

QUICK HITS

Central to host sports physicals

INDEPENDENCE — Central High School will hold sports physicals Aug. 9 from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Physicals will take place at the Panther Pit. Cost is \$10.

DHS, CHS fall sports registration coming

POLK COUNTY — Registration for the high school fall sports season will take place Aug. 8-11 at Dallas and Central high schools. Those who are not registered by Aug. 11 will not be able to practice on Aug. 15, the first day of official practices. Cost in Dallas is \$150 for all sports. Those qualifying for free lunch must provide a letter from the district office. Cost will then be reduced to \$35. Paperwork is available online at www.sites.google.com/a/dsd2.org/dallas-high-school-athletics/ and will be in the athletic office starting Aug. 8. At Central, registration will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Aug. 8-11 at the athletic office. Cost is \$50. Forms will be available at the office.

Dallas to host volleyball, soccer camps

DALLAS — Dallas High School will host soccer and volleyball camps the week of Aug. 8. The volleyball camp runs from Aug. 8-11 at the high school gym. The morning session (9 a.m. to noon) is open to students currently in or entering high school. The afternoon session (1 to 3 p.m.) is open to boys and girls entering grades one through eight. Cost is \$45. For more information: Shana Lavier, 503-949-4657 or Kayce Lilley, 503-791-9062. The soccer camp runs Aug. 9-11 at Whitworth Elementary School from 9 to 11 a.m. The camp is open to students entering kindergarten through eighth grade. Players will be separated based on grade and skill level. Cost is \$40. For more information: John Jones, John.Jones@dsd2.org.

Central volleyball, football camps coming

INDEPENDENCE — Central High School will host football and volleyball camps Aug. 8-11. The football camps will be split into two groups. Grades 3-8 will run from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., while the high school camp runs from 6:45 to 9 p.m. Cost is \$20. For more information: Shane Hedrick, shedrick@central.k12.or.us. The volleyball camp runs from 5 to 6:30 p.m. for students in grades 5-8 and from 6:45 to 8:30 p.m. for high school students. Cost is \$30. Registration taken first day of camp. For more information: Claudine Mendazona, cmendazona@central.k12.or.us.



PEDAL TO THE METAL

Bike MS camps at Western Oregon University during its weekend ride in the Willamette Valley.

COURTESY OF BIKE MS/for the Itemizer-Observer

Annual event hopes to raise \$800,000 for MS research

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The first year Augi Garred joined Bike MS, an annual event that is part of a national movement and raises money for Multiple Sclerosis research, he was more concerned about how he'd look riding than how his actual journey would go. "I first started riding as a volunteer in 2012," Garred said. "I wasn't a long distance rider. I showed up on my hybrid bike with a pair of tennis shoes and shorts that looked cool, but were too tight." He embarked on a 35-mile ride — by far the longest ride he had ever taken.

"I had no idea what I was getting myself into," he said. "I was in pretty bad shape. I was going up one of the biggest hills, and near the top, I came upon a cemetery and thought, are you trying to tell me something?" "Right before I went up the hill, a support wagon drove by that had picked up cyclists who were dunking their heads in ice water. I was tempted to stop and ask for help. At that moment, I thought about my mom (who had MS) and how if she could be on that bike feeling the wind, the heat and even the pain, she would have traded with me in a heartbeat. That kept me going." Garred's view of the event was forever changed. See MS, Page 12A

County wants to become cycling haven

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Bike MS has made its home at Western Oregon University for multiple years. It wasn't always like that. In past years, the event moved locations. "I know prior we had been near Hood River," Augi Garred, Bike MS vice president of marketing and events, said. "It went on a scenic route, but it was so difficult. There were so many people who wanted to come out and ride but didn't feel comfortable riding that long or taking on that big of hills." The Willamette Valley was an attractive alternative. "It's really peaceful," Garred said. "There's not a lot of traffic. We have seven routes over the weekend from an 18-mile, flat-as-a-pancake ride to Dallas to a 100-mile ride to Silver Falls. There's variety from flat to hilly. The landscape allows people who aren't as advanced riders to join." The factors that made the Willamette Valley such an appealing spot for Bike MS is something the county is looking to capital-



