

**EDITORIALS**

**Communities should come together**

After an Independence man lost his life in a tragic car-bicycle crash on Hoffman Road on Dec. 30, it has the town of Monmouth asking: What could be done to prevent such tragedy from repeating itself?

The first thought is to building a bike lane and sidewalks on this narrow stretch of road between 16th Street and Highway 99W.

Cries from City Councilor Marshall Guthrie and from residents and business owners came last week to invest in this strip of road and make it safe for bicycles and pedestrians.

The road is in Polk County, outside of Monmouth city limits. If there was a point where the county and cities of Monmouth and Independence all collide, in fact, it would be in this area. That is one reason why police officers from both Monmouth and Independence responded with Polk County deputies to the fatal accident.

While we know the project would be costly — estimates by Polk County public works director Todd Whitaker are \$2 million to \$3 million — we can't help but share a vision brought to life in both communities, a vision of more trails, more access via bicycle and on foot for the people who call Monmouth and Independence home.

We have a recent example of city-county road cooperation on Talmadge Road in Monmouth, where the city worked with the county, sharing costs, to add a sidewalk and bike lane on a one-block stretch where people were concerned about children walking to school.

That project wasn't inspired by a fatal accident. In fact, no accidents could be found in police reports for five years.

Hoffman Road accident statistics also are minimal, but even one life lost is tragic.

In fact, if that roughly 1-mile stretch of road was bike-ped safe, it would make an amazing loop around and between the two cities. We could host a 10-kilometer race during the Fourth of July weekend, starting on Main Street and Highway 99W, down Highway 51 through downtown Independence, up to Polk Street which turns into Hoffman Road, back to Highway 99W and swing around to the intersection with Main again.

Imagine the possibilities for fitness and health. Imagine the ease of travel next time we have a large bicycling event in Monmouth and Independence, at least on that stretch of county road.

We know it won't be easy. We know it will be expensive. But we are confident it would be worth it.

Perhaps if the cities, already strapped for cash as new expectations for public employees retirement system figures come in, maybe the communities of Independence and Monmouth can join forces and raise money to make this happen.

**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, JAN. 13**

- **Polk Soil and Water Conservation District Board** — 6 p.m., USDA Service Center, 580 Main St., Suite A, Dallas, 503-623-9680, ext. 5.
- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas, 503-623-8173.
- **Monmouth Parks and Recreation Board** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth, 503-838-0725.
- **Monmouth Library Advisory Board** — 7 a.m., Monmouth Public Library, 168 Ecols St. S., Monmouth, 503-838-0725.
- **Independence Heritage Museum Commission** — 4 p.m., Independence Heritage Museum, 112 S. Third St., Independence, 503-838-1212.
- **Dallas Residential Street Task Force** — 4 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court Street, Dallas, 503-831-3502.

**THURSDAY, JAN. 14**

- **Western Days Commission** — 7 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence, 503-838-1212.
- **Polk County Fire District No. 1 Board** — 6 p.m., Central Station 90, 1800 Monmouth St., Independence, 503-838-1510.
- **Falls City City Council** — 7 p.m., Falls City Community Center, 320 N. Main St., Falls City, 503-787-3631.

**TUESDAY, JAN. 19**

- **Dallas City Council** — 7 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas, 503-831-3502.
- **Polk County Board of Commission work session** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas, 503-623-8173.
- **Monmouth City Council** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth, 503-838-0725.
- **Independence Historic Preservation Commission** — 4 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence, 503-838-1212.
- **Falls City School Board** — 6:30 p.m., Falls City High School, 111 N. Main St., Falls City, 503-787-3521.
- **Dallas Parks Advisory Board** — 5:30 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas, 503-831-3502.

**WEDNESDAY, JAN. 20**

- **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas, 503-623-8173.
- **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth, 503-838-0725.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**U.S. becoming dictatorship?**

The United States of America stops being a democracy when the inhabitant of the White House starts making laws by issuing executive orders in direct contradiction to decisions made by the members of Congress. When these executive orders are in violation of our Constitution, our Republic then becomes a dictatorship.

And the group in charge becomes exactly the same as the ruling groups in all previous dictatorships throughout all history. And we are watching these events happen on a daily basis.

We, the people, elected individuals to represent us within the government that we created for this country. When these individuals were elected to their Congressional office, they swore an oath whereby they promised to abide by our Constitution and defend it from all enemies, both from outside and from within.

Apparently, some of these elected members of Congress have forgotten their oath of office and have chosen to be totally loyal to their political party's policies rather than to our Constitution, and have allowed this individual to repeatedly subjugate their lawmaking function.

Members of Congress have the power and the right to remove this dictator from office, but have steadfastly refused to do so.

They have allowed this individual to repeatedly lie to us, rationalized his activities, and totally disregarded our laws with impunity.

This period of time will be recorded as the time of insanity. When the world's greatest democracy was transformed into a dictatorship by the refusal of elected officials to perform their duties.

Richard C. Evans  
Monmouth

**Monmouth workers shine**

We want to say thank you to the city workers of Monmouth. Once again our town looked very festive with the Christmas decorations along Main Street and throughout the town. Year-round, they work diligently, without applause, and we wanted to relay our appreciation to them.

