

Roll credits for Motor Vu Drive-In

By Jolene Guzman The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The final credits are rolling. Motor Vu Drive-In's Facebook page had a "thank you" message posted Friday on behalf of the treasured drive-in, one of a handful left in Oregon. It said that, as feared, the 2016 season was indeed the last for the drive-in. The Motor Vu opened in 1953.

Owner Jeff Mexico said he had known for the last few weeks that last year was to be the last, but wanted to begin the process of clearing out equipment and supplies before letting the community know.

"We tried. We tried to do crowdfunding," Mexico said. "We are sad to see it go. We put a lot of time and energy, heart and soul into this place. We love what we do."

After receiving an overwhelming response in October to the possibility of the drive-in closing for good, Mexico thought it had the support to stay open. About 300,000 people saw a potential "farewell" Facebook post at the end of the 2016 season. Many indicated they would help with the effort to keep the Motor Vu alive.

Mexico launched a crowdfunding campaign to purchase the land from owner J.W. Fowler, which is developing the properties surrounding the drive-in. He



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Motor Vu owner Jeff Mexico takes down signage at the snack bar at the drive-in on Friday afternoon.

had plans to seek grants, apply to the National Historic Registry, and plant trees on the fence line to cut down on light and noise to nearby houses.

The campaign didn't turn out as planned, however. After 45 days, the crowdfunding effort generated about \$5,000 from 121 donors, far from the 300,000 who initially expressed sup-

port.

Mexico said if they all had pledged \$5, he could have raised \$1.5 million.

"The cost of a Starbucks espresso could have saved the drive-in," he said.

While sad to see the drive-in he and his partner operated for almost a decade close, Mexico is grateful for the support that was offered.

He said Jim Fowler has

been more than gracious.

"He's been really good to let us go as long as he did," Mexico said.

Mexico also thanked Dallas Mayor Brian Dalton for trying to help find an alternate location in Dallas. The former Weyerhaeuser mill site was suggested, but Mexico said the property is too expensive and the location would make drive-in traffic

burdensome in town.

Mexico said, despite his momentary optimism last fall, the plan to keep the theater at the Fir Villa location wasn't going to be ideal in the long run. The houses planned on neighboring property would have been too close not to cause disruption to neighbors and moviegoers.

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Fair board considers plans for building upkeep

By Jolene Guzman The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — Facilities were front and center at the Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center's annual work session Saturday.

In the short-term, the fair board wants to form a facilities committee to identify maintenance projects at the fairgrounds, and how to get them done with a tight budget.

One of the first tasks

could be the demolition of the old 4-H building.

"That building is being held up right now by paint. A good wind storm, ice storm, snow storm will take it out," said Fair Board Chairwoman Anna Scharf.

Eliminating the building may provide an answer for something the board has struggled with for years at the annual fair: Where to put the entertainment stage.

The stage once was in front of the old 4-H building,

right in the center of the fair. It's been moved or reoriented in the years since, but it's not working, Scharf said.

"The main entertainment area, we shoved it too far out again. We've got to figure out how we bring that back in," she said. "It's disheartening to see the talent that our entertainment committee works so hard to get to fair, and then there's nobody there to hear them play or see them dance. That's really frustrating."

With the building gone, there's an opportunity to put the stage in a more visible spot.

First, though, the building needs to come down. Scharf asked for suggestions to make that happen without asking the county for more money.

"Please be thinking about that, how you could volunteer your talents, how you could volunteer your resources," she said. "We've got a ways to go, but we

need to get moving on it and we need to get the plan in place to make it happen."

The county officials and fair managers have some even bigger projects on their mind, to the tune of \$1.5 million.

Wednesday, today, the Polk County Board of Commissioners will hold public hearings on placing a 10-year, \$10 million bond on the May ballot.

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Great American Eclipse comes in August

See special section inside for more information on Polk County's plans for event

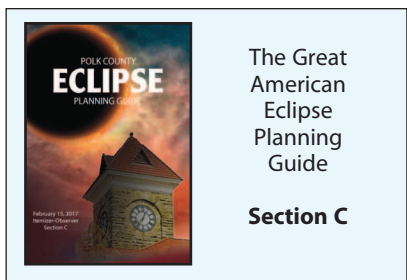
By Jolene Guzman The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Pat Jarrott was climbing to 14,000 feet during the last total solar eclipse seen in the Willamette Valley.

