

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer
 Volume 142, Issue 39 www.Polkio.com September 27, 2017 \$1.00

Four fatal car crashes affect Polk County

Itemizer-Observer staff report
Crash on James Howe is fatal

DALLAS — A California man, formerly of Dallas, was killed on Sept. 15 in an early morning single-vehicle collision on James Howe Road. The crash occurred between 5 and 5:30 a.m. in the 2500 block of James Howe Road, said Polk County Sheriff Mark Garton. He said the driver and lone occupant of a Toyota Corolla, Jeremy Colley, 24, drove off the road and collided with a tree. The car landed down a

driveway off the road. "There's no apparent cause," Garton said. Garton said the crash wasn't called in until about 6:30 a.m. Colley was declared dead at the scene. Colley had been visiting his family when the crash happened, according to a Go Fund Me page set up to help pay for funeral expenses. "Jeremy Colley had recently come back from California to visit his mom and two brothers," the fundraiser page said. "He was excited he had found work there and was feeling like his life

was coming together." Colley was planning to head back to California soon, the entry said.

Grand Ronde residents injured in Hwy 18 crash

OTIS — Grand Ronde residents were injured and one person died in a multi-car crash on Highway 18 near Otis on Sept. 19. At about 3:45 p.m., Oregon State Police troopers and emergency responders were dispatched to a report

of a multiple-vehicle crash on the highway near North Deer Drive in Lincoln County. The preliminary investigation revealed a dark green 1995 Eagle Talon was westbound on Highway 18 at about milepost 4 when, for unknown reasons, it drifted into the oncoming eastbound lane and crashed head-on into a 2016 red Ford Explorer, according to OSP. A white 1993 Subaru Legacy, which was following the Talon, was struck by the Talon as it spun back into

the westbound lane. A secondary crash occurred at the scene after a westbound Kia Sedan struck a stopped Chevy Cavalier a few yards from the original crash. The driver of the Talon was pronounced deceased at the scene. The identity of the driver is withheld pending family notification. The driver of the Ford, Robert James, 68, and his passenger Barbara James, 67, both residents of Grand Ronde, were transported to a Lincoln City area hospital with minor injuries. **See ACCIDENTS, Page 6A**

Increased penalties for distracted driving

Itemizer-Observer staff report
 POLK COUNTY — If you haven't already, starting Oct. 1, you have more incentive to put down the phone — or tablet or laptop — while you are driving. House Bill 2597, passed by the Oregon Legislature earlier this year, applies stiffer penalties to those caught driving distracted. Prohibited device use includes texting, talking, entertainment, navigation, accessing the internet or sending emails if it takes more than a single touch or swipe. The only legal way to complete those tasks while holding the device in your hand is to pull over and park safely. Red lights and stop signs don't count. Those restrictions don't apply to those 18 years old and older using a hands-free accessory or to people who need to use mobile devices while driving for their job — such as emergency workers, commercial truck drivers, school bus drivers — or those using a two-way radio device as part of their work. People can use a phone to call 911 while driving if no one else is in the car is capable of doing it, according to the new law. A first violation is considered a class B traffic violation and can come with a presumptive fine of \$260, but could be as much as \$1,000. A second conviction in a 10-year period or first violation that contributes to a crash is a class B misdemeanor and comes with a \$435 presumptive fine with a maximum of \$2,500. People with a third offense in 10 years can face a six-month jail sentence and \$2,500 maximum fine. For more information, see "Distracted Driving" at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Safety/Pages/index.aspx.



The Falls City Fire Department hosts a National Night Out Event in August. The city and Southwestern Polk Fire have struggled on an agreement. *JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer file*

Fire contract set to expire

By Jolene Guzman
 The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — A contract between Southwestern Polk Rural Fire Protection District and Falls City Fire Department regarding services in that area of the district is on the verge of expiring without a new agreement. Monday, The Southwestern Polk Board met in Falls City Fire Station, but were unable to approve a new contract because negotiations are ongoing between the city and Southwestern

Chief Fred Hertel, who also is the Dallas Fire & EMS chief. A three-month extension of the contract ends Saturday, and the two sides have yet to see eye-to-eye on the details. Monday, Hertel said progress had been made at the most recent negotiation meeting, but he hadn't received a response from Falls City Mayor Terry Ungricht about the latest proposal as of Monday night. "From my perspective, I guess I would say negotiations are ongoing," Hertel

said. "I would say there was an uptick in positivity at the last meeting, but I think we are still a long ways from having a finished product." Southwestern Board member Bob Davis encouraged him to keep working on the agreement. "We want to get there," he said. Ungricht and Fire Chief Bob Young have said they would like to see the current contract extended, which maintains the relationship the two fire departments have had for decades.

