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Dog rescued from fire

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — A Thursday afternoon house fire on Walnut Street damaged the home and contents, but no one was hurt, thanks in part to the efforts of Independence Police Officer Jill Thissell.

When officers and Polk County Fire District No. 1 were dispatched to the fire at 3:37 p.m., they were told by neighbors that no one was home, but there was a dog in the house.

"There were flames coming out of the back of the house, and the entire house appeared to be filled with smoke," Independence Sgt. Tino Banuelos recalled. "We could hear a dog barking from the front door, but we could not tell where exactly it was coming from."

The smoke was too thick to see beyond a foot or two, Banuelos said. Neighbors, the homeowner and officers tried going into the house, but were quickly overwhelmed by the smoke.

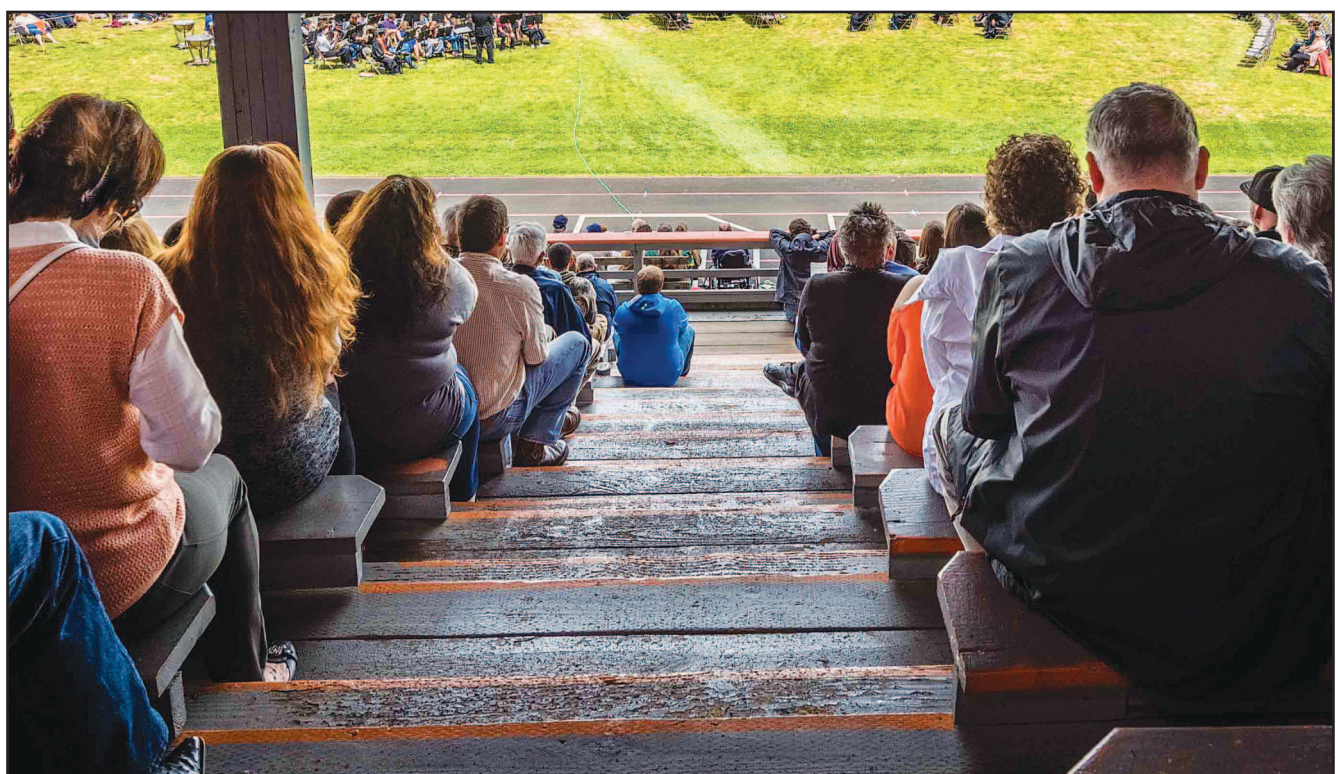
"We reached in as far as we could, but had to turn back," he said.

Thissell made her way in through the front door, got down low and followed the barking.

"In her words, she 'got lucky,'" Banuelos said. "She is so modest and humble."

