

Alcalde resigns post as fire chief

By Emily Mentzer
 The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Al Alcalde submitted a 30-day resignation on April 25 of his position as fire chief for Polk Fire District No. 1. He started the job on Sept. 8, 2015.

The fire board accepted the resignation at a special meeting after a 40-minute executive session.

Alcalde said that in his eight months as fire chief, he hasn't had a chance to get involved in the community because of an extended work schedule.

"The board has been very supportive and looking for change in the agency," Alcalde said. "As you are aware, it is very tough to work your way into a closed group."

Board chair Tom Snair said the resignation was not what the board wanted, but said that Alcalde didn't turn out to be the best fit for the department.

"It's not something I'm particularly happy about," he said. "Sometimes, when you get the shoe home, it

doesn't fit like it did in the store."

Snair said fire chiefs typically stay three to four years, not just eight months.

"Eight months wasn't really a fair time to give an evaluation," Snair said. "It just kept coming to a boil."

Volunteers and full-time employees were unhappy with Alcalde, Snair said.

Snair said Alcalde has agreed to work beyond the 30-day resignation to finish some tasks he started, including making sure Central School District buildings were up to code and completing job descriptions for firefighters, something the department has lacked for years.

"He wanted to clean up the schools and make sure the safety violations are taken care of," he said.

Some people were working outside their job descriptions, Snair said.

He and the board hoped having more clarity would help people know exactly what they were expected to do.

See CHIEF, Page 6A

Bond fails at polls

Voters say no to efforts to raise money for Dallas streets

By Jolene Guzman
 The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Voters voiced strong opposition to a 10-year, \$10 million bond to repair residential streets in Dallas in the May 17 primary.

The proposal, Measure 27-119, suffered a 62 percent to 37 percent defeat, receiving 2,998 "no" votes to 1,803 "yes" votes.

"It's a disappointing outcome," said Dallas Mayor Brian Dalton. "I do believe this was our best and most appropriate way of dealing with a problem that's growing exponentially."

The city estimates it has a \$15 million maintenance backlog on residential streets due to insufficient revenue coming from state highway appropriations and the federal gas tax.

Revenue received from those sources pays for operation of the entire street department, which maintains not only streets, but sidewalks and street lights and pays for equipment and materials.

Without adequate funding, the city maintaining just high-traffic areas.

Measure 27-119

Yes: 1,803 (38 percent)
 No: 2,998 (62 percent)
 For more election results, see Page 2A

Measure 27-119 would have been the first of a three-step process to solve the problem, which included implementing a fee to cover future maintenance and a second bond to fix the approximately 11 miles of streets not covered with the first.

Now, Dalton said the situation will deteriorate. He said between 2010 and 2016, the cost to repair streets increased by \$6 million.

"That's a pretty steep cliff we are approaching," he said. "It's getting worse."

He said kicking the more expensive burden into the future is damaging.

"I think that we are eating the seed corn of the next generation," he said.

Dalton said he believed the campaign in support of the bond was well-organized and provided voters with information via different sources, including a website, social media, live presenta-

tions, print advertising, and door-to-door.

That's part of the reason he was so surprised by the margin of defeat.

"I feel the voters had quite a bit of information," Dalton said. "I don't know what more we could have done."

Dalton said two citizens' committees examined the issue and found the proposed plan to be the best option available. With its defeat, the city will have to search for a plan B.

City Manager Ron Foggin said leaders haven't had an opportunity to hammer out how to move forward.

He said he would like to find out more information about why the vote was so lopsided.

"Understanding the 'why' part of it is really important," Foggin said.

Foggin added this is the second attempt the city has made to address streets, and second failure.

"We need to look at how we communication the information," he said. "If we missed that, or there is some work to do on it, we need to figure out what we can do."

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Dallas Family Night Out collects school supplies.

»Page 3A

FALLS CITY

Annual Third of July Celebration canceled.

»Page 7A

INDEPENDENCE

Couple honoring Memorial Day with a special CrossFit workout and fundraiser.

»Page 5A

MONMOUTH

Western Oregon University honors veterans with Memorial Day program.

»Page 7A

SPORTS

Dallas baseball and softball teams advance to the first round of the state playoffs.

