

Santa Train leaves station for final time

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Cynthia Jaramillo will be moving to New Mexico at the end of June, and will be taking an Independence tradition with her: Santa Train.

"We did that for six years," Jaramillo said. "This would have been seven. Last year, we counted 3,800 people showed up."

The event, traditionally held on the first Saturday of December, brought children from all over Independence for presents, hot chocolate, and, of course, for a chance to sit with the Big Guy himself — who arrived in style via train.

Jaramillo, a train engineer, made the event — originally organized by the Friends of the Independence Library and on a smaller scale — something bigger than life, coordinating different organizations and businesses to donate toys, hot chocolate, or music. Even the Independence Heritage Museum played a role, always loaning the antique chair Santa Claus sat in while hearing the wishes of children.

"It's really sad, because I know the kids really de-



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer file

The Santa Train will no longer be part of Independence's Christmas festivities.

pend on that train and those presents," Jaramillo said. "I don't mean to be selfish about it, but I don't want it to happen with this railroad."

Friends of the Independence Library board member Marilyn Morton said the tradition of Santa visiting the Independence Cinema will continue, but St. Nick will

have to find a new way to travel — perhaps horse and buggy.

As Jaramillo and her wife, Donna, ready to leave Independence after 13 years, Cynthia has mixed emotions. They are heading to Farmington, N.M., which will be a homecoming for Cynthia, but Independence has become her family.

"I love this town," she said. "I like the people in it. I like that it's a community. It's not just friends, it's like family."

Cynthia said when you meet one person in Independence, it is as though you've met 100.

"That person knows 50 people, and that person knows 50 people, so it ends

up everybody knows you," she said. "Donna and I fit in this group. Right away, people took to us. They loved when we were around. They want us to be around."

The Jaramillos had a big impact in Independence in their 13 years.

Cynthia was the first female exalted ruler at the Independence Elks Lodge,

and she and Donna were the first gay couple in a lodge. While exalted ruler, Cynthia worked to open the lodge to more community events.

She took Ford Leadership classes while in Independence as well as ethics commission classes. She toyed with the idea of running for local political office. Cynthia was one of the delegates that brought Independence the title of All-America City.

Cynthia plans to get active in leadership activities in Farmington, too.

"I try and meet everybody," she said. "My father was the same way, because you never know if you're going to meet them again. That's what he told me. 'You'll never see them again.' But here, you meet everybody and they all know you."

To celebrate their love for Independence, Cynthia and Donna will throw a party at Chase Bar and Grill on Saturday at 3 p.m.

"I'm inviting the entire town," Cynthia said. "We're going to open up the parking lot, rope it off, have tables out there for the overflow. We'll play the jukebox for music. They're doing a menu just for us that day."

West Valley Housing Authority will hold their **Work Session Meeting on Wednesday, June 28, 2017 beginning at 11:30 a.m. at 204 SW Walnut in Dallas, Oregon. The Regular Meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 28, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. at 204 SW Walnut in Dallas, Oregon. An Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660 will be held immediately following the Regular Meeting, if required.**

Agenda for the meeting is posted on the Housing Authority website at www.wvpha.org. The location for the meeting is handicapped accessible. Please advise the West Valley Housing Authority if you need any special accommodations to attend the meeting. For information, please call 503-623-8387, TDD 1-800-735-2900.

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City receives park grant

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — The city of Independence got a boost to pay for a park on the area between the Willamette River and the Independence Landing development, said Shawn Irvine, economic development director.

A \$414,000 grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation department was awarded to the city for hard-surface trail improvements on the lower terrace of the property, Irvine said, as well as a ramp and stairway, and a couple small plazas — one at the top of the stairs and one at the bottom.

"It is property the city owns," Irvine said. "The plan is, as part of the development, there will be a trail."

The trail will link current trails along the Willamette to city hall, he said.

"It's exciting because this is the next extension of our riverfront greenway plan," Irvine said. "We have a mile north and south of that Independence property. Now, not only do we own it, we're going to be able to develop it

to make that parkland connection."

The grant required a 40 percent match. Irvine said the city used the value of the property and the money already spent on the Independence Landing project to cover the match.

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DEADLINES

- NEWS DEADLINES**
- For inclusion in the Wednesday edition of the *Itemizer-Observer*:
- Social news** (weddings, engagements, anniversaries, births, milestones) — 5 p.m. on Thursday.
 - Community events** — Noon on Friday for both the Community Notebook and Community Calendar.
 - Letters to the editor** — 10 a.m. on Monday.
 - Obituaries** — 4 p.m. on Monday.
- ADVERTISING DEADLINES**
- Retail display ads** — 3 p.m. Friday.
 - Classified display ads** — 11 a.m. on Monday.
 - Classified line ads** — Noon on Monday. Classified ads are updated daily on www.polkio.com.
 - Public notices** — Noon on Friday.

CORRECTIONS

The *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* is committed to publishing accurate news, feature and sports reports. If you see anything that requires a correction or clarification, call the newsroom at 503-623-2373 or send an email to ementzer@polkio.com.

WEBSITE

The *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* website, www.polkio.com, is updated each week by Wednesday afternoon. There, you will find nearly every story that appears in the print version of the newspaper, as well as some items, including additional photos, that do not appear in print due to space limitations.

The *Itemizer-Observer* is also on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Watch for breaking news, links to stories, sports scores updates and more.

WEATHER

RECORDED	HIGH	LOW	RAIN
June 13.....	64	51	T
June 14.....	69	48	.00
June 15.....	N/A	N/A	.13
June 16.....	N/A	N/A	.02
June 17.....	75	58	.00
June 18.....	83	58	.00
June 19.....	88	59	.00

Rainfall during June — 0.74 in.
Rain through June 19 — 33.30 in.

Sudoku
Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

Row →

Three-by-three square →

Column ↓

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	9	4	7
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

Solution on Page 6A

3	4					5	1	
				5		7		
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8		7	9					6
1	3				5	9		
2		9				3		
4				6	8		7	
			1			4	9	

By Ben Arnoldy

The Christian Science Monitor