



Code enforcement officers with the city of Bend, Kristin Bates and Jason Gault, give official notices to vacate to people camping along Emerson Avenue in Bend on Thursday.

Dean Guernsey/Bulletin photos

Cleanups

Continued from A1

While the public agencies like the city are required by law to collect personal property and store it after homeless camp cleanups, previous cleanups and evictions in Central Oregon show that the story of property loss for homeless residents is more complicated. Due to a variety of barriers, extremely few homeless residents pick up personal belongings after they've been collected and stored, according to information from the Oregon Department of Transportation and Deschutes County.

Out of several cleanups administered on property owned by ODOT since the beginning of the year, only five homeless campers have come back to retrieve their belongings, according to Peter Murphy, a spokesman for ODOT. The rest that isn't picked up is sent to the landfill.

In a homeless camp removal effort near Redmond in 2018, none of the campers chose to use a personal storage option provided by the county, according to Whitney Hale, the county's public information officer.

Several barriers can exist when it comes to someone homeless trying to recover items taken away in a cleanup or eviction, according to homeless service providers, which contributes to a cycle of people needing to replace their belongings.

Cleanups also come with a cost. The cleanup at Emerson Avenue is expected to cost between \$10,000 to \$15,000, according to the city. As of early June, ODOT has spent \$47,700 on homeless camp cleanup efforts in Central Oregon, Murphy said in an email.

That raises questions about whether the storage practice, which is intended to be more humane for homeless residents, is effective, and whether there are better alternatives.

"I don't know if it's really



Adam Pendell with SMAF Construction delivers a 40-foot shipping container where personal property belonging to homeless people evicted from a city right of way will be stored in downtown Bend.

worth offering," said Stacey Witte, the executive director of REACH, a nonprofit organization that serves homeless people. "It'd almost be less expensive to help someone pay one month of storage somewhere."

For the effort at Emerson Avenue, city workers will close the street Wednesday and begin collecting items that have been tagged by residents as personal property, and throwing away the rest, said Grant Burke, the city's facilities director. Last week, the city posted notices to let people know when and where people can retrieve their belongings, which will be stored in containers in the Troy Field parking lot in downtown Bend.

But there are many reasons why homeless people choose not to store their belongings, or retrieve them, Witte said. It boils down to trust.

"Everything in their entire life is in those garbage bags or in that tent, so there's a trust issue," Witte said. They are worried they won't get their things back.

Coordination is also an issue, said Colleen Thomas, Deschutes County's homeless services coordinator.

People often don't have a way to transport their stuff, or have a sense of where to put it because they don't know where

they are going next, Thomas said.

Money can also be a potential barrier. For items cleared off ODOT property, campers are charged \$2 to pick up their items, which is an administration fee, said Tim McGinnis, a transportation maintenance manager with ODOT.

The fee is used to filter out those who want to retrieve their items and those who want to come to the ODOT office to complain, he said.

All of this can contribute to a pattern of more people seeking donations for essentials after a cleanup, Thomas said.

"They are in that survival mode, so they panic and leave. Then there is a request for a new tent and sleeping bag," Thomas said.

Dave Notari, the director of development at Shepherd's House Ministries, said the nonprofit doesn't have any scientific data to show whether the need for donations goes up after a cleanup, but said based on experience it does appear that way, and that the organization does see people come in for essentials like sleeping bags and jackets.

"If we were able to provide people some stability," Thomas said, "I still think there would be a need for resources, but it might not be as much."

La Pine

Continued from A1

Sunday's fires, which burned only a few acres in total, are considered suspicious and the law enforcement investigation into their cause remains open.

The first call to 911 was made around 5:37 a.m., when columns of smoke were seen near the intersection of U.S. Highway 97 and Rosland Road just a few hundred yards north of La Pine.

The property is owned by the Bureau of Land Management and home to a number of transient camps, parked RVs and abandoned vehicles. Responding personnel on Sunday experienced difficulty accessing the area due to rough terrain and lack of roads, Supkis said.

