

**Proposed increase for aquatic center**

By Jolene Guzman  
 The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Dallas' Administration Committee recommended a 10 percent rate increase at the Dallas Aquatic Center.

The committee — which includes five members of the Dallas City Council — voted to send a rate-increase ordinance for the full council to consider.

The move will bring in roughly \$40,000 in additional revenue per year, helping to reduce the subsidy the city provides to balance the center's budget.

"There is this gap that is experienced by every municipal aquatic center, and we fall somewhere in the middle in terms of what the percentage of what that gap is, between revenue and expenditure," said Jason Locke, the city's community development director.

Locke said a 20 percent hike was considered, which would have raised \$70,000, but he didn't recommend it.

"There are a couple problems with that scenario, though. It would result in a pretty large, all-at-once increase," Locke said. "There's a certain elasticity in demand with these situations, where if you raise the price too much, you are going to have fewer visitors."

A 10 percent raise in rates — or something close to it — was urged by Locke and City Manager Ron Foggin. The increase is included in the city's 2017-18 budget and Locke said it is needed to meet revenue goals for the facility. The last rate change was in 2013.

"We really need to do something, for any number of reasons, and we feel this is probably the way to do it that is going to cause the minimum amount of disruption and allow us to recoup some of those costs," Locke said.

Foggin said city staff would have proposed a rate change last year, but that was delayed due to the process ordered by the council last year to examine other ways to cut expenditures or raise revenues at the aquatic center.

"We are going to continue to look for revenue opportunities," Foggin said. "We've cut the expenditure side, at least on the operations of the aquatic center as much as we possibly can."

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EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Central School District Superintendent Buzz Brazeau retires at the end of June after 31 years in education.

**Buzz ready to hit the road**

Superintendent will miss the passion of community, student energy

By Emily Mentzer  
 The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — In 1986, Buzz Brazeau asked his wife, Kathy, if she would mind if he took a 70 percent cut in pay.

"She looked up and said, 'You want to teach, don't you,'" Brazeau recalled.

The Central School District superintendent had been working as a banker, but dreaded going to work each day.

"I didn't like it," Brazeau said. "It just wasn't fun. It was a way to make money, but it just wasn't fun."

After helping old friends at a football camp, he was energized by the kids.

"The kids were like sponges," Brazeau said. "They wanted to learn, and there was excitement. There was energy. There was



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer file

Students were surprised to find Superintendent Buzz Brazeau driving their school bus in 2014.

laughter. A day at work seemed to last forever. A day at camp went by like a flash."

Now 31 years later, Brazeau — still energized by

kids — is hanging up his hat in education and retiring, literally hitting the road in June for a three-month excursion in a recreational vehicle with his wife.

Brazeau spent the last five years in Central. During that time, he finished his goal of working every job in a school district when he learned how to and drove a bus route in 2014. While Brazeau was superintendent, Central moved to Class 5A and excelled.

"We've solidified ourselves in population growth," he said.

Under his leadership, graduation rates increased from 65 percent in 2010-11 to 86 percent in 2015-16.

While he said it is a much larger effort than his alone, sometimes it's good to be leader.

"I think we've really tied the communities to the schools," Brazeau said. "I think the Student Based Health Center is a really big thing."

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**Explore Polk County, where we call home**

From trivia to wineries, we have the best of the Willamette Valley

By Emily Mentzer  
 The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — In August, tens of thousands will discover how great Polk County is as they descend on the area for one of the best viewing places of the Great American Eclipse, a total solar eclipse on Aug. 21 at 10:17 a.m.

But Polk County has much to offer year-round for outdoor enthusiasts, foodies, cyclists, pinot lovers, and members of Rogue Nation, residents and visitors alike.

The county is home of the hard-to-find (but worth the effort) Valley of the Giants, where towering, hundreds-year-old Douglas fir give visitors a glimpse into what the landscape of Oregon must have looked like



in its early settler days. Parks, preserves, and historic farms and buildings help paint the picture of the history of the county, state and its people.

Polk County is ideal for birding, and not just at Bassett Slough. Ospreys and bald Eagles make their nests near rivers that run through the county, includ-

ing in Independence Riverview Park.