Banuelos added that going into a burning building filled with smoke without the proper equipment is very dangerous, but that "of course we're proud of her. She saved the family's puppy."

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The bleachers at Dallas High School could face required improvements if a state fire marshal deemed it necessary.

JOHN SCHULTE/Itemizer-Observer file

Stepping forward

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The home bleachers at Gallaspy Stadium have long been considered a landmark among Dallas High School's athletic facilities.

The stadium, originally built in 1965, may face future scrutiny that could lead to required improvements.

Dallas School District Facilities Manager Kevin Montague wants to make one thing clear: the stands at the football stadium are structurally sound.

But father time and changes in codes have caused the stands to land in a potentially difficult spot.

The bleachers fall short of today's building codes passed in 2012 as an inspection revealed in January.

"None of the aisles meet current codes," Montague said. "They aren't the necessary widths. There are no handrails and the stairs are uneven, and that's not compliant with current codes."

The "crow's nest" has one ladder leading up to it — a violation of codes

requiring multiple exits in case of a fire.

At a March Citizen's Oversight Committee meeting — a group that oversees how bond money approved by voters in 2014 is spent — Montague reported that "there are many concerns with the structure which may cause it, or at least the crow's nest, to be shut down by the inspector."

If a state fire marshal inspected the stands, he or she could force changes to be made.

"The fire marshal could come in and say you have to close the crow's nest," Montague said. "That could happen tomorrow. Our insurance has been pushing (to make these changes). If you have a plan, they give you some leeway if you can say this is what we're going to do. Right now, we're forming that plan."

Montague said fire marshals have inspected the district multiple times over the past year.

The Citizen's Oversight Committee is in the process of addressing the issues raised, Superintendent Michelle Johnstone said.

Woodburn High School faced simi-

lar issues with its grandstands in 2015.

"The steps themselves were out of code because the length of the steps was too long," Woodburn Athletics Director Chad Waples said. "They had to shorten the steps by adding some additional ones. They also added hand rails that went down the middle of the aisle. We added a ramp because we only had one that was out of code. We added a complete stairwell that goes up to our crow's nest and press box. Prior to that we had a secured ladder that went straight up."

A fire marshal inspected the facility in 2015 and reported the findings to the facility supervisor, Waples said. The result was a closure of the grandstands throughout the entire football season.

"We could not allow the general public to use it because we were out of compliance with regulations," Waples said.

What could confuse some is that the stands are not considered to be out of code by the city of Dallas because they are only responsible to meeting the codes of the time they were built, city building official Ted Cuno said.

See BLEACHERS, Page 6A

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

City named in wrongful death lawsuit.
»Page 2A

INDEPENDENCE

Family Treasure's Marketplace scheduled to be sold in a Sheriff's Office sale.
»Page 3A

MONMOUTH

Register for Zimfest online through Thursday.
»Page 2A

POLK COUNTY

County fair exhibits due Monday.
»Page 6A

SPORTS

Dirtbags fall short of state title.
»Page 11A

ONLINE

Photo galleries from Summerfest events.
www.polkio.com

Grand Ronde man killed in car accident

Itemizer-Observer staff report

YAMHILL COUNTY — A Grand Ronde man died on the scene of a two-vehicle crash on Monday at about 9:24 a.m.

Preliminary investigation from Oregon State Police revealed that a 2003 Nissan Sentra driven by Michael Tubbs, 62, of Grand Ronde, was stopped northbound on Grand Ronde Road at the intersection of Highway 22.

The Nissan pulled out onto Highway 22 in front of a 1994 Honda Civic, driven by Tyler Porter, 27, of Tillamook, traveling eastbound on Highway 22.

The Civic attempted to avoid the collision, but ultimately struck the Nissan in the driver door.

Tubbs was pronounced dead on scene. Porter was transported to Willamette Valley Medical Center in McMinnville with non-life-threatening injuries.

Highway 22 was closed for about four hours with an established detour.

OSP was assisted by the Grand Ronde Police, Yamhill County Sheriff's Office, the Oregon Department of Transportation and West Valley Fire.