On Sunday morning, fire personnel arrived to discover two unoccupied RVs, about a quarter-mile apart, in flames.

Crews contained both fires before either could burn much of the surrounding wildland. Both RVs were destroyed, and there were no reported injuries. A mid-50s temperature,

moderate humidity and low wind contributed to the positive outcome, Supkis said.

At 3:17 p.m., firefighters in a Central-Oregon based Forest Service engine traveling on Highway 97 spotted smoke about a mile away, west of the highway in the Jack Pine Loop area just south of La Pine.

Firefighters with various agencies again had difficulty accessing the source of the smoke. And again, the source of the smoke was discovered: an unoccupied RV engulfed in flames. This fire burned about an acre before it was contained.

"There's a big black hole in the forest right now," Supkis said.

Sunday's efforts around La Pine required the cooperation of numerous fire agencies: La Pine Fire, Crescent Rural Fire Protection District, Bend Fire & Rescue, the Oregon Department of Forestry, Walker Range Fire Patrol and Sunriver Fire Department. The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office evacuated several dispersed campgrounds in the area.

Last year, three fires of at least 35 acres burned in the same

area east of La Pine. The largest of the three was 335 acres.

In addition to the six fires in the past two years, La Pine Fire has responded to various medical calls at self-built campgrounds tucked away in the forest off trails and dirt lanes.

"I don't know if it's really worth offering. It'd almost be less expensive to help someone pay one month of storage somewhere."

— Stacey Witte, the executive director of REACH, on storing the belongings of people experiencing homelessness after city cleanups

Other solutions — like investing in community lockers so people experiencing homelessness can secure their belongings during the day without fear of them getting stolen or damaged — could help. A system of volunteers who transport or otherwise help homeless individuals retrieve their stuff could also help, but would likely require more trusted people who work in providing services to homeless people to execute, Thomas said.

"It's going to take dedicated compassionate people to do that work, and part of that is for agencies to provide a living wage," Thomas said, noting that prospective workers in this industry face similar housing affordability challenges as the clients they serve.

Witte said her organization has focused efforts on buying utility carts and larger backpacks for people to help them carry their belongings more effectively.

But ultimately, these are short-term solutions, Witte and Thomas said. People need a stable place where they can legally stay and call home.

"We need a safe camping area and ... to work with people to take responsibility to keep their areas clean," Witte said.

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Warm Springs

Continued from A1

On Monday, fire crews prioritized holding the north end and establishing control along the northeast and southwest ends of the fire in order to keep it from spreading into Pine Grove or from closing U.S. Highway 26 and state Highway 216, which are both located a few miles from the fire.

As crews attempt to hold the north and west sides, the southern end remains totally uncontained, and it is not known how long it

will take to contain it.

Temperatures in the area were expected to exceed 90 degrees with low humidity Monday, and winds were expected to be light but shifting. Javin Dimmick, a spokesperson for Warm Springs Natural Resources, said he was concerned about the high temperatures expected Monday and Tuesday.

Air quality throughout the state has been impacted by the fire in Warm Springs and another in Klamath County. In Klamath County, the Cut-off Fire was 10% contained on Monday and had burned 1,150 acres.

Land

Continued from A1

"We have the highest home prices in the state, and some of the highest rents in the state as well," Kropf said. "More and more people who work in Bend are no longer able to afford to live in Bend."

Zika noted that the median home price in Bend was \$700,000 — out of reach for all but the wealthy.

Employers had told him of offering jobs to candidates from outside the area, only to be turned down once they discovered the cost of living seriously devalued the salary offered.

People in key community roles were priced out of buying homes or paying rents.

"Firefighters and teachers cannot afford to live where they work," Zika said.

But opponents of the bill, notably Democratic lawmakers from the Portland metro area, said Bend was making an end run around the state's land development system that balances development needs with maintaining open space.

If the Bend project is approved, critics said, other cities would follow, saying they needed the waiver be-

cause their development issue was also acute.

