

Business Notes

State listens, Food Stamp time limit is rescinded

After years of pressure from advocacy groups, and embarrassing news that Oregon had the highest rate of hunger in the nation, state welfare officials have sought and obtained approval to end a harsh time limit on receipt of food stamps by unemployed and under-employed adults. Revocation was effective on Monday, May 1.

Since December, 1996, under and unemployed adults in Oregon between the ages of 18 and 50 who had no dependents or disabilities, could get food stamps for only three

months every three years. The new policy rescinds this restriction, which was particularly hard on seasonal workers such as those who work in canneries, construction and agriculture.

"The three month limit helps explain why Oregon had the nation's highest hunger rate over the last few years," said Kelley Weigel of the Rural Organizing Project. A study released last October by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that nearly six percent of Oregon households were living

in hunger, the highest rate in the country.

"This is a major victory for the farmworker community," said Ramon Ramirez of Piñeros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN). With food stamps limited to three months every three years, seasonal workers who face annual periods of unemployment could not rely on the program to help through the hard times.

The policy change follows research by the Oregon Center for Public Policy (OCP) demonstrating that the Oregon Department of Human Resources could effectively remove the limits in Oregon by piecing together waivers and

exemptions the federal government provides. Because the state had used so few of these exemptions over previous years, a huge stockpile of exemptions had accumulated.

Research by OCPP also showed that the time limits could be waived in 30 of Oregon's 36 counties because they met the standard of having insufficient jobs. Oregon had used the insufficient jobs waiver from April 1997 through March 1998 in the 16 "labor

surplus" counties that qualified at that time. The Center reported earlier this year that the number of qualifying counties had almost doubled.

Always locate lines before you dig

Spring is almost here, and with it comes the busiest excavation season of the year. Thousands of Oregonians will dig into the ground with shovels, post hole diggers, and rented power equipment such as trenchers and augers. Whether you're landscaping your backyard, installing a new mailbox post, setting up fencing or putting in a sprinkler system, there are four important steps to Dig Safely.

The first step is to call the Oregon Utility Notification Center at least two business days before beginning your digging project. The toll-free number is 1-800-332-2344. A representative will notify the utility operators, who will then mark the property to show where there are underground utilities.

The second step is to wait for the lines to be marked with

color-coded paint. The third step is to respect the marks, and the final step is to dig with care.

The underground utility complex includes electric, natural gas, oil, fiber-optic, telephone, cable-television, water and sewer lines. One wrong move can cause death or injury due to an explosion. Hundreds or thousands of residents might be cut off from heat, electricity, telephones, 9-1-1 calls, and other vital services.

The Oregon Utility Notification Center incorporates a comprehensive, statewide database of underground utilities. Calling before you dig not only prevents dangerous accidents — it is also the law! For more information, call the Oregon Utility Notification Center at (503) 232-1987.

Meeting set on Hwy. 202 repairs

A public meeting to discuss plans for replacing a failing culvert on the Nehalem Highway (Oregon 202) between Jewell and Birkenfeld, is set for Wednesday, May 10, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., in the library of the Jewell School.

Oregon Department of Transportation plans call for replacing the culvert at Squaw Creek with a bridge. The site is located about four miles east of Jewell at mile post 33.6. The project also includes fish habitat enhancement measures.

ODOT officials anticipate the project will require two summer construction sessions to complete. Because of fish

habitat restrictions, the usual work window in the streambed is July 15 to August 31.

Most of the work is expected to cause delays for motorists. The project will require that one lane of the highway be closed. During working hours, one way traffic will be controlled by flaggers. Outside of working hours, traffic through the work zone will be controlled by a stop sign at either end of the single lane section of highway.

Area residents are urged to attend the public meeting to learn about these scheduled repairs and how they will affect the community.

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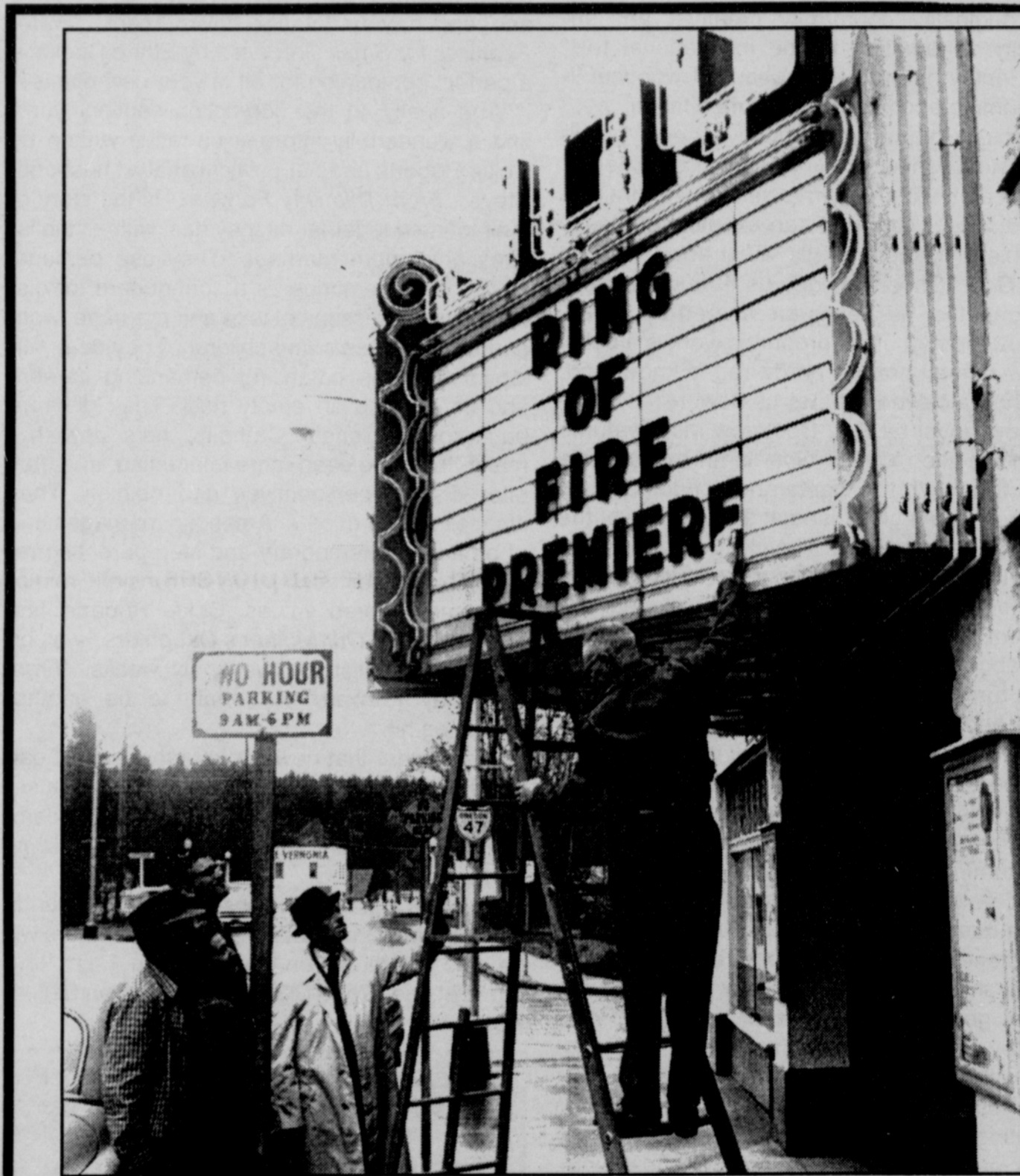
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Nearly forty years ago I stood with my aunt and watched as the MGM movie crew burned her barn for the making of "Ring of Fire." All eyes were fixed on the Nehalem Valley and those memories will always be with me. I have spent a lifetime in Columbia County and seen its triumphs and tragedies. I believe we can make it the most livable county in the state. But first we must work together to bring industries like MGM back by finally dealing with the services that will attract industry and tourism. I ask for your vote for County Commissioner because I have the confidence that things can happen, change and improve. It's time all eyes were fixed on the Nehalem Valley again. Our best resource is the people who live here.

Joe Corsiglia

ELECT

JOE CORSIGLIA

Columbia County Commissioner, Position #1

JOE CORSIGLIA
COMMISSIONER #1



THIS TIME YOUR VOTE WILL COUNT.



PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT JOE CORSIGLIA, COLUMBIA COUNTY COMMISSIONER POSITION #1

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