

EDITORIALS

Polk County begins Christmas season

Polk County kicked off the countdown to Christmas in style last weekend.

From cookies and cocoa with Santa in Dallas to lighting the giant tree at Western Oregon University to Portland & Western's special delivery of Kris Kringle in Independence and Falls City's tree lighting, there were plenty of smiles and Christmas cheer to go around.

Thank you Dallas Area Chamber of Commerce, Independence Downtown Association, the Elks and Portland & Western, Tony and Jenn Drill, WOU and WOU's Athletics Department for putting on great events.

Here's hoping that spirit remains throughout the season and if you are looking for way to give back, there are plenty of opportunities to do so.

The Salvation Army could always use more volunteer bell ringers to collect donations at local businesses throughout Polk County. For more information or to sign up, go to www.salem.kroccenter.org/volunteer.html.

You have to get up early to help Dallas Christmas Cheer with its Christmas Eve deliveries, but it's worth it.

If you want to be part of the fun, show up at 6 a.m. at LaCreole Middle School, 701 SE LaCreole Drive, to help "shop" for or deliver food boxes for local families in need. For more information: www.dallascc.org/.

Finally, if you can't volunteer, you can give. There are collection bins around town for Christmas Cheer and Toy for Tots that need filling, as well as Red Kettles that could use donations.

The rain storm that has caused havoc in the region waited just long enough not to disrupt Christmas celebrations around the county, but it's in full swing now.

We want to thank Polk County CERT and the city of Dallas for posting important and informational updates about road closures and high water areas on Monday and Tuesday. Thanks for helping keep residents safe and informed.

We aren't done yet, as much more rain and flooding is in the forecast for Wednesday (today) and Thursday, so remain vigilant and careful while driving.

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, DEC. 9

- **Monmouth Library Advisory Board** — 7 a.m., Monmouth Public Library meeting room, 168 S. Ecols St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.
- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Monmouth Park and Recreation Board** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.
- **Polk Soil and Water Conservation District Board** — 6 p.m., USDA Service Center, 580 Main St., Suite A, Dallas. 503-623-980 Ext. 5.

THURSDAY, DEC. 10

- **Polk County Fire District No. 1 Board** — 6 p.m., Central Station 90, 1800 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1510.
- **Luckiamute Watershed Council** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-837-0237.
- **Falls City City Council** — 7:30 p.m., Falls City Community Center, 320 N. Main St., Falls City. 503-787-3631.
- **Southwest Polk Fire Board** — 7 p.m. 503-831-3533. Call for location.

MONDAY, DEC. 14

- **Polk Soil and Water Conservation District Board** — 10:30 a.m., USDA Service Center, 580 Main St., Suite A, Dallas. Easement committee. 503-623-9680, ext. 5.

TUESDAY, DEC. 15

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Independence Historic Preservation Commission** — 4 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.
- **Monmouth City Council** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 16

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.
- **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0722.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Blessing and hope

My husband would like to tell how blessed we were when we went to the Dallas hospital emergency. The doctor found Les had a colon blockage. Les went by ambulance to the Salem Hospital. Les had wonderful care by Dr. VanderHeyden; all went great. Hope we live long enough to see the new senior center.

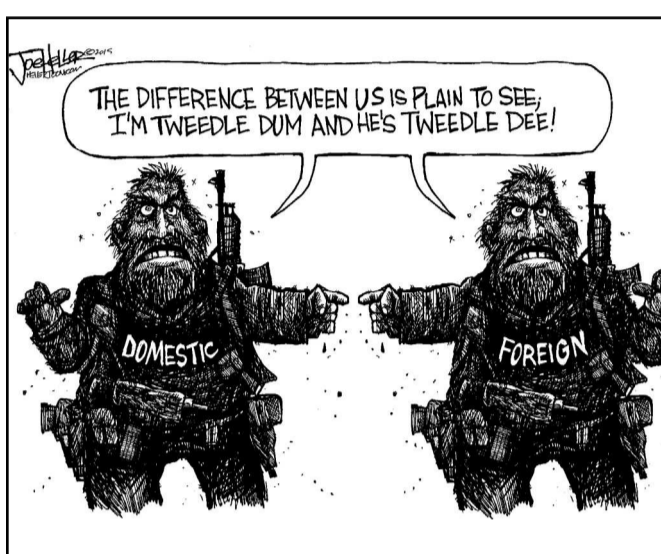
Betty and Les Day
Dallas

Stranger's offer a holiday reminder

I had the most amazing experience last week. I was in Salem to have lunch with friends and do some shopping. My last stop was the Fred Meyer store on Market Street. The clerk totaled up my purchases and suddenly the young woman behind me in line said to me, "May I pay for your groceries as a Christmas gift to you?" I was so astonished. I know I was standing there with my mouth open.

When I finally got it together, I thanked her and declined her offer. I explained to her that most of what I bought was either going to the Food Bank, the Boy Scouts food drive, or to the Dallas seniors who adopted a family for Christmas. I paid my bill and turned to her to thank her again. We gave each other a hug and said Merry Christmas. I left the store with a smile on my face as I realized there are still wonderful, kind, caring people in this country. Each day brings blessings.

