

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer

Volume 141, Issue 43

www.Polkio.com

October 26, 2016

\$1.00

The GREAT Pumpkin float

By Jolene Guzman

The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Andy Hendersen has been growing giant pumpkins for almost a decade, but this year he raised something unique in his prized pumpkin patch.

His 919.5-pound giant didn't make its way into the record books — not by weight anyway.

"My biggest was 1,250.5 pounds," he said. "They can get up to well over 2,000 pounds."

His "small," big pumpkin still was destined for greatness — not on a scale, but on a river.

Hendersen says, with more than a little irony, that the world of giant pumpkin enthusiasts is small. He often sees the same people at annual weigh-ins and other events.

This fall at a Bauman Farm and Garden's weigh-in, Hendersen connected with Charity Rusch Marshall, another competitive grower, who was tracking down a record of her own. She picked Hendersen's carefully cultivated gourd as an option for her pursuit of a Guinness World Record in river floating in a pumpkin boat.

See PUMPKIN, Page 10A



Photo courtesy of Charity Rusch Marshall/Itemizer-Observer
Charity Rusch Marshall paddled a pumpkin 15 miles.

Curtain call?

Motor Vu Drive-In faces an uncertain future



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

The Motor Vu Drive-In Theater opened in 1953. The theater held its last showings of the year on Friday and Saturday, and may be have closed its doors for good.

By Lukas Eggen

The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Jeff Mexico has made running movie theaters an unlikely career. Mexico, who owns the Motor Vu Drive-In and Fox Theater in Dallas, opened his first theater in Stayton in 2002.

The Motor Vu has been a landmark in Oregon. Originally opened in 1953, it was No. 7 in the USA Today 10 Best Reader's Choice for best drive-in theater.

But the Motor Vu may be no more. Mexico announced on Facebook last week that Friday and Saturday were the theater's final showings of 2016 — and possibly forever because the land the theater resides on is for sale for more than \$1 million, Mexico said.

"We were told it was possible we wouldn't make it through the 2016 season," Mexico said. "I've been asking them since August every few weeks if this is our last season. We still don't know for sure. The post was to say thank you for supporting us."

What happened next left Mexico floored — and hopeful that the drive-in's fate may be brighter than he thought.

When Mexico announced the drive-in may be closing its doors forever, he expected



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Jeff Mexico works at the Motor Vu Drive-In on Friday night.

a few thousand views and some words of support.

"It blew up," Mexico said. "There were more than a quarter million views, which is crazy. I was expecting maybe 3,500. I'm pretty sure there are people from across the country sharing their input. It was a complete shock."

See THEATER, Page 8A

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Population estimates may help with city planning.

»Page 3A

FALLS CITY

City officials chip away at park payoff.

»Page 3A

INDEPENDENCE

Central cross-country teams prepare for districts.

»Page 14A

MONMOUTH

Western Oregon University practices earthquake drills in the Great Shakeout.

»Page 3A

SPORTS

Pirates volleyball heads to state.

»Page 14A

EDUCATION

Most districts see increased enrollment.

»Page 16A

Dallas Glow Run Saturday

Itemizer-Observer staff report

DALLAS — The Dallas Glow Run will take place Saturday at 7:15 p.m. in downtown Dallas.

The 5-kilometer run begins and ends in Dallas.

The run was originally scheduled for Oct. 15, but was rescheduled because of the massive rain and winds predicted by the National Weather Service.

Proceeds will go to Christmas Cheer, a nonprofit that provides holiday meals for families in need in the Dallas area.

Organizers of Dallas Christmas Cheer are preparing to sign up families for the program.

The Dallas Adopt-a-Family program matches donors with families needing help to provide gifts for children and a Christmas dinner for the family.

Families needing help can sign up Nov. 14 through 18, from 4 to 6 p.m., and on Nov. 19 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Academy Building.

Individuals, families or businesses wishing to adopt a family may email melissa.baurer@usw.salvationarmy.org, or call 503-507-6269 for more information.

Folklife festival celebrates culture

Event returns to fairgrounds for second year, showcases variety of music, art, food

By Jolene Guzman

The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — Polk County Folklife Festival will return for its second year Saturday at the Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center.

The festival debuted in March 2015, and due to a calendar quirk — there were five weekends in March last year — it had to take a year and a half break before fitting into the fairgrounds schedule this month.

The additional time allowed organizers to bring in new acts and vendors to expand upon what was a successful first year that brought in about 1,200 people, including attendees, artists, vendors and event volunteers.

Folklife was created to celebrate the Willamette Valley's varying cultures with music, food and art.

There should be even more of that on display Saturday.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer file

A blacksmith will be among the vendors and demonstrators at Polk County Folklife Festival at the Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center on Saturday.

exact same performers that there are so many different cultures, types of singing

and dancing that you can have," said Monica Johnson, the festival's vendor coordinator and president of the Dallas Arts Association. "We went to other things this year."

Among the new performers is Iraqi folk dancer Ishtar Sumer and two storytellers, one who uses poetry, and another telling children's stories.

"We did not have storytellers last time, so that will be definitely something new," Johnson said. "There will be two different types of that going on during the day."

Festival headliner Oregon Valley Boys, a swing dance band, will take the Jane Keefer festival main stage at 5:30 p.m.

Don't worry, there's plenty of room to dance — and you will want to dance.

Vendors and demonstrators will include spinners, a flint knapper and a blacksmith.

See FOLK, Page 5A

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK



wed
Try your hand at painting at the Boondock's Painting, Canvas and Cocktails in Falls City.
7 p.m. \$30.
Rain
Hi: 60
Lo: 50

thu
Central High will host the Build Oregon Career Expo where students can speak with professionals and colleges.
8 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Free.
Rain
Hi: 59
Lo: 45

fri
Get your toes tapping at the Guthrie Park Acoustic Music Jam Session on Kings Valley Highway in Dallas.
6:30 p.m. Free.
Partly sunny
Hi: 60
Lo: 48

sat
Support LaCreole theater programs and enjoy a good, funny, spooky time at "Comedy of Terrors."
7 p.m. \$3 to \$5.
Partly sunny
Hi: 60
Lo: 47

sun
Love 'em or hate 'em, today is National Candy Corn Day, celebrating one of the oldest, most well-known treats of Halloween.
Rain
Hi: 56
Lo: 45

mon
Happy Halloween! For a list of events throughout the county all weekend, see the Halloween Happenings on Page 10A.
Partly cloudy
Hi: 58
Lo: 47

tue
James2 Community Kitchen feeds all who are hungry each Tuesday at St. Philip Catholic Church in Dallas.
4:30-6:30 p.m. Free.
Showers
Hi: 57
Lo: 45