Under that agreement, Southwestern Polk keeps fire engines and equipment in the Falls City station to respond to calls on that side of the district. Falls City volunteers respond to Southwestern calls, and Southwestern helps Falls City on calls within the city limits, if needed. In the proposal put forward by Southwestern, all administrative services would be provided by Dallas, similar to an agreement between Dallas and Southwestern's Rickreall station.

Hertel said Young would serve as a station chief under that arrangement. Young said at a Falls City City Council meeting in August that he's afraid the department would lose its identity if the administrative role is filled by someone else. "We have a lot of pride in our department, and the city has a lot of pride in our department. We provide a good service," Young said. "If we do have them doing the operations, Falls City ceases to exist as a fire department." **See CONTRACT, Page 6A**

Social media

Be sure to follow the *Itemizer-Observer* on Twitter @PolkIONews, Instagram and like us on Facebook and check www.polkio.com for breaking news, photos, stories and more.

Two cases of pertussis confirmed at Central

By Emily Mentzer
 The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Two students at Central schools have been confirmed with pertussis, or whooping cough. The students attend Talmadge Middle School and Central High School, Superintendent Jennifer Kubista said.

She nor Wendy Zieker, from Polk County Public Health, could not disclose whether or not the students were from the same family. Zieker said the disease is serious and can be deadly, especially in young infants. Complications from the disease include pneumonia, middle ear infection, loss of appetite, sleep dis-

turbance, fainting, dehydration, seizures, altered brain function, brief periods when breathing stops, and death. "Before the whooping cough vaccines were recommended for all infants, about 8,000 people in the United States died each year from whooping cough," she said. "Today, because of the vaccine, this number has

dropped to fewer than 20 per year." Pertussis has never been eradicated, Zieker said, but vaccinations have kept the disease at lower numbers. In 1934, there were more than 265,000 infections in the United States, she said. By 1959, that number was down to 40,000. In 1976, 1,010 infections were counted in the U.S. But

cases are increasing now. Zieker said a number of things can be contributing to the increase of whooping cough seen over the last 40 years: Doctors and nurses are more aware of whooping cough and recognize it more often; testing has improved; and protection from whooping cough vaccines is not long-lasting.

Because of the nature of the vaccine, and because having the disease does not confer lifelong immunity, Zieker recommends everyone get a booster, particularly people who live with or are frequent visitors to children, such as grandparents and relatives, or those who are child care providers. **See COUGH, Page 6A**

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

<p>wed</p> <p>Come meet at the corner of Mill and Main streets in Dallas for a cash mob and support local businesses. 5 p.m.</p> <p></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 84 Lo: 55</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>The Storyteller festival begins at the Dallas Public Library. Okaidja Afrosu will share African music and stories. 6 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Sunny Hi: 82 Lo: 54</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>The Dallas Booster Club will present information about the field turf project at the Dallas High School gym. 5 p.m.</p> <p></p> <p>Showers Hi: 68 Lo: 50</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>Stephanie Wood will present about Native American food and medicine at the Polk County Museum. 1:30 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 65 Lo: 49</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>The Rickreall Grange Flea Market returns Saturday and Sunday to offer treasures and tasty treats. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.</p> <p></p> <p>Partly cloudy Hi: 65 Lo: 48</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>Get your well water tested at the Polk County Extension Office to make sure your water is free from danger. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Showers Hi: 65 Lo: 45</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>Don't let a few clouds keep you forming checking out the Independence Riverview Market. 2 to 7 p.m.</p> <p></p> <p>Partly cloudy Hi: 65 Lo: 45</p>
--	---	---	---	--	---	---

0 94922 61652 4