

## Oregon's average student borrower leaves school \$26,328 in debt

*The Columbia Press*

Student loan debt has ballooned to \$1.67 trillion nationwide and Oregon students rank in the top 30 percent.

The average debt per borrower in Oregon is \$26,328, although the figure represents a drop of 8 percent over last year's figures, according to LendEDU, an online seller of student loans and other financial products.

The company has completed an in-depth analysis of hundreds of public and private schools in all 50 states for the fifth consecutive year.

Oregon's student borrowers rank 17th of the 50 states, with 36 percent of the class of 2019 shouldering debt upon graduation.

The schools with the highest average loan debt per borrower were the private

Corban University, where the average borrower walked away \$40,239 in debt. Seventy-five percent of the students had outstanding loans to pay.

Other schools and their average debt per borrower: Oregon State University, \$27,392; University of Oregon, \$26,548; Eastern Oregon University, \$25,756; and Western Oregon University, \$6,815.

The topic of student loan debt and the rising cost of college in the U.S. is more important now than it has ever been before, according to LendEDU.

The coronavirus pandemic has students and parents weighing the true value of higher education and the financial burden of student loan debt that usually comes with earning a degree.

### *A little spruce-up*



Photo courtesy Spruce Up Warrenton

Spruce Up Warrenton members Norm Hoxsey, left, and Jim Dutcher, along with Chris Connolly, who isn't shown, replace the handrails at Lighthouse Park at the four-way stop. The volunteers have made improvements large and small throughout downtown in the past year.

## Business and development tidbits

### Favorite restaurants dishing up some changes

#### DAIRY MAID

Dairy Maid, the town's favorite burger joint, reopened Tuesday after a monthlong closure for maintenance.

The parking lot has been repaved and some repairs have been made inside, although most everything else is the same, said Jodi Helmer, daughter of business owner Julia Salmi.

The drive-through restaurant at 89 N. Main Ave. also revised its hours of operation. Dairy Maid is open 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and closed Sundays and Mondays.

If you're looking for a job, instead of a great burger, the restaurant is hiring.

#### ARNIE'S CAFÉ

Crystal Neahring-Green and the crew at Arnie's Café will serve their final meals Sunday in the old building near Warrenton High School.

The popular eatery's new home near City Hall is nearly complete, said Rick Newton, owner of the building that housed his auto parts business before he retired.

Opening of the new café could come as early as Thursday, Aug. 27.

#### NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

The design phase of Warrenton's new middle school is complete and it's time for the project to fully move into the construction phase, project manager Scott Rose told the school board late last week.

"There's a lot of activity happening and it's very exciting," he said. "In November, the steel arrives and we'll start getting vertical."

After excavation, which is nearly complete, the pavement of Warrior Way, featured on today's front page, begins Oct. 16.

#### GRADE SCHOOL

A contract to build Warren-



Cindy Yingst/The Columbia Press

An excavator works on a stretch of Warrior Way at the site of Warrenton's future middle school. The school will be off Dolphin Drive, south of Walmart.

ton Grade School's security vestibule was awarded to Mark Baldwin Construction, who was the only bidder on the project.

The vestibule will be near the front office and provide a barrier between the entrance and student areas. It's in re-

sponse to violence such as occurred at Sandy Hook in Newtown, Conn., where a gunman shot and killed 20 children and six adults after gaining easy access to campus.

The vestibule construction should be complete in early September.

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