

Sign: Community comes together to help

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"I thought it was fitting," he said. "We painted the words white, and then I went around the little trench line around the letters with black to make it pop out more."

To cover the spray paint on the posts, Sires painted them black.

"I didn't want the family to go out there last night and say, 'the sign looks great,' and still see that paint on those posts," Sires said. "I'm just glad they woke up this morning and they did not have to see any ugly. That's all I cared about."

Lofton said the sign looks different from other city park signs, but it's fitting because it's more than a park, it's a memorial to a fallen soldier.

Theda Tawney, Ian's mother, said she was upset when she first found out about the vandalism, and surprised by the number of people who responded and how strongly they felt.

"I was not sure how it could be fixed, but Alex took action right away," she said. "It was comforting to know a veteran was working on the situation. Alex and everyone involved did an amazing job. It looks great

and we have met some new friends."

Tawney also said she was grateful for the way the situation was explained by Lt. Jerry Mott.

"Mott did a beautiful job of describing the situation," she said.

Mott posted on the Dallas Police Facebook page that the suspect, "a 55-year-old female known to Dallas Police from previous events" was cited and released for two counts of third-degree criminal mischief. The woman told police she spray-painted "City Park" and an arrow to make "directions so others could more easily find it."

"Nothing suggested the suspect targeted the sign intentionally to disrespect the sacrifice Sgt. Tawney made for us," Mott said in the Facebook post.

Lofton and Sires were concerned the city of Dallas would replace the sign so it would be consistent with the color scheme of other park signs, but Park Supervisor Eric Totten said he has no plans to do that.

"The response was amazing on it," Totten said. "I was scratching my head with what we were going to do with the posts, but it looks good. We're going to



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

The repainted sign at Sgt. Ian Tawney M. Memorial Park.

leave it as-is."

Because of his efforts, Lofton said he's "Dallas Facebook famous," but he insists it was a community effort to fix the sign.

"I started it, but it wasn't just me who did it," he said. "There were four of us the first night; there were two of us the next day; and then Janie and her husband showed up to help. This has been a community thing from the get-go. I've just been the figurehead, for lack of a better word. I was the first one who, instead of saying 'I'm going to do it,' I just went and acted."

Lofton insists that, given the time, many others would have done the same.

"I'm retired; it was midnight on the Fourth of July, probably because I'm a little crazy, too. Most people wouldn't go out there at midnight and try and do it," he said. "There were a lot of

people who wanted to do it the next morning, I'm sure. But 95 percent of them probably had to work because it was the first day back coming from a four-day (weekend)."

Shirley Buchanan, owner of Sassy's Keggs and Eggs, paid for the paint used to fix the sign, and Jake Frazier from Dallas Dominos donated pizzas to Lofton and his crew — which Lofton used to host an informal "rededication" of the newly painted sign for the community on Thursday night.

Lofton said the entire ordeal is a reflection of how great the Dallas community is.

"From the vile acts of one person, you really see what your community's based on," he said. "This community's great. Whenever something bad happens, it seems like the community pulls together and takes care of it."

Traffic: Expect to see major delays

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The morning of the eclipse could be even more hectic from a traffic perspective if weather on the Coast doesn't cooperate.

"If we wake up at 7 a.m. and it's cloudy, people will rush into the valley," Beers-Seydel said.

Oregon Department of Energy Nuclear Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Deanna Henry said local drivers should not break normal driving habits.

"We're working with our petroleum companies so that they can apply their special events planning strategies toward that event," Henry said. "That means they have ample time to gradually maximize their supply volume to meet an increase in demand. They are prepared if there is a need to increase delivery from once every four days to every day and a half, and our trucking companies operate at about 40 percent capacity. We anticipate increasing that to 100 percent, if needed."

Henry said she is confident the strategies will be enough, but things could change.

"We do anticipate some spot problems in the more rural communities," Henry

Poetic wisdom

If you wait to arrive
You'll be late on the drive
And miss the celestial lights.

If you hurry to leave
You'll surely feel peeved.
Stick around and see Oregon's sights.

* — ODOT

said. "The strategies also don't accommodate for behaviors out of the norm for our Oregon motorists. If they go out of the norm, it may put an unnecessary strain on an already strained supply system and may create our own problems."

Jim Todd, space science director at OMSI and member of the statewide task force, suggests approaching the eclipse weekend as if extreme weather hit.

"Treat it like a snow day," Todd said. "The infrastructure in Oregon is not built to handle (the traffic). We are a mountain state. Here in Oregon it's a bit of a challenge to get around. Give yourself extra time. Get there early, stay put and leave later."

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