Larry and Karen Gratrek  
Monmouth

**Woman shows kindness at store**

This is a great story of how nice people in Oregon are. Yesterday I was in the store buying my monthly groceries and I couldn't find my debit card, as this store does not take credit cards. I was stuck digging into my wallet.

The bill was \$119 and I only had \$84 in my wallet. I was about to put some things back when this very nice young lady said, "I will pay the difference for you."

That was about \$40, and I wanted to pay her back but



she said no. I wonder if she would have said no if she loaded my groceries into a \$28,000 sports car.

Anyway I really appreciate the helping hand but feel bad about not being able to pay her back as I'm not a poor man even if I dress like one.

Walt Davies  
Monmouth

**Coach grateful for wrestling volunteers**

Thank you once again to Alice Bibler, the wrestling parents, alumni, the boosters, administrators, the Oregon Army National Guard, and community at large for the exceptional support you give the Dragon Wrestling Team every year at the Brunner Invitational. Several of the top 5A, 4A, 3A wrestling schools in Oregon were treated to a Saturday of top-of-the-line high school wrestling.

Without your help, it would have been "Just a typical wrestling tourney," and we've never settled for that.

On behalf of our wrestlers, thank you so much.

Coach Tony Olliff  
Dallas

**Bruner Invite smashing success**

The fourth annual Brunner Invitational, named after Janet Brunner (who ran the tournament for 20 years), was an exciting event once again. This year, there was a total of nine teams competing on five mats in two gyms at Dallas High School. The tournament consisted of 382 matches with 176 student athletes participating.

Huge kudos to the many volunteers that assisted — the tournament would not be possible without you. Special thanks to Liz Dunagan in her final year running an amazing concessions and Betty Jordan who headed up the hospitality room.

The DHS Athletic Director Tim Larson was there countless hours helping out — his dedication is unmatched across the state.

We are fortunate to live in a generous community such as Dallas.

DHS Wrestling very much appreciates our many sponsors: Oregon National Guard, Thrifty Market, Lime

Berry, Mira Mar, Columbia Distributing, Franz, and Costco. The number of fans this year was much higher than prior years. All admissions and concessions receipts will help fund the wrestling program. Thank you for your continued support and we hope to see you next year.

Alice Bibler,  
Tournament Director  
Dallas

**Lines helped make parks beautiful**

Our beautiful Dallas City Parks have never looked better.

The Rickreall Creek Trail system continues to grow and give a whole different view of Dallas to those who travel it.

The person largely responsible for making the parks and trails such wonderful showplaces for our community in recent years has been Ron Lines.

The legacy he has left those who succeed him isn't to exceed his standards but to maintain them.

That, in itself, will be a big challenge.

Thank you, Ron. Your work is appreciated. You will be missed.

Dave Weston  
Dallas

**Nutria live trap program available**

Thank you for the story on nutria in Independence. Nutria are active not only in Independence, but also in residential areas in Monmouth and elsewhere along Ash Creek.

Nutria are more than a nuisance. When they burrow into streambanks to make their dens, the weakened banks can erode or collapse.

To reduce nutria impact, the Ash Creek Water Control District operates a free live-trap lending program.

Those living near Independence can borrow up to five traps for a month at a time. Residents of Polk County can borrow up to two traps.

Please contact Ed Matteo at the Independence Nursery on Monmouth Street in Independence (by Les Schwab) for detailed information.

Dan Farnworth  
Ash Creek Water Control  
District  
Monmouth

**Thank you from Dallas Cheer**

Our goal every year is to help families in need in our area to have a Merry Christmas by providing them food and if possible some gifts. We had good indicators that the number of applicants would be similar to the 325 families we provided for in 2014 and it was. For 2015 we had 320 families and senior citizens apply for help and we can say with pure joy that all were provided for very generously.

Our goal was met because of your commitment to make this "your priority" for the Christmas season. Local Businesses, Civic Groups, Churches, Government agencies and Individuals young to old stepped up and came together not just on Christmas Eve morning but months prior to the event.

On Christmas Eve morning with out prompting over 500 volunteers arrived at La Creole middle school to sort, shop, pack and deliver the holiday food boxes that fill receiving families refrigerators and cupboards. It was a morning full of fun and excitement to see the hands and feet of our community come together to provide to those in need.

The Dallas Christmas Cheer Board of Directors, Grant and Judy Boustead, Debbie Davies, Mary Weinbender, Brooke Masingale, Warren and Sue Lamb, know that without you taking ownership for this program nothing gets accomplished. Our hope is that you understand how grateful we are of you hard work and support. Your act of kindness will be remembered throughout the New Year.

To all the donors and volunteers, again we say Thank You and look forward to seeing you next year.

Warren and Sue Lamb and  
Dallas Christmas Cheer  
Board Directors

**Write a letter**

Let us know what's on your mind with a letter to the editor.

Letters are limited to 300 words and must be turned in by 10 a.m. on the Monday prior to publication. All letters are subject to editing.

See our full letters to the editor policy on [www.polkio.com](http://www.polkio.com).

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