City hears aquatics center analysis

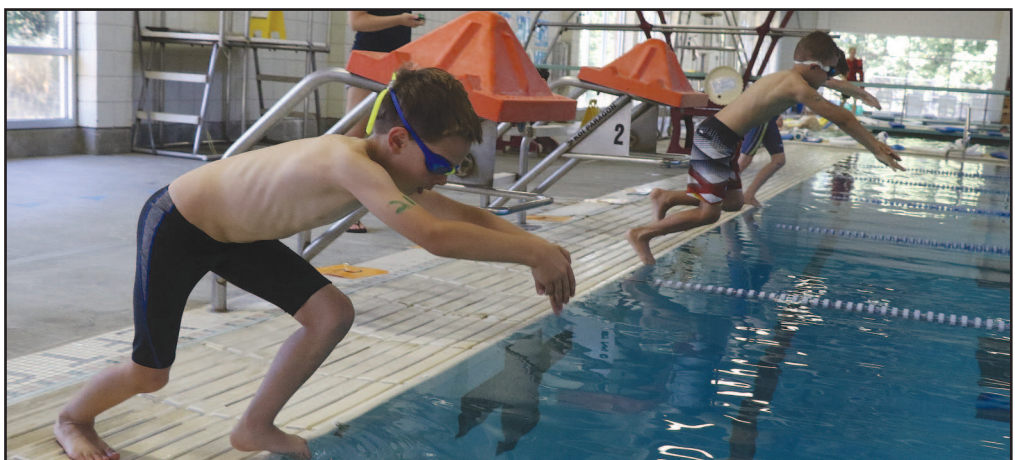
By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Dallas Aquatic Center has never been a money maker, but has, in general, made cost reductions and revenue growth since 2008, according to a city of Dallas analysis of the facility.

The study was prompted by a motion the council approved in May to look at options to eliminate or decrease the center's dependence on the city's general fund.

Revenue versus expenditure numbers have been as high as 60.4 (2014) percent and as low as 56 percent (2015).

Those percentages put the facility about average with similar year-round aquatic centers in the state, but Dallas Community Development Director Jason Locke warned not to read too much into those com-



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

The Dallas Aquatic Center hosts events, including the kids triathlon.

parisons.

"You can look at all of these numbers and I think there are differences in the way these facilities operate," he said.

Management structures and budgeting practices are among those differences. Locke said one example is the Astoria Aquatic Center, which doesn't include main-

tenance costs in the facility's budget or the cost of the park and rec director's salary for overseeing the center.

The Dallas Aquatic Center's budget accounts for both of those expenses and has a stand-alone fund, while Astoria's center is included in a park and rec department.

Other centers in McMinn-

ville, Woodburn and Forest Grove vary in age, size and program offerings, making comparisons complicated.

"It's apples to apples, but its granny smith to McIntosh to red delicious, because everybody functions a little bit differently," Locke said.

Through the analysis, Locke said he didn't find any easy answers to increasing

revenue or lowering costs when looking at how other centers operate.

The discussion set the table for city staff to make recommendations on how to close the Dallas center's funding gap, a process that will be complete in September and brought to the city's administration committee.

"I wanted to make sure everyone was on the same page," he said.

Locke reviewed the aquatic center's history from the beginning. Voters in Dallas passed a bond measure to build the facility in 1998, and, at the same time, voted "no" on an operating levy that would have supplemented the center's revenue.

Locke estimated that would have generated about \$300,000 to \$350,000 per year. By comparison, the center will receive about \$388,000 in general fund support this year.

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THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

<p>wed</p> <p>Kathy Boyd and Phoenix Rising take the Main Street Park Amphitheater in Monmouth to play some bluegrass. 6:30 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 83 Lo: 54</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>Polk County Bount Market features fresh fruits, veggies and handcrafted items at the Academy Square lawn. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 87 Lo: 53</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>Beth Willis rocks the Independence Riverview Park Amphitheater tonight as part of River's Edge Summer Series. 7:30 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 79 Lo: 52</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>Don't miss the all-you-can-eat breakfast at the Monmouth Senior Center, the first Saturday of the month. 8:30-10:30 a.m. \$3-6</p> <p></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 78 Lo: 54</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>Learn to sing for free at From the Heart Community Sing at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Dallas. 1:30-3 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Partly cloudy Hi: 77 Lo: 54</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>It's never too late to pick up an instrument and join Willamette Valley New Horizons Orchestra. 6:30 p.m. \$25/mo.</p> <p></p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 79 Lo: 56</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>James2 Community Kitchen provides free meals to all who are hungry at St. Philip Catholic Church. 4:30-6 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 82 Lo: 56</p>
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