

Polk County
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Pollen, pollen everywhere

JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Salem was listed as number two on the list of worst places for people with allergies on Monday, according to Pollen.com.

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The official count of allergy-causing pollen is tabulated at a station in Eugene, but those with the misfortune of being allergy sufferers measure the season in itchy eyes and throats, sneezes and congestion.

Residents of the Willamette Valley, where grass seed is king, can experience a unique level of misery.

Monday, Pollen.com list-

ed Eugene and Salem as one and two on the list of worst places for people with allergies. Portland was No. 5.

This season started off with a bang, but the spring rain we had for a few weeks in a row took the edge off of what could have been pollen hell in the valley.

“It started to pick up, but then it rained,” said Beth Brenner, a nurse with Allergy & Asthma Associates in Eugene.

See POLLEN, Page 5A



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

Pollen from cottonwood trees dust trails throughout the county.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS
School Board votes to replace track at Dallas High School.
»Page 10A

INDEPENDENCE
Bystander saves youths from Willamette River.
»Page 9A

MONMOUTH
NASA scientist speaks to library.
»Page 12A

SPORTS
Western Oregon runner David Ribich named Great Northwest Athletic Conference’s Male Athlete of the Year.
»Page 10A

POLK COUNTY
Sheriff reviews use-of-force policy.
»Page 9A

Salem Health presents grant

Itemizer-Observer staff report
SALEM — Salem Health presented a \$41,370 Community Partnership Grant to Family Building Blocks to pay for a pilot project to electronically conduct developmental screenings for children in a family’s home.

Salem Health introduced the Community Partnership Grant program in October 2014 and will grant a total of \$306,382 in 2017.

Successful initiatives improve the quality of life for those most at risk in our community and decrease the need for catastrophic care and its associated social, emotional and economic costs.

Electronic screenings increase the chance of early detection of developmental delays. Early detection followed by quality interventions result in better long-term health outcomes.

Research indicates that detection rates for developmental disabilities without using tools is 20 percent, compared to 80-90 percent when using a screening tool.

Only 30 percent of children with disabilities are identified for intervention before starting school. Providing intervention prior to kindergarten for children with potential delays has significant benefits.

Silbernagel retires after 29 years with corrections office

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — One of Marty Silbernagel’s favorite events of the year is Polk County Community Corrections annual pizza party in October.

The occasion celebrates those people who have graduated from probation and are now leading healthy, productive lives. Each year, invitations for the reunion are sent out to former clients of the office.

See RETIRE, Page 9A



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Marty Silbernagel will retire on Friday after 29 years.

Merritt ready to become director

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — When Jodi Merritt saw the advertisement for Polk County’s Community Corrections director position this spring, something clicked.

Merritt was working as a manager with Jackson County Community Justice and hadn’t thought of changing jobs or moving.

“I had been in my last position for almost 10 years.



Meritt

And then working with Jackson County for 15 years, I was very comfortable,” she said. “I needed a change, something to challenge me. I love to learn, I love to ask questions. I love to develop things and people.”

See MERRITT, Page 5A

Polk County offers Fourth of July fun

Itemizer-Observer staff report
POLK COUNTY — Finding a way to celebrate Independence Day in Polk County won’t be a problem, whether you are looking for a laid-back day in the park or a thrill-ride carnival experience.

July Fourth celebrations will take place in Dallas, Falls City, Independence and Monmouth, spanning from one-day events to a long holiday weekend of fun.

Falls City is first in line to mark the nation’s birthday on July 1 with a short, but entertaining parade and



community gathering in Lower Park, complete with music, grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, and cotton candy.

Saturday evening, Inde-

pendence’s Western Days joins the party with the carnival in Riverview Park opening at 6. Western Days run from Saturday to July Fourth with two fireworks displays on the schedule.

Monmouth’s July Fourth celebration opens on Monday and runs through Independence Day.

The main event has an art show, held both days. Artists can enter until 11 a.m. on Monday.

Independence Day brings the long-standing Mini-Marathon, Children’s Parade, and the highlight Monmouth-Independence

Rotary Club’s Fourth of July Grand Parade, all starting in Monmouth.

This year, Margaret Johnson will be the Grand Marshal.

“We talk about how much we want to honor the person or people involved,” said Jim Birken, parade committee chairman. “We discuss how much they warrant recognition. This year, the Grand Marshall is Margaret Johnson, and she is representing all of the community volunteers.”

Dallas will mark July Fourth with Freedomfest and the revival of its barbe-

cue contest. It was not part of the 2016 celebration, so Freedomfest founder Beth Jones stepped in to bring it back.

This year pits six amateur smoker teams against each other.

“We are opening it up to something that embraces everybody,” Jones said.

Freedomfest opens in Dallas City Park at 3 p.m. with the contest, a beer garden, vendors and live music. At 6 p.m. it moves to Roger Jordan Community Park for more live music, food truck vendors and, of course, fireworks.

<p>THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK</p>	<p>wed</p> <p>Come enjoy some laughs with comedian Michael O’Neill at Dallas City Park thanks to the Dallas Library. 11:30 a.m. Free.</p> <p>Mostly sunny Hi: 74 Lo: 51</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>Extend a hand to everyone you meet and take part in National Handshake Day!</p> <p>Mostly sunny Hi: 80 Lo: 54</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>Rock out with musicians or just enjoy the music at the Guthrie Park Acoustic Music Jam Session. 6:30 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 80 Lo: 54</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>Kick off your holiday weekend with Falls City’s Independence Day celebration, which begins with a parade. Noon. Free.</p> <p>Mostly sunny Hi: 80 Lo: 52</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>Got a special talent? Come out to Western Days and compete in Talent Quest at Riverview Park. Noon to 10 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Mostly sunny Hi: 79 Lo: 52</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>Check out local artists’ latest masterpieces at Monmouth’s Community Art Show. Noon to 5 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Mostly sunny Hi: 73 Lo: 49</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>Happy Fourth of July! Keep your celebrations safe with smart use of fireworks and, if you drink, have a designated driver.</p> <p>Sunny Hi: 74 Lo: 49</p>
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