

# It's ELECTION DAY

Ballots for today's special district elections must be dropped off at a county clerk's office or a drop box by 8 p.m. It's too late to mail them. Drop boxes can be found at [oregonvotes.gov](http://oregonvotes.gov)



# PREP 'WINTER' SPORTS START THIS WEEK »

SPORTS PULLOUT, A5-8



# The Bulletin

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY [bendbulletin.com](http://bendbulletin.com)

## Bend woman sentenced for stealing \$23K from singers

**BY GARRETT ANDREWS**  
The Bulletin  
A Bend woman received probation and community service for stealing \$23,000 from a local nonprofit women's chorus while acting as treasurer from 2014 to 2020. Nancy Lee Phillips, 67, was further ordered to repay all of the money she stole from Bella Acappella Harmony. The group's leadership is "certain" Phillips stole more than she admitted to, according to joint statement read at Phillips' sentencing hearing Monday in Deschutes County Circuit Court. "This was a very deep personal betrayal in a very small circle of friends. For six years, Ms. Phillips sat in our monthly leadership meetings as we struggled to find ways to pay for chorus needs, to help members pay to attend conferences and, in some cases, even pay their dues. All the while, she was stealing from our accounts to pay her own way."

See Theft / A4

## Texas man gets 8 years for sex abuse while in Bend

**BY GARRETT ANDREWS**  
The Bulletin  
A Texas man will serve eight years in prison in Oregon for sexually abusing a woman in Bend in 2018. Bradley Austin Montgomery, 29, was sentenced Monday, one week after a jury found him guilty following a short trial in Deschutes County Circuit Court. On Nov. 23, 2018, Montgomery was in Bend to attend a relative's funeral and staying at the apartment of different relative, who is married to the victim.

See Abuse / A4

### CONGRESS

## Oregon delegation wants \$50M for projects

Representatives make funding requests for community projects; none from Bentz

**BY KEVIN HARDEN**  
Oregon Capital Bureau  
Most of Oregon's congressional delegation is asking U.S. House budgeters for nearly \$50 million to fund projects across the state as part of the 2022 federal budget process, but they aren't "earmarks." Sort of. U.S. Reps. Suzanne Bonamici, Kurt Schrader, Earl

Blumenauer and Peter DeFazio offered a pile of proposals in late March for dozens of projects and programs. U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz of Ontario, the state's lone congressional Republican, did not offer any proposals. Bentz's staff was contacted for a comment but did not provide one. Officially, they're not "earmarks." Under new House rules adopted in late February, the proposals are "com-

munity project funding requests." Oregon's proposals were culled from hundreds sought by local governments, school districts, counties and agencies. Two months ago, House Appropriations Committee Chair Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., opened the 2022 budget process to representatives' specific funding requests for projects and programs. That process, usually known as "earmarks," was halted nearly a decade ago. Democratic House leadership brought it back for the new budget.

See Congress / A4

# CUE THE PERKS

## Central Oregon employers offer higher pay, free meals and more benefits in a tighter labor market



**BY SUZANNE ROIG** • The Bulletin

The help wanted signs are pasted up all over Central Oregon, an icon of a tight labor market that was around before the pandemic started more than a year ago. Employers in all fields are feeling the pinch, said Katy Brooks, Bend Chamber of Commerce CEO. There's no clear answer to why there's a shortage of workers, she said. The situation is forcing employers who are rushing to ramp up for a busy summer tourism season to offer workers higher pay, bonuses, free meals, employee discounts

and other perks. In an effort to keep her trained workforce, Julia Rickards, co-owner of Open Door restaurant in Sisters, recently paid one-time bonuses to her regular employees who all make above the minimum wage. "We've been in front of the minimum wage for three years," Rickard said. "We have the very amazing good fortune that our core team that started with us are still here." But if she wants to expand her hours she needs part-time employees, and those applicants are not lining up at the door. Even though unemployment numbers still are higher than a year ago, most who were

**Job seekers wait for an interview during a job fair Wednesday at Sunriver Resort.**  
Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

unemployed by the pandemic have recovered their jobs, said Damon Runberg, Oregon Employment Department regional economist. Runberg says there are four main reasons why there's a tight labor market: 

- Almost half the unemployed workers are on temporary layoff, which means that they are subject to recall by the employer and not required to look for work.

See Perks / A4

Colin Wills, Arnold Irrigation District manager, checks a sinkhole in the canal in Deschutes River Woods on Monday. "We are doing everything we can" to address the situation, Wills said, but it's too big for the district to handle alone.

Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin



## Sinkhole shuts off water for over 600 customers in southeast Bend

**BY MICHAEL KOHN**  
The Bulletin  
Hundreds of residents in southeast Bend have been without irrigation water since Thursday after a large sinkhole appeared in a canal, causing a measurable loss of water. The Arnold Irrigation District shut off water to more than 600 patrons Thursday, according to Colin Wills, manager of the district. The canal was losing 30 cu-

bic feet of water per second to the sinkhole, he said. Sinkholes appear periodically in Central Oregon, where man-made canals crisscross a region of volcanic rock and the occasional lava tube. Wills said his irrigation district can repair most sinkholes when they appear, but last week's hole is larger than normal and requires additional help. "We are doing everything we can," said Wills. "We are hiring a

construction company and an engineer right away." Kyle Gorman, region manager for the Oregon Water Resources Department, said lava tubes are common in the Deschutes River Woods area, where the sinkhole appeared. But having a sinkhole open up in a canal occurs infrequently, he added. "Maybe one every few years or so," he said.

See Sinkhole / A4