"This is a precedent-setting, proactive government action, so please remember it's not just affecting Bend. It's affecting land use in the state of Oregon," said Rep. Susan McLain, D-Hillsboro.

Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane disagreed, saying Kropf and Zika had made the case that this was a one-of-a-kind situation.

"Exceptional circumstances that have been fully addressed and thoughtfully addressed from the community sometimes can necessitate this body taking affirmative action, even on land use," Owens said.

Rep. Greg Smith, R-Hepner, said Kropf knew the needs of Bend and he should get the benefit of the doubt that the city needed action by the Legislature.

"This isn't Washington, D.C., — we don't have to fight each other," Smith said. "Let's help a colleague."

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Find it all online

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OBITUARY

Alonzo Leif Gilbertson

September 15, 1959 - May 22, 2021

Alonzo "Leif" Gilbertson was born to Curt Gilbertson and Susan Horner Gilbertson on September 15, 1959 in Sacramento, CA. The family moved to Oregon in 1965, and had a dairy in Redmond, Oregon for several years, where Leif got his first horse, Alamo. In 1973, the family moved to Luverne, MN. Leif graduated high school in 1977, adding "Graduation Day" to the long list of days he "played hooky". Leif instead got behind the wheel of the family's yellow Ryder truck, and moved back to Oregon. His love for the road was born.

In 1980, Leif drove log truck in Cascadia, OR for his Grandpa and Uncle. By 1981, Leif & his older brother, Wynn, started hauling cattle out of Sioux Falls, SD. Eventually the brothers moved back to Oregon and each bought a truck, Leifs being a bright yellow Kenworth, with "Gilbertson Trucking" on the side. The last 20 years, he made a weekly trip to Canada to haul hogs for the Huterites. Leif continued driving truck for the rest of his life, logging more than 8 million miles.

Leif married his childhood, family friend, Dawn Tschantre, in 1984. They welcomed their first son, Sterling Sage in '85, a second son, Dakota Dean, in '87, and a baby girl, Shayanne Elise in '90. The couple raised their kids in Prineville, OR, and divorced in 2012.

Leif loved his children, riding horses, especially his horse-Tyler, fast cars, loud music, trucks, running, working, and reading biographies and nonfiction country western stories. He knew every Rock N Roll radio station this side of the Mississippi River.

Leif was preceded in death by his Grandparents, Earl & Irene (Chandler) Gilbertson, Amos & Dorma (Cole) Horner, Uncle David Horner, and his dear mentor, Duke Tschantre.

Leif is survived by his parents, Susan (Horner) Goldsmith and Curt & Judy Gilbertson. His children, Sterling (& Ashlie), Dakota (& Heather), and Shayanne (& Dallas). Two grandchildren, Lottie & Leilani, as well as two "bonus" grands, Clancy & Ella. His siblings, Wynn (& Candy), Darcy, Levy, Chance (& Rhonda), and Reagan (& Julie). Leif is survived by many loving nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles. Friends, neighbors, and his "World Champion" horse, Tyler.

A party will be held at Leifs ranch in Powell Butte, on July 30, 2021, starting with a prayer service at 5:30pm.

DEATH NOTICES

Robert "Robby" Allen Uiam of Prineville, OR July 26, 1974 - June 6, 2021

Services: There will be a service announced at a later date. To light a candle for Robby or leave the family and online condolence, please go to; www.whisperingpinesfuneralhome.com

Samantha Jane Kline of Prineville, OR August 30, 1945 - June 13, 2021

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals, Redmond 541-504-9485 www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: No Services will be held at this time.

Edward James Kettle of Terrebonne, OR May 13, 1949 - June 14, 2021

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals - Redmond is honored to serve the family. 541-504-9485. Condolences may be conveyed to the family at www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: A private service will be held.
Contributions may be made to: St. Jude; 501 St. Jude Place; Memphis, TN 38105 or considering planting a tree in Edward's honor.

OBITUARY DEADLINE
Call to ask about our deadlines
541-385-5809