

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer

Dallas Bank of America to close in April

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Bank of America Dallas branch will close its doors on April 3.

The decision was based on customer behaviors, said Britney Sheehan, media relations manager.

“We’ve seen a shift in our industry,” she said. “Every day, we’ve seen more customers using mobile phones for banking.”

Customers come inside the bank for more detailed banking needs, such as to speak to mortgage loan officers or wealth advisors,

Sheehan said.

Day-to-day transactions, including transferring money between accounts, withdrawals, deposits, and paying bills, are done more online and on the mobile platform, Sheehan said.

The bank’s ATM will remain on site until the building is sold, which will likely be in a year or two, Sheehan said. The employees of the Dallas branch may find work at another location.

“The bank works to place employees in other positions or works to find them other arrangements when

there are closures,” she said.

Salem is the nearest Bank of America financial center, at 390 High St. NE, Sheehan said, noting it is about 13.8 miles from the Dallas location. She would not disclose the number of Dallas customers held at the location.

“We definitely look forward to serving our customers online, on mobile, through the ATM and in Salem,” she said. “We hope people will stay with us,” and come to Salem “when they do need to have those more complex conversations.”



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Bank of America is closing based on customer behavior.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Boys and girls basketball begin league play
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FALLS CITY

The Falls City School District secures a loan to begin building a gym and classroom facility.
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INDEPENDENCE

Indy Police arrest five for DUII in December.
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MONMOUTH

The Monmouth City Council approved a zone change for a strip of land at the south end of the Marr Bark Dust property.
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SPORTS

Central’s boys basketball team enters league play ready for a stiff challenge.
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Police investigate broken windows

Itemizer-Observer staff report

DALLAS — Several Dallas businesses have had their windows smashed with rocks or other objects in recent days.

Dallas police officers are investigating whether the incidents are connected, said Dallas Police Lt. Jerry Mott.

Four incidents were reported on Dec. 29 at locations throughout town.

La Herradura on Main and Washington streets reported a pumpkin tossed through the window, while H2O said a bench taken from Forest River was thrown into the front store window, according to Dallas’ daily police log.

More broken windows were reported on Jan. 3.

This time, the unknown suspect or suspects used a rock and brick to smash windows at businesses in Monmouth Cutoff Road and on Southeast Uglow and Lyle streets, the daily police log said.

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Commissioners to explore countywide broadband

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The Polk County Board of Commissioners may join the city of Independence in a grant application to pay for a study looking at ways to provide broadband internet service countywide.

Gov. Kate Brown’s office gave Business Oregon

\$500,000 to offer in grants for the Rural Broadband Capacity Pilot Program. The program was created “to kick start funding opportunities to assist with planning for and deployment of broadband project targeting rural and underserved populations.”

Shawn Irvine, Independence’s economic development director, said the city

replied to Business Oregon’s request for information in the fall of 2017, but wanted to include Polk County in the grant application because most rural/underserved areas are outside of cities.

“We have a good case to be made as a potential test site because we’ve got a fiber system in place in Independence and Monmouth,” he said. “We are doing some-

things that could leverage it in town, but we could leverage it better out of town ... if there was better service.”

Irvine said the idea is to find out who owns fiber networks and where, if there’s capacity to serve others and, if it’s possible to lease or access those networks.

“The intent is to explore countywide service,” Irvine said.

Independence has already been in contact with a consultant that performed a “scope of work” and cost estimate on a feasibility of building a network to provide access to rural residents. According to the consultant, the study would cost \$50,000, and Irvine suggested applying for a grant for that amount.

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SW Polk hopes for new contract

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — In the face of Falls City area residents’ concerns, members of Southwest Polk Rural Fire Protection District Board vowed Monday night to strike a new contract with the city for fire service.

On Jan. 2, Southwest pulled its two trucks and a quick response SUV after contact negotiations broke down between the district and Falls City.

“I realize that this particular issue has not been an issue in the past,” said board member Rod Watson. “We will get this resolved. We have no intentions of leaving you guys hanging out there forever.”

At the board’s meeting Monday night, several Falls City residents were in attendance, and three spoke about their fears of diminished service in and around Falls City.

Southwest board members pointed out that Falls City Fire will respond via mutual aid, but that did little to calm those at the meeting.

Jennifer Wright lives five minutes from the Falls City Fire Station, but believes that the fire engine remaining at the station won’t make it down her driveway. She’s afraid if an incident were to happen at her home, that help would have to come from Dallas.

“That’s a 25-minute wait,” she said.

Bob Davis, a Southwest



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Southwest’s Rickreal Station is one of two places from which district firefighters could respond to Falls City.

board member and professional firefighter, disputed that, saying he’s witnessed that engine perform a similar job when it was in service in Salem. He said if a driveway meets access standards, the truck should be able to drive it.

“I don’t know the condition of your driveway, but I can tell you the ability of that truck because it did that very thing for 18 years in the city of Salem,” Davis said. “It happened to be at Station Nine that was on the rural edge of the city. That engine

will make any driveway in reasonable condition.”

Wright said she wasn’t convinced, based on what members of Falls City Fire told her.

“I’ve had multiple ones tell me it is a pavement vehicle, not an off-road vehicle,” she said.

Falls City Fire Chief Bob Young said the trucks Southwest placed in Falls City were meant to complement those the city owned.

“Everything we’ve done is try to offset each other — work together so we have

apparatus that can do all these different things. If it’s a big structure-type fire, then we take our city engine out because it has a bigger pump. If it’s a narrow driveway, we worked on getting a four-wheel drive engine out here,” he said last week after Southwest removed its trucks. “I worked with (Southwest) when we ordered those things, when we put that truck together for specifically our area.”

Falls City residents asked that Southwest give negotia-

tions another shot — and find a way to compromise — to re-establish a contract.

“I don’t think you guys really want that,” said Falls City resident Tiffany Weems. “You guys want to take over. You want to force people out and take over.”

District residents said that is especially important because of the district’s recently passed bond to provide better service, something some district residents living near Falls City don’t believe they are getting.

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THE NEXT
7
DAYS
PLANNING
FOR YOUR
WEEK



wed

Get lost in a great story the whole family can enjoy at Family Story Time at Independence Library.
10:30 a.m. Free.



Rain
Hi: 47
Lo: 44

thu

Find out what the Independence Downtown Association is all about during its meeting at Independence Grill.
8 a.m. Free.



Rain
Hi: 54
Lo: 41

fri

Dallas High School’s boys basketball team hosts Crescent Valley for a Mid-Willamette Conference showdown.
7 p.m. \$5/adults.



Cloudy
Hi: 50
Lo: 37

sat

The Ash Creek Arts Center holds its Second Saturday art class. This month’s topic is birch tree landscape painting.
2 to 4 p.m. Free.



Partly sunny
Hi: 52
Lo: 36

sun

Start your Sunday morning with a tasty bite to eat at the Buell Grange Breakfast at Buell Grange Hall.
8 to 11 a.m. \$6.



Partly sunny
Hi: 51
Lo: 38

mon

Western Oregon University will hold several events during the week to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
See Page 2A.



Rain
Hi: 49
Lo: 41

tue

Central’s girls basketball team continues Mid-Willamette Conference play against South Albany.
7 p.m. \$6/adults.



Showers
Hi: 49
Lo: 40