

Polk County
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Ellis takes interim manager in Dallas

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Dallas City Council named Greg Ellis its interim city manager during a special meeting on Dec. 6.

Ellis took over Friday for Ted Cuno, the acting city manager since Dec. 4, following a vote to terminate former city manager Ron Fogglin's contract.

"We've had Ted as our acting city manager for two days and he's done a really good job," said Mayor Brian Dalton. "I've seen him out there in several meetings already. He's done a fine job.

He stepped right up to that plate after that call."

The council unanimously approved paying Cuno, the city's building official, an extra \$1,500 for taking on the additional duties.

Ellis is the former city manager for Independence and, more recently, Canby. Though he retired after serving in Canby, Ellis filled in as the interim city manager for Jefferson and worked for the city of Dallas as a part-time economic development consultant for more than a year.

When asked about his background during the Dec. 6 meeting, Ellis said he

began working in the public sector at the age of 45, after working years in private business.

"I had some of the same misconceptions about the public sector that a lot of people do," he said.

Ellis said he learned lessons about the difference between public and private sectors as city manager in Estacada.

"In private business you make a decision; in the public sector, you go through a process," he said. "I learned how to work with the process."

Ellis said he grew to love working in local government.

"I just really enjoy working with people and being a part of the community and taking nothing and making something out of it. As you all know, there's limited resources," he said.

Ellis said he sees his role with Dallas as making sure nothing is lost in the transition from one city manager to another. He said he will work with city staff to continue current projects and work with the council to proceed with it has in progress.

"I think there's a lot of potential and a lot of stuff happening in Dallas right now," Ellis said. "I just want to

make sure that continues."

The vote to appoint Ellis and approve his contract was unanimous. He will be paid \$12,000 per month while serving in the interim role.

Fogglin worked for the city since 2013 and received positive annual job performance reviews until Dec. 4, when he was dismissed on a 5-to-4 vote. The city will pay him a severance package of nine months' salary and the cash value of benefits, amounting to \$15,400 per month, unless he takes another job before nine months have passed.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Focus group testing about a public safety building doesn't provide much insight.

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FALLS CITY

Akha Farm owners arrested on assault, mistreatment and sexual abuse charges.

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INDEPENDENCE

Central's girls basketball team remains unbeaten.

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MONMOUTH

City Council approves two city utility ordinances.

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SPORTS

Central hires three new coaches for spring sports.

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Independence police department receives grant

Itemizer-Observer staff report
INDEPENDENCE — Oregon Impact, in partnership with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, awarded the Independence Police Department funding for 100 officer overtime hours for the next calendar year.

The grant is for officers to patrol the streets looking for and arresting drivers under the influence of intoxicants.

Two DUII arrests were made in November where suspects refused to submit a blood alcohol content test.

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Healing through helping

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Debbie McCleery created Kindness Club when she decided the best healing was through helping.

Kindness Club began in November 2016 for students whose families struggled to put food on the table. A Dallas school district employee, McCleery knew many students were in need — and she decided she needed to help.

"About more than a year ago, I found myself in not a very good healthy place, mentally, emotionally, so I reached out to a couple neighbors and some close friends," McCleery said. "I said 'I'm calling a meeting.' I said I need to focus outward, and I need help to do that."

At first, the club worked with Christmas programs like Adopt-a-Family and Christmas Cheer, but when the holidays were over, club members had to reconsider how they would continue to assist students.

One member suggested "Friday bags," a program that sent backpacks with snacks home with students over the weekends when



Debbie McCleery, fourth from left helped create a food pantry for older students to "shop" at every Friday.

JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

they didn't have access to school-provided meals.

"A couple of us had heard about other communities doing it, so we decided to start with the Morrison population, which is about 70 to

75 kids," McCleery said. "A lot of them are having struggles anyway in life, displaced, homeless. We asked the counselor to identify kids for us and took 11 kids on."

From February to the end of the school year, they filled backpacks, which the students would return after the weekend.

At the time, the club operated out of McCleery's

house, but soon it would need more space, so it moved to the district office and created a food pantry for older students to "shop" on Fridays.

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Polk Connect zeroes in on homeless

Event switches focus from 'at risk' to aiding people who are unsheltered now

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Polk County Homeless Connect is sharpening its focus for the event in 2018.

Previously, the event brought together resources to help individuals and families who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Heather Wright, the Living Hope City Church pastor with the Dallas Ministerial Association, an event sponsor, said the emphasis at the Jan. 31, 2018, event will be helping unsheltered adults.

"We're taking it back to what we had originally dreamt it for, which is to help homeless people with resources and give them a vacation day," Wright said. "We have been

servicing a large amount of guests who have not been homeless."

Wright said the connect coincides each year with the annual "point-in-time count," which attempts to account for all people who are homeless in Polk County and the U.S.

That count contributes to securing grants and resources to help homeless people.

Wright said most of the people participating in the connect event did not qualify as homeless under the count's definition.

"Our statistics from last year and previous years have not been good on actually surveying people that (are homeless)," Wright said. "We have reason to believe that sometimes, when you open it up and make it a family environment, it isn't

as friendly for the unsheltered homeless."

In 2018, event organizers want to change that.

The connect will be held at Valley Life Center from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and will offer a free meal, clothing, and resources to help get people off the streets.

Wright said all those who complete the point-in-time count survey will receive either a tent or a sleeping bag, even those who are surveyed in homeless camps and don't attend.

Event sponsors so far, are: City Vibe West Salem, Polk County, Dallas Ministerial Association, Ace Hardware in West Salem, Polk County Free Clinic, Salem Leadership Foundation, Salt Creek Baptist Church and Marion-Polk Foodshare.

Wright said organizers are seeking donations of tents and sleeping bags, as well as volunteers to be part of mobile teams completing surveys in Falls City, Grand Ronde, Monmouth, Independence and West Salem. Volunteers are needed for the event, as well.

Polk Connect will still offer bike repair, pet care, haircuts, medical care, dental care and connections with a yet-to-be determined list of agencies offering assistance.

"We anticipate fewer guests but, service on a grander scale for the individual," Wright said.

She said no one will be turned away, but services and clothing donations are suited toward homeless adults.

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<p>THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK</p>	<p>wed</p> <p>Holiday stress got your blood pressure up? Get it checked out free at Salem Health West Valley, surgery admitting area. 2-3 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Partly sunny Hi: 46 Lo: 32</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>Curious about downtown Independence? Meet with like-minded people at the IDA meeting. 8 a.m. Free.</p> <p>Partly sunny Hi: 47 Lo: 36</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>The annual "Sounds of Christmas" program will be at Guthrie Park Community Center. Santa will be there. 7 p.m. Donations.</p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 50 Lo: 37</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>The Oregon Old Time Fiddlers will perform in Dallas City Hall annex tonight. Expect fiddlers from around the state. 1-3 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Mostly cloudy Hi: 48 Lo: 39</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>Western Oregon University's men's basketball team hosts Alaska Anchorage in a conference battle. 5 p.m. \$7/adults</p> <p>Mostly cloudy Hi: 50 Lo: 40</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>Polk County Battle Buddies meets the third Monday of each month at the Veterans Service Office in Dallas. 6-8 p.m. Free.</p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 49 Lo: 37</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>The Cloverbuds will host a "Holiday Swag" class twice, whether you're a 4-H'er or not. Register by Thursday. 4 and 6 p.m. \$2-\$3.</p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 48 Lo: 35</p>
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