Vineyards dot the countryside — roughly 30 of them — close enough together to make a day of touring and tasting, and far too many to see in just one afternoon.

Polk County is rich in culture with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde sharing their tribal heritage at the Chachalu Tribal Museum and Cultural Center, as well as a plethora of multi-cultural events at Western Oregon University, from annual powwows to luaus.

The county is home to world-class, destination trails for bicyclists, from a mountain bike vineyard loop to the Black Rock Mountain Bike area — and winding country roads in between, past farms, old barns and

past fruit and vegetable stands.

If touring the county by car, the dirt and gravel roads that wind between fields can make it feel like you're miles away from a town or city rather than just minutes from Salem.

The county's rich history in agriculture brings local food straight to your table at local restaurants and farmers markets. In Polk County, we still believe in making food from scratch with fresh ingredients.

Whether you're looking to stretch your legs, canoe or raft, or just lounge around and relax, you'll find it here in Polk County. Enjoy the journey.

See our annual Explore Polk County inside, and read more about the place we call home.

**IN YOUR TOWN**

**DALLAS**  
 Hunt elected to Dallas School Board.  
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**FALLS CITY**  
 School district budget includes money for more teachers.  
 »Page 10A

**INDEPENDENCE**  
 Talmadge WEB leaders help students get ready for middle school.  
 »Page 14A

**SPORTS**  
 Dallas' softball team opens the state playoffs at home on Wednesday (today).  
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**Dallas man arrested**

Itemizer-Observer staff report

DALLAS — Polk County Sheriff's deputies arrested a Dallas man following a two-vehicle accident on Friday on East Ellendale Avenue near Fir Villa Road.

Emergency crews responded to a report of the crash at noon on Friday, with deputies assisted on the scene by the Dallas Police Department, the Oregon Department of Transportation and Dallas Fire & EMS.

According to Polk County Sheriff Mark Garton, a black Dodge pickup had been traveling west in the east bound lane when it struck an eastbound 2002 Chevy Silverado pickup almost head-on. The Chevy rolled multiple times after the collision.

Fire & EMS assessed driver of the Chevy, Vance Ruzicka, 55, of Salem, on scene and didn't take him to the hospital.

The driver of the Dodge, David Larios-Mendoza, 21 was not taken to the hospital, either.

A third vehicle that had been following the Chevy was able to avoid the accident, according to police.

After interviewing witnesses and investigating evidence on the scene, deputies determined Larios-Mendoza caused the crash and had been driving recklessly, Garton said.

Police said Larios-Mendoza was the subject of another reckless driving report from Dallas where Dallas PD responded, but was unable to locate the vehicle. The caller said the vehicle was speeding, not able to maintain its lane and following too closely.

Deputies arrested Larios-Mendoza on five counts of reckless endangering, reckless driving and second-degree criminal mischief.

**THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK**

**wed**  
 Need a break from your little one? Free child care for children 6 months to 5 years old is at the Academy Building. 1-3 p.m. Free.  
  
**Partly cloudy**  
 Hi: 65  
 Lo: 46

**thu**  
 Dallas Veterans of Foreign Wars and its auxiliary will hand out Buddy Poppies today at Bi-Mart. Donations accepted. Free.  
  
**Mostly sunny**  
 Hi: 71  
 Lo: 49

**fri**  
 Temperatures are heating up. Be safe and take part in National Heat Awareness Day.  
  
**Sunny**  
 Hi: 81  
 Lo: 52

**sat**  
 Swing by downtown Independence to see what's new at the farmers markets each week. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Free.  
  
**Sunny**  
 Hi: 82  
 Lo: 54

**sun**  
 Why not fire up the grill and cook a juicy hamburger and celebrate National Hamburger Day.  
  
**Sunny**  
 Hi: 80  
 Lo: 50

**mon**  
 Happy Memorial Day. The Itemizer-Observer office will be closed to honor the holiday.  
  
**Sunny**  
 Hi: 82  
 Lo: 53

**tue**  
 Heat slowing you down? Head indoors to the play park at First Presbyterian Church in Dallas. 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free.  
  
**Mostly sunny**  
 Hi: 86  
 Lo: 53