted a youth rodeo for about 10 years.

"But even that got to the point where it was really expensive to put on," said Tina Andersen, fair manager.

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**SALEM NEWS**

The landscape of statewide assessments — currently Smarter Balanced Assessments — is in question after Gov. Kate Brown signed a law allowing parents to more easily opt children out.

The law is not without controversy, as roughly \$140 million in federal funding statewide is dependent on at least 95 percent of students participating in the standardized tests.

Last year, only about 10 students were excused from the tests in Central School District, said Buzz Brazeau, superintendent. Whether or not the new law will affect participation rates next year is hard to say.

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**THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK**

<p><b>wed</b></p> <p>Companies will be at the Job Fair looking for workers today, as well as resources to people find jobs. 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 81 Lo: 55</p>	<p><b>thu</b></p> <p>Meet the new owner of Blue Garden at a reception at Pressed and hear about his plans for the building. 7 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 79 Lo: 56</p>	<p><b>fri</b></p> <p>Enjoy a barbecue to honor Randy Whitaker and support the Correctional Peace Officer Foundation. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. \$5.</p> <p>Mostly Sunny Hi: 80 Lo: 56</p>	<p><b>sat</b></p> <p>Cook in a solar powered pizza oven or use a coffee can to flip pancakes at Step up to 4-H's outdoor cooking class. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. \$8-\$10.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 92 Lo: 60</p>	<p><b>sun</b></p> <p>Hawaii comes to Western during its 15th annual luau auction and picnic, a benefit for the Smith Fine Arts Series. 4:30 p.m. \$35.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 85 Lo: 58</p>	<p><b>mon</b></p> <p>Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce hosts a luncheon at the Majestic. Have lunch and network with others. 11:30 a.m. \$12.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 85 Lo: 57</p>	<p><b>tue</b></p> <p>IDA and Ash Creek Arts Center host Art in the Park in downtown Independence. Fun art projects for all. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 80 Lo: 54</p>
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