»Pages 10-11A

EDUCATION

Eola Hills Charter School continues its search for a permanent home.

»Page 16A

COUNTY

Incumbents win local elections.

»Page 2A

Committee to hold final budget meeting

Itemizer-Observer staff report
 POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Budget Committee will hold its final budget hearing Wednesday (today) at 10 a.m. in the conference room at the Polk County Courthouse.

The meeting will include any changes or updates to the budget outlook for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Tentative approval was given in April to the \$64.9 million total budget, an increase of 10 percent over the current budget. The general fund — the fund that contains budgets for such departments as the sheriff's office and jail, district attorney, community corrections and assessor — comes in at \$22.2 million, a 12 percent increase.

Final approval by the Polk County Board of Commissioners is slated for June.

For more information: 503-623-8173.

'Explore' Polk County's parks, cities

With so much to do, where do you start? See Section C



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Take a drive, hike or bike ride through the scenic pathways and roads in Polk County. Plan your next day trip or adventure now with Explore Polk County, Section C.

By Emily Mentzer
 The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Inside, find the *Itemizer-Observer's* Explore Polk County 2016, an annual publication taking a look at all the things the county has to offer visitors, residents and businesses.

Some stories are similar — covering our favorite parks, events and towns — this year we took a new look at the organization of things. Instead of trying to pack everything into geographic locations, we put stories together based on recreation, communities, entertainment, living in Polk County, and festivals.

Also this year, you may notice a higher quality in the printing. We hope you will consider keeping the magazine year-round. When guests visit, it makes the question, "What should we do today?" easy, and keeps things in quick driving distance.

Celebrating all things Polk County is something outdoor enthusiasts, foodies, cyclists, wine tasters and members of Rogue Nation have been doing for years.

Between the Willamette River and the Oregon Coast Range, Polk County has much to offer for visitors and residents alike.

Campsites and bed and breakfasts offer lodging opportunities for hikers exploring trails that loop through

vineyards, hills, fields — and through towns.

The county is ideal for birding, and not just at Bassett Slough Park. Ospreys and bald eagles make their nests near rivers that run through the county.

Vineyards spot the countryside, close enough to make a day of touring and tasting, but too many to see in just one afternoon. Inside Explore, we take a look at the wine industry in general, but in August, we will publish something new — a wine guide dedicated exclusively to Polk County's vines.

Polk County is rich in culture with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde sharing their tribal heritage at the Chachalu Tribal Museum and Cultural Center, in addition to free powwows, a chance to see elaborate, traditional costumes and watch professional Native American dances.

The county is home to world-class, destination trails for bicyclists, from a mountain bike vineyard loop to the Black Rock Mountain Bike area — and country roads winding past farms, old barns, and fruit and vegetable stands.

Even if touring the county by car, the dirt and rock roads that between fields can make it feel like you're miles away from civilization rather than just minutes from a city.

See EXPLORE, Page 6A

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed
 Step up to 4-H with the Polk County Extension's needle felting class today at the Extension office, 289 E. Ellendale Ave. 4-5 p.m. Free.

Cloudy
 Hi: 64
 Lo: 45

thu
 Lightsabers and 1980s high school meet Shakespeare in Western Oregon's production of Cymbeline. 7:30 p.m. \$7-\$12.

Cloudy
 Hi: 62
 Lo: 45

fri
 Kick it old school at Guthrie Park's acoustic jam session. Musicians and listeners welcome. Donations accepted. 6:30-10 p.m. Free.

Showers
 Hi: 63
 Lo: 46

sat
 Find out what's fresh at one of two Independence farmers markets, both easily accessed from downtown. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free.

Mostly cloudy
 Hi: 64
 Lo: 46

sun
 Take in some art at River Gallery in downtown Independence and celebrate the window artist of the month. 2-4 p.m. Free.

Partly sunny
 Hi: 69
 Lo: 47

mon
 Happy Memorial Day to our readers. See Page 7A for events honoring those who have fallen in battle. Our office will be closed.

Sunny
 Hi: 72
 Lo: 48

tue
 James2 Community Kitchen serves meals to all who are hungry each Tuesday at St. Philip Catholic Church. 4:30-6 p.m. Free.

Sunny
 Hi: 74
 Lo: 49