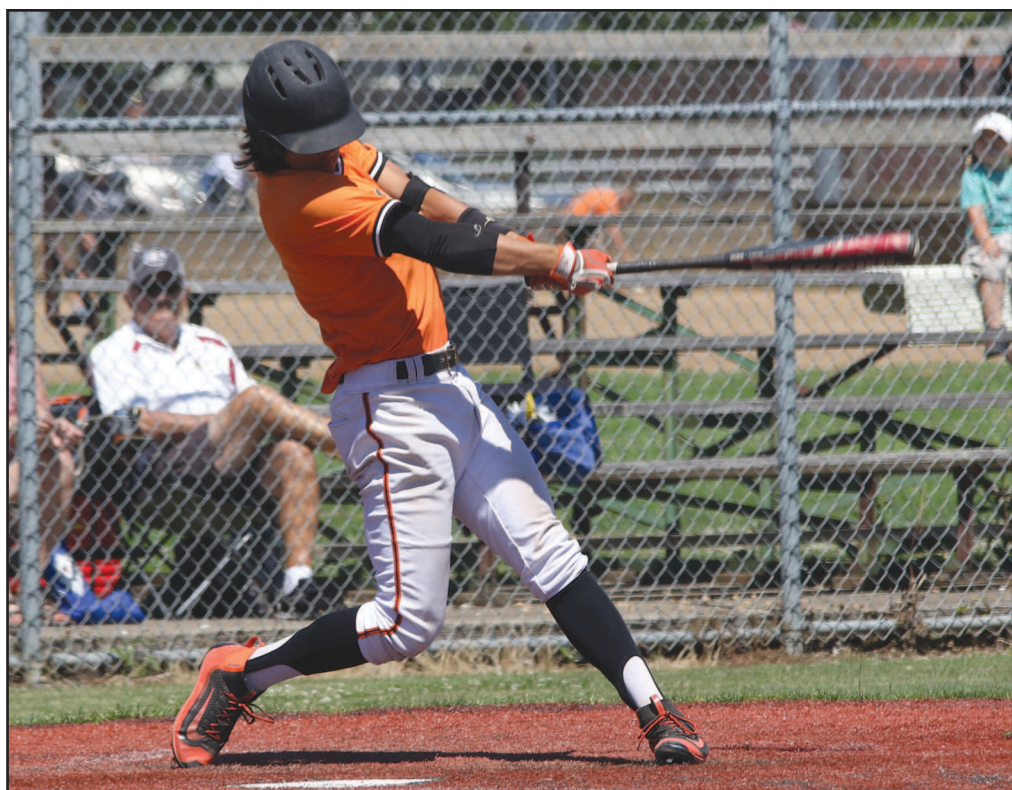
Two bike repair stations were installed at Riverview Park in Independence.

ize on, turning Polk County into a biking haven. Independence and Monmouth have taken steps to become a more appealing cycling destination. See COUNTY, Page 12A

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Dirtbags head to state tournament

Dirtbags face Bi-Mart Challengers from Eugene in 2015 state semis rematch



Tanner Earhart helped the Dirtbags defeat the Hustlers 7-2 and 13-2 on Saturday.

LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The DeMarini Dirtbags are headed back to the American Legion state tournament.



Mendazona

This time, they're looking to finish what they started in 2015. The Dirtbags defeated the Columbia Gorge Hustlers 7-2 and 13-2 on Saturday at Dallas High School to win the best-of-3 regional. DHS graduate Tucker Weaver earned the win in the first game. Central's Pete Mendazona dominated on the mound in game two, throwing eight strikeouts in six innings of work and had a perfect game going through

State

- The DeMarini Dirtbags are one of eight teams to qualify for the American Legion State Tournament in Keizer.
- The Dirtbags finished the regular season with a 30-6 record.
- The Dirtbags face the Bi-Mart Challengers, of Eugene, in the first round Wednesday (today) in Keizer.
- The Dirtbags advanced to the state semifinals in 2015.

the fourth inning. "I just took the success we had in the first game and that gave me a little more confidence," Mendazona said. "I go out there every outing thinking I'm going to dominate. I want to do my best to give my team a chance to win and I did." See STATE, Page 12A

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