

Polk County  
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**Minimum wage increase affects fair**

*Wages went up to \$9.75 on Friday, will continue to climb to \$13.50 by 2022*

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Fair will be charging \$3 for parking this year, a direct result of the minimum wage increase that took effect Friday, fair officials say.

Fair Manager Tina Andersen estimates the fair, running Aug. 11-13, will cost an extra \$7,500 in labor costs and price increases from vendors due to the 50 cent per hour wage hike.

"A lot of people we hire come on before fair, they stay on after fair and we can't afford to absorb those costs," said Fair Board Chairwoman Anna Scharf.

She noted that other small county fairs are struggling with the same issue, but Polk is one of the few that didn't already charge to park.

Andersen added that vendors that provide tents and fences for the fair and those who sell at the event also have to charge more because of an increase in labor costs.

"Those have all gone up," Andersen said. "Our costs aren't just directly associated with our own employees, but directly associated with employees of all of these other companies that are using temp employees like we are during fair time."

Scharf said admission to

the fair hasn't increased and people will still be able to pay for parking and admission in one stop when they pull into the parking lot.

The July 1 increase is the first of a series of annual raises approved by the state legislature earlier this year that will put the Mid-Valley region's minimum wage at \$13.50 per hour by 2022.

Portland metro's wage will grow to \$14.75. More rural counties will cap at \$12.50.

Like the fair, businesses are having to plan for the annual adjustment, especially for those further down the line, said Chelsea Metcalfe, the Dallas Area Cham-

ber of Commerce executive director.

"They are concerned about the incremental increase that is going to happen each year," Metcalfe said.

The chamber will be offering courses and materials to local businesses to help them prepare early for what is coming.

Local governments also are preparing for the increase, but some more than others.

The city of Dallas estimates personnel costs will jump \$20,000 this year due to the increase, City Manager Ron Foggini said. The increase is affecting departments that hire part-time

employees at the minimum wage, such as the Dallas Aquatic Center.

For now, school districts see very little impact from the \$9.75 per hour rate as most employee salaries are settled through contracts and rates higher than the state's new minimum.

Dallas School District has a few temporary workers at minimum wage, but doesn't anticipate much of an increase this year. Falls City Schools Superintendent Jack Thompson said the only time the district would see a difference is with substitute teachers who are paid at the minimum rate.

"That doesn't happen that often," he said.

**IN YOUR TOWN**

**DALLAS**  
Dallas Fire & EMS entertain with pyrotechnic display.  
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**FALLS CITY**  
Falls City School District passes its budget.  
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**INDEPENDENCE**  
Reports of loose dogs have been on the decline.  
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**MONMOUTH**  
Apple Box Theater opens "Jolly Roger and the Pirate King" on Thursday.  
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**POLK COUNTY**  
The deadline to enter the Polk County Fair is approaching.  
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**SPORTS**  
Central student-athletes read to kids at the Monmouth Public Library.  
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**Feline dies after rescue**  
Itemizer-Observer staff report  
DALLAS — A cat died on Saturday after being rescued by Dallas emergency services.  
Dallas Fire & EMS received a call at 6:15 p.m. on Saturday about a trapped feline.  
The cat was found in a storm drain near Dallas Secure Storage on Brookside Avenue.  
Responders were able to free the cat, but attempts to locate an owner were not successful. The cat was thought to have injuries prior to being trapped in the storm drain and later died.

**Falls City to pursue Wagner Library district**

**By Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — The Wagner Community Library in Falls City has enough funding for three years of operations, but what about after that?

Members of the Falls City school board and city council met June 29 to discuss that very issue and proposed a solution that would have voters decide the long-term future of the library.

The two government bodies agreed to seek a library district to charge a property tax for operations. It would be drawn on the same boundary lines as the Falls City School District.

Based on current costs, the library would need between \$40,000 and \$50,000 per year to remain open.

Without the district, Wagner will close, the group concluded.

In late 2012, the school district announced it would have to end its support for the library due to funding shortfalls. The district paid for library staff and operations. Wagner was forced to run on donations for nearly a year before stable, but temporary, funding was found.

That came in the form of the Wagner Trust Fund, originally created to purchase materials and supplies. The city appealed to have it dissolved and transferred to the city for library operations. In 2014, a California court judge decided in favor of the proposal and the funding has covered library costs since.

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**Funding for the Wagner Community Library is running short and a solution needs to be found or it will shut down in three years.**  
JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

**Having a Grand Old Time**



**Western Oregon men's basketball coach Jim Shaw, right, and Wolfie greet the crowd at the Monmouth-Independence Rotary Grand Parade on Monday morning. The men's basketball team served as Grand Marshal. For more photos from all of the county's celebrations, www.polkio.com.**  
EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

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

wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue
Tour the new Main Street Park Amphitheater with the Monmouth Business Association at its monthly meeting. 7:30 p.m. Free.	Applebox Children's Theater presents, "Jolly Roger and the Pirate Queen," opening tonight at WOU's outdoor stage. 7-8:30 p.m. Free.	Dave Upton performs at Redgate Vineyard in Independence as part of the winery's summer concerts. 6-9 p.m. \$5.	Find a feast of fresh produce at the Independence farmers markets at Riverview Park and Umpqua Bank. 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free.	Grab friends and family and head to the Buell Grange monthly breakfast, just off Highway 22, northwest of Dallas. 8-11 a.m. \$6.	Central Lions Club will meet at the Independence Elks Lodge located at 289 South Main St. in Independence. Noon. Free.	Court Street in Dallas will be closed this afternoon for Tuesdays on the Square, featuring family activities. 4-7 p.m. Free.
Mostly sunny Hi: 76 Lo: 52	Mostly cloudy Hi: 72 Lo: 55	Showers Hi: 65 Lo: 53	Showers Hi: 65 Lo: 51	Cloudy Hi: 67 Lo: 49	Partly sunny Hi: 72 Lo: 50	Cloudy Hi: 71 Lo: 51

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