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ODOT installs dynamic warning sign

By Jolene Guzman
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POLK COUNTY — Oregon Department of Transportation is installing a “dynamic warning sign” on Highway 99W at Clow Corner Road with the goal of preventing high-speed crashes.

Installation will finish in early summer, said Lou Torres, an ODOT

spokesman, but it doesn't change the long-term plan of building a roundabout at the intersection.

The warning sign will alert drivers on Highway 99W when cars are entering the intersection from Clow.

“The idea is to get a driver's attention that a vehicle may be wanting to cross the intersection or turn left,” Torres said. “And, hopefully they will slow down.”

Torres said four dynamic warning signs are being put in on ODOT's Region 2, which includes the mid-valley area.

The total cost of the four projects is \$670,000.

The county and ODOT reached an agreement to build a roundabout at the intersection early this year, ending a long-standing dispute between state and county officials about in-

stalling a traffic light at Clow Corner. The sign project was already planned.

Torres said the roundabout project needs more funding before it can begin.

“We have \$3.4 million secured for the roundabout, but we will likely need around \$5 million to complete project development and construction,” Torres said. “We believe that we should be able to secure

the remaining funds.”

Once money is in place, the project will take three to four years to complete. At that time, the dynamic warning signs will be taken down and could be reused at another intersection, Torres said.

“They can be effective for high speed rural intersections like the one at Clow Corner and (Highway) 99W,” he said.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS
Relay for Life Polk County kicks off Saturday at DHS track.
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FALLS CITY
Madeline Guiger remembers her time at Falls City High School.
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MONMOUTH
Bike repair stations make traveling by bike a little easier.
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INDEPENDENCE
Monmouth-Independence chamber has a new director.
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SPORTS
Dallas' softball team defeats Lebanon to advance to state semifinals.
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Answering the call

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — Leon Beauchamp, a longtime volunteer firefighter with the Falls City Fire Department, remembered a call when he and one other guy were the only people available to respond.

They went to the station and waited for others to arrive, Leon recalled. When it was evident that no one else was coming, they looked at each and asked: “What do you want to do?”

“Well, if we are going to do anything, let's go do it,” he remembers saying. “Nobody else showed up, so we had to go do it.”

The call was for a burn pile that drifted out of control. The pair put it out and went back to their day.

For a town like Falls City, that kind of dedication is needed — and that's what kept Leon going for 51 years as a volunteer in various capacities. He said there were maybe 10 or 12 volunteers when he started in 1966.

“It was doing something,” Beauchamp explained. “Back then, it was a small department.”

Last month, Leon retired from the department.

Department spokes-



Leon Beauchamp retired in April from Falls City's Fire Department after volunteering for 51 years.

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woman Megan Sykes said the he is the longest-serving volunteer, and the department made him an honorary lifetime member — a

first for Falls City Fire. Leon was talked into joining the department by a friend in January 1966. Leon's wife, Alice, remem-

bers the scene clearly. “He came up in the evening, and he sat there and said, ‘Come on, let's just join the fire department,’”

she said. “He (Leon) was just sitting there holding a baby in his lap and finally said, ‘OK. OK. I'll try it.’”
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Friday Court holds first graduation on Friday

Itemizer-Observer staff report
DALLAS — The first graduates of Polk County's new Mental Health Court will celebrate their accomplishment on Friday.

The ceremony takes place at 9:30 a.m. in Polk County courthouse court room No. 1. The key note speaker is Sen. Brian Boquist. The graduation is open to the public.

The program, also known as Friday Court, began in April 2016 after more than a year of planning to “develop strategies to reduce the impact of mental illness on our criminal justice system,” said a press release announcing the graduation from Judge Norm Hill.

“From the court's perspective, these defendants are on a carousel of dysfunction,” Hill wrote. “They commit crimes, are placed on probation, then fail to obtain mental treatment leading to committing new crimes. We needed a new tool to try and break that cycle.”

Memorial Day: Paying their respects

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — It took them a few minutes of searching, but Lucile Mitchell and Sally Lowry, both of Lebanon, found what they were looking for at Dallas Cemetery Thursday morning.

Pausing a second after the walk up the hill to the back of the cemetery, Mitchell knelt over the grave of Alton Mitchell. She placed potted yellow flowers next to the grave and began pushing metal sticks in the ground next to it to keep it in place.

“He's my brother-in-law,” Lucile Mitchell said before taking a small American

flag from Lowry to put in the flower pot.

Alton Mitchell fought in World War II and was injured. He was given a Purple Heart for his service.

Down the hill in the cemetery, others are making similar journeys, from near or far, to honor their relatives on the eve of Memorial Day weekend. Red, white, and blue flowers, pinwheels and flags decorate graves of those who served.

A pair of sisters took the morning to clean the headstones of their relatives, choosing to come Thursday morning to avoid the crowds later in the weekend.

See RESPECT, Page 6A



The Avenue of Flags help pay tribute to veterans during Memorial Day weekend.

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THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed
Surprise a local business during the Dallas Vitality Connection Cash Mob. Meet at Mill and Main streets. 5 p.m. \$20.

Cloudy
Hi: 71
Lo: 52

thu
Dallas Public Library will host a two-hour workshop on the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace. 5 p.m. Free.

Partly cloudy
Hi: 68
Lo: 51

fri
Why not grab a tasty treat and celebrate National Doughnut Day?

Partly sunny
Hi: 69
Lo: 48

sat
Looking to head outdoors? Enjoy free parking and camping on Saturday as part of State Parks Day. www.stateparks.org.

Mostly sunny
Hi: 71
Lo: 48

sun
Head out to Rickreall Grange for Sunday's flea market — and enjoy breakfast or lunch while you are there. 9 a.m. Free.

Partly sunny
Hi: 71
Lo: 45

mon
The Brew and BS lecture series explores the New Testament at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Dallas 7p.m. BYOB.

Mostly sunny
Hi: 72
Lo: 49

tue
The public is invited to a Latino forum focused on marketing/outreach to the Latino community in Polk County. 9 a.m. Free.

Sunny
Hi: 84
Lo: 53