He was flying small airplane on the morning of Feb. 26, 1979. He and a photographer friend planned for an aerial view of the eclipse to avoid the cloud cover that threatened to block it for ground locations in Oregon and Washington on the "path of totality."

He flew around until he found a break in the clouds over Forest Grove.

Jarrott, of Keizer, had a camera, but had to pilot the plane, so his friend would adjust the settings of the camera for him to shoot without looking.



"It was fun and hectic for a few minutes," Jarrott said.

On the ground that morning was David Kasnick, at the age of 14. He watched it from an observatory in Goldendale, Wash., along with many other astronomy enthusiasts.

The sky was partly cloudy that morning, so he didn't see the entire eclipse, but it was still an experience that led him to remain interested in sky watching and eclipses as a life-

long hobby. Kasnick, of Monmouth, and Jarrott belong to astronomy club Night Sky 45.

He described totality during that February morning as not quite like night, but an "eerie darkness."

The 1979 eclipse was visible in totality in Northern Oregon, Southern Washington and parts of Idaho, Montana, North Dakota and Canada. Totality in the Portland area was around 8:15 a.m.

Nancy Coffelt was watching from a field next to her house in Tigard. Coffelt describes herself as "kind of a science geek," so the rare event held a fascination for her.

"I know it was a school day, I was a senior in high school, but I don't remember if I had permission to skip or not," Coffelt said.

Overcast skies took some of the vi-

sual spectacle out of the eclipse, but Coffelt still was impressed. During an eclipse, as the sky darkens, the temperature drops, and animals behave as if the sun is going down.

"It did get noticeable darker," she said. "Since it was February, it was already kind of chilly, so I don't remember much of a temperature drop. But the birds did get quiet. That was very cool. ... I remember that it looked like what the sky looked like just before sunrise — a kind of dark silver."

She said witnessing the eclipse made a lasting impression.

Coffelt is the author and illustrator of children's space-themed books "Dogs in Space," published in 1993, and the 1999 follow-up, "Dogs in Space, the Great Space Doghouse."

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IN YOUR TOWN

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FALLS CITY

Falls City City Council approves water master plan, discusses how to pay for \$7 million in projects.

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INDEPENDENCE

Central athletes finish well at districts, head to state competitions.

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David Negrete wins a district title for Central wrestling.

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EDUCATION

Dallas targets graduation rate increases.

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POLK COUNTY

Polk County Fair Board discusses changes to 2017 event.

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DDA monthly meeting Wednesday

Itemizer-Observer staff report

DALLAS — The Dallas Downtown Association's general member meeting is Wednesday (today) at 6 p.m. at Pressed Coffee and Wine Bar.

On the agenda is an update of upcoming projects for 2017, what the organization is currently working on and update for a DDA volunteer.

A prize raffle from a local business is on tap as well.

For more information: http://www.dallasdowntownassociation.com/.

Newsletter

Want to be more connected? Sign-up to receive the Itemizer-Observer newsletter at www.polkio.com.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed Helping Hands Emergency Food Bank is open for those who qualify at Monmouth Christian Church. 10 a.m.-noon. Free. Rain Hi: 54 Lo: 45	thu Learn what to keep and what to ditch when it comes to clearing out clutter at a workshop at Monmouth library. 6-7 p.m. Free. Showers Hi: 51 Lo: 37	fri No supplies necessary at Independence Public Library's adult coloring night. Bring yourself and your creativity. 4 p.m. Free. Cloudy Hi: 50 Lo: 37	sat Have a wild time at Dallas Public Library's showing of the movie, "Zootopia," rated PG. 3:30 p.m. Free. Cloudy Hi: 49 Lo: 35	sun Learn more about flying remote-control planes with the Dallas Wingdingers club at Whitworth elementary's gym. 1-3 p.m. Free. Cloudy Hi: 47 Lo: 38	mon Take the opportunity to network and have lunch with others at the Dallas Chamber of Commerce luncheon. 11:30 a.m. \$15. Rain Hi: 47 Lo: 39	tue Jayme Stone will perform tonight as part of the Smith Fine Arts Series at Western Oregon University. 7:30 p.m. \$25-\$28. Showers Hi: 49 Lo: 37
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