

Building a better downtown



Volunteers, businesses tackle one property at a time

By CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

A pandemic has slowed the economy nationwide but the pace of progress in Warrenton's downtown has quickened.

Business owners are polishing their facades, a new restaurant and a brewpub are opening, a walk-to-town apartment complex is nearly complete, and a group of volunteers has put a fresh face on everything.

"I think it's crazy, but awesome that business development is still going on in Warrenton," Mayor Henry Balensifer said at Tuesday night's city commission meeting.

Spruce Up Warrenton, a grassroots group of volunteers, has built and installed flower boxes and hanging flower baskets on Main Avenue. Members have pulled weeds, pressure-washed sidewalks, and removed debris.

The group visited every business owner last year, encouraging them to clean up and apply for façade grants paid for by their business license fees. Several businesses – a beauty salon, Sanderson Construc-

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Above: Members of Spruce Up after installing planter boxes and topiaries at a business on Main Avenue. They are, left to right, Jim Dutcher, Lucinda Davis, Ken Davis, Brenda Hoxsey, Norm Hoxsey and Carol Snell.

Left: Ken Davis and Jim Dutcher fill the planters.

Photos by Kelsey Balensifer



Late summer will be all about the streets

By CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

Streets were all over the agenda Tuesday night.

Warrenton city commissioners made decisions about paving 21 streets, talked about state plans to change the intersection of Highway 101 at Perkins Road south of town, and issued invitations for contractors to bid on two more road-related projects.

"We're just going down the list of projects in our management plan," Public Works Director Collin Stelzig told commissioners when asked why certain streets were selected.

In some cases, a contractor would be hired to pave all selected streets within a certain level of decay. So a street that's in worse shape may not make the list.

Work would begin in August and is expected to take place this summer and fall, and possibly next spring.

"The plan says we're going to be completing it in summer 2020," Commissioner Pam Ackley said. "Is there a reasonable expectation that will happen?"

All three city projects will be completed during the fiscal year, Stelzig said. "Worst-case scenario, if it didn't get done this summer, it would be early next summer."

• **Pavement plan.** All the following streets will get a 2-inch pavement overlay but one, which will get a 4-inch overlay. The contract is expected to cost about \$369,500.

Streets in the plan include portions of First Street Southeast, Third, Fifth and Ninth avenues, Seventh Street Southeast, Ninth Street Southwest, 10th Place Southeast, 13th Street

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UO developing ways for teens to beat anxiety disorders

By JIM MUREZ
University of Oregon

Sixth grade can be a tumultuous time for youth, and the additions of a global pandemic and intense discussions around race have only increased adolescent stress in recent months.

With funding from the National Institutes of Health, a team of researchers from the University of Oregon and the local community is working on a

way to teach students basic mental health skills as well as give teachers a tool to keep classrooms on a more even keel.

The \$1.5 million, three-year grant is helping the UO College of Education's Nichole Kelly, local licensed psychologists Lori Allen and Shin Shin Tang, and Adam Wendt of education technology company Tri-foia develop a curriculum to promote better mental health habits among

sixth graders that can be rolled out nationally.

"The average onset for anxiety-related disorders is around 13 years old, and that's why we're targeting this group," said Kelly, who works in the college's Counseling Psychology and Prevention Science programs. "Schools are one of the top sources of stress. ... We hope to change the overall school culture and how we talk

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