

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer

Volume 141, Issue 52

www.Polkio.com

December 28, 2016

\$1.00



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Tiffanie Bowles, assistant director at the food pantry at Western Oregon, and volunteer Sabbrenna Bowles help run the food pantry.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Barb Buchan named Distinguished Educator.
»Page 5A

FALLS CITY

Water rates to increase for residents of Green Haven RV Park.
»Page 12A

INDEPENDENCE

Monmouth Independence Networks finds stability in spite of debt shortfalls.
»Page 6A

MONMOUTH

Mayor John Oberst steps down after 10 years.
»Page 3A

SPORTS

Central's Grace Holstad ready to swim to victory.
»Page 10A

Three arrested after chase

Itemizer-Observer staff report
MONMOUTH — On Saturday at about 1:10 a.m., Monmouth Police Officer Alaster Graham noticed a vehicle travelling at high speeds west on Hoffman Road from Glazemeadow Street. The vehicle, a black BMW, turned north onto Highway 99W. The car continued north at a high rate of speed. Graham attempted to initiate a traffic stop. The vehicle slowed and pulled to the shoulder before accelerating northbound. The driver attempted to turn east onto Clow Corner Road, but was unable to navigate the turn and went into a ditch. Deverick Thomas, 37, of Dallas, was charged with a warrant for probation violation and conspiracy to attempt to elude a police officer. Brandon Parker, 35, of Independence, was charged with unlawful possession of a firearm (concealed), possession of heroin, and supplying contraband. Amy Montgomery, 36, of Sheridan, was charged with attempting to elude a police officer, driving while suspended, reckless driving, two counts of reckless endangering, and possession of methamphetamine. The suspects were not injured, and were lodged at Polk County Jail without incident.

Facing HUNGER

Students struggle, not knowing where their next meal is coming from

By Lukas Eggen
The Itemizer-Observer

MONMOUTH — The hunger is bad enough to deal with, but the stress may be worse.

Western Oregon University junior Tiffanie Bowles knows this firsthand.

"I've had to use churches and food pantries my whole life," Bowles said. "I know what it's like to not know where my next meal is coming from."

Bowles, the first in her family to attend college, arrived at Western Oregon excited before a harsh reality set in.

"I was barely eating three meals a day and my (meal) plan was going down quick," Bowles said. "That wasn't with me buying snacks or going out or anything. That was just me trying to feed myself breakfast, lunch and dinner. ... Around dead week and finals week, I was like, oh my gosh, I have no money left



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

A 2014 study found that more than half of WOU students experienced food insecurity.

on my meal card." With the biggest tests of her young collegiate career looming, Bowles also had to find new ways to get food. Luckily, Bowles knew about WOU's food pantry. But Bowles, who is now the associate director at the

food pantry, knows food insecurity hasn't gone away and remains a big issue at Western.

A 2014 study by Oregon State University found that 59 percent of students at WOU suffered from food insecurity — defined as having limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and the ability to acquire such food in acceptable ways.

Rebecca Hardgrave, director of the food pantry at WOU, said that number is likely higher thanks to a diverse student population and rising costs. "The cost of education is rising, debt levels are rising, and many people work two or even three jobs to get through school," Hardgrave said.

No matter the reason, food insecurity can negatively impact a student's health and performance.
See FOOD, Page 5A

County considers facilities bond for May ballot

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Polk County Board of Commissioners will decide in early January whether to move forward on a possible 10-year, \$10 million facilities maintenance bond.

Greg Hansen, county administrator, made the recommendation to place the bond on the May 2017 ballot.

If approved, it would cost an average of 20 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on properties.

The bond would be used for improvements to existing buildings only, not new construction.

"We need to make a decision the first or second week in January," Hansen said.

How would it be spent?

- Courthouse complex** — \$6.65 million
- Polk County Fairgrounds** — \$1.5 million
- Polk County Jail** — \$500,000
- Equipment and furniture** — \$450,000
- Public Works** — \$400,000
- Academy Building** — \$200,000
- Contingency** — \$300,000
- Total** — \$10 million

He said the board would consider the matter further at either its Jan. 4, 2017, or Jan. 11, 2017, meeting. Those meetings begin a 9 a.m. at the Polk County Courthouse conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas.

If the board approves moving forward, it would schedule a hearing to take comments from the public on the proposal for Feb. 15, 2017, at 9 a.m. Open-house meetings are slated prior to

that hearing. The board would make its final decision on the bond on March 1, 2017. The deadline to file it with the county clerk is March 16, 2017.

A recent study identified more than \$8.5 million in needed improvements at the county buildings, including the Polk County Courthouse complex on Main Street in Dallas, the Polk County Jail, and Polk County Fairgrounds in Rickreall.

The study didn't include needs at the Academy Building, which had a significant upgrade five years ago, and public works facilities.

"Not having adequate fund to address these maintenance needs with the county operating budget, it is necessary to look at funding options to finance these needs prior to them escalating in cost substantially," Hansen wrote in a memo to the board.

Recommended improvements include: new roofs at the courthouse and jail; exterior repairs on the courthouse; parking lot improvements at the courthouse, fairgrounds and the Academy Building; main building renovation at the fairgrounds; HVAC upgrades and window replacement at

the courthouse; ADA upgrades at the courthouse and fairgrounds; asbestos abatement; basic restoration of the old courthouse building; seismic upgrades; and emergency generator and security upgrades.

Taxpayers finished paying off the county's road bond this year, which amounted to 51 cents per \$1,000 assessed value. That bond was approved in 2006.

Hansen said he recommended using \$1.4 million to pay off the remainder of the Academy Building renovation, but the board preferred to use that money for upgrades at the courthouse complex.

The county will continue to make regular payments on the Academy Building balance.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed
Helping Hands Emergency Food Bank provides for eligible families at Monmouth Christian Church. 10 a.m.-noon. Free.



Partly sunny
Hi: 44
Lo: 33

thu
James2 Community Kitchen feeds all who are hungry at Dallas United Methodist Church. 4:30 p.m. Free.



Partly sunny
Hi: 45
Lo: 35

fri
Taking your tree down? Dallas Mat Club will recycle it tomorrow at LaCreole Middle School. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. By donation.



Partly sunny
Hi: 42
Lo: 29

sat
As you make your way to New Year's celebrations tonight, what is your plan to get home safely? Designate a driver or call a cab.



Showers
Hi: 41
Lo: 33

sun
Happy New Year! Make a healthy choice starting today with a walk in the fresh air at a local park. Free.



Showers
Hi: 40
Lo: 33

mon
The Itemizer-Observer office is closed today in honor of New Year's Day. Many government offices also are closed.



Partly sunny
Hi: 32
Lo: 21

tue
Salem Health West Valley hosts Overeaters Anonymous each Tuesday at the hospital in Dallas. Noon-1 p.m. Free.



Sunny
Hi: 30
Lo: 20