Helvi Ross
Dallas



Indy should focus on what they have

The city of Independence needs to be reminded that 52 businesses located in our downtown core have closed their doors or gone out of business in the last six years. Fourteen of those retail fatalities were restaurants.

Currently there is an excess of 60,000-square feet of vacant retail or income-producing space located within three city blocks. Good luck to the in-state investors attempting to collect \$2.40 per square foot when neighboring businesses occupying buildings owned locally are struggling to pay their bills at 38 cents per square foot.

In referencing the newly acquired landfill: to complement the current downtown, all new construction must be built to exceed anticipated seismic reality. The landfill is unstable ground within a flood plain.

That does not mean the property cannot be built on; it means construction due to the proximity of the river

will require substantial reinforcement. Building facades must resemble 19th century architecture to blend in and maintain the historical image of the town. The development should contain a parking structure, destination hotel, and a performing arts center — things that brings hotel guests to the area. Competitive retail, additional restaurants or Section 8 housing is a bad direction. Let the hotel guest keys become "the keys to the city," allowing visitors to shop and enjoy the venues we already offer. The city has been struggling for years and obviously does not or cannot sustain what it already has. For that to change, residents and government need to support what they can see and abandon the ideology of seeing what they can support by continuously attempting to attract new victims to maintain the illusion of prosperity. As a merchant; I would gladly give the hotel 10 percent of the receipts their traffic generated.

Ron Smith
Independence

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 after this deadline are not accepted.

Reach us at:
Mail: Editor, *Polk County Itemizer-ObsERVER*, P.O. Box 108, Dallas, OR 97338.
Fax: 503-623-2395.
Email: ionews@polkio.com.
Office: 147 SE Court St., Dallas.

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How to Contact Officials

GOVERNOR
Gov. Kate Brown (Dem.)
160 State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-378-4582
Email: via website,
<http://governor.oregon.gov/>

STATE LEGISLATORS
Sen. Arnie Roblan
(District 5, Democrat)
5-417 State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1705
sen.arnieroblan@state.or.us
www.oregonlegislature.gov/roblan

Sen. Jackie Winters
(District 10, Republican)
5-301 State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1710
sen.jackiewinters@state.or.us
www.oregonlegislature.gov/winters

Sen. Brian Boquist
(District 12, Republican)
5-305 State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1712
sen.brianboquist@state.or.us
www.oregonlegislature.gov/boquist

Rep. David Gomberg
(District 10, Democrat)
H-471 State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1410
rep.davidgomberg@state.or.us
www.oregonlegislature.gov/gomberg

Rep. Paul Evans
(District 20, Democrat)
H-281 State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1420
rep.paulevans@state.or.us
www.oregonlegislature.gov/evans

Rep. Mike Nearman
(District 23, Republican)
H-378 State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1423
rep.mikenearman@state.or.us
www.oregonlegislature.gov/nearman

U.S. CONGRESS
Sen. Ron Wyden (Dem.)
221 Dirksen SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: 202-224-5244
Fax: 202-228-2717
Salem office: 707 13th St. SE,
Suite 285, Salem, OR 97301
Phone: 503-589-4555
Email: via website,
www.wyden.senate.gov

Sen. Jeff Merkley (Dem.)
313 Hart SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510
Phone: 202-224-3753
Fax: 202-228-3997
Salem office: 495 State St. SE,
Suite 330, Salem, OR 97301
Phone: 503-362-8102
Email: via website,
www.merkley.senate.gov

Rep. Kurt Schrader (Dem.)
108 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: 202-225-5711
Fax: 202-225-5699
Salem office: 544 Ferry St. SE,
Suite 2, Salem, OR 97301
Phone: 503-588-9100
Fax: 503-588-5517
Email: via website,
www.schrader.house.gov

POLK COUNTY Board of Commissioners
850 Main St.
Dallas, OR 97338
Phone: 503-623-8173
www.co.polk.or.us

CITIES
Dallas
187 SE Court St.
Dallas, OR 97338
503-623-2338
www.ci.dallas.or.us
Falls City
299 Mill St.
Falls City, OR 97344
503-787-3631
www.fallsctyoregon.gov
Independence
555 S. Main St.
Independence, OR 97351
503-838-1212
www.ci.independence.or.us
Monmouth
151 W. Main St.
Monmouth, OR 97361
503-838-0722
www.ci.monmouth.or.us

HOW TO REACH US

NEWSROOM

Nancy AdamsPublisher/Editornadams@polkio.com
Lukas Eggen.....Sports Editor.....leggen@polkio.com
Jolene Guzman.....Dallas/Falls City/Polk County Reporterjguzman@polkio.com
Emily Mentzer.....Monmouth/Independence Reporterementzer@polkio.com

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

Heidi LeppinDisplay Advertising Managerhleppin@polkio.com
Rachel Best.....Display Advertising.....rbest@polkio.com
Karen Sanks.....Client Servicesksanks@polkio.com

CLASSIFIED LINE ADVERTISING

Dawn Ohrenloads@polkio.com

PRODUCTION

Kathy Hugginsiosales@polkio.com
Karyn Presseliosales@polkio.com

Web: www.polkio.com **Phone:** 503-623-2373 **Fax:** 503-623-2395