

Natalie Conn named 2025 Sportsman's Holiday Queen

By Cindi Hamar
For The New Era

Natalie Conn was crowned the 2025 Sportsman's Holiday Queen on a perfect summer evening Thursday, July 10, at Community Chapel's outdoor amphitheater.

Isabella Wagner was named Miss Congeniality, selected by her fellow princesses, Bailey Chafin, Ashley Duncan, Annabelle Morris, Delainie Pratt and Selah Wright.

Emcee Don Knight presided over the program, beginning with the entrance of the flags and the National Anthem, which was sung by Ember Ogden and followed by a proclamation by Mayor Susan Coleman.

The princesses were introduced and escorted by their fathers and a grandfather.

Also introduced were the Junior Court members: princes Soloman Golden, Kai Kern, Kyler Orr, Marshall Steinbrink and Axle Whitmyer; and princesses KaliaAnn Abraham, Taylor Borden, Kenzlee Brown, Rowan Dixon, June Helper, Peyton Hooper, Alina McConnell,



Photo by Cindi Hamar

Newly crowned Sportsman's Holiday Queen Natalie Conn pronounces the opening of the festival at the close of the coronation ceremony. Thursday, July 15.

Whitney McCutcheon, June Sells and Stella Vaird.

The Junior Court performed a skit, singing a song with very animated gestures about going on a bear hunt.

The performance got the crowd laughing, and it ended with the arrival of the A&W

Bear, "scaring" the entire court, who ran off the stage area.

The Sportsman's Holiday Court princesses each gave a speech focusing on their chosen charities – which each princess selected to sell raffle tickets for – and why the

organization was near to her heart.

Wright's chosen charity was 4-H, which includes three clubs in Sweet Home with 97 members. She has been active for four years.

See Coronation, Page 7

Decision to end fluoride stirs protest

By Sarah Brown
Of The New Era

One city councilor and a handful of residents have expressed dismay over a seemingly hasty decision to overturn an ordinance requiring fluoride in the city's water system during the July 8 City Council meeting.

Fluoride No More

Prior to the third and final reading of an ordinance bill repealing a municipal code that requires fluoridation of the city's drinking water, Councilor Ken Bronson – who was absent at the June 24 meeting – let the council know he was not happy with the move.

Bronson said he made multiple attempts to attend that last meeting virtually but was unable to get through. He would

See Fluoride, Page 13

SHEDG: This year will be final Jamboree

By Scott Swanson
Of The New Era

The Sweet Home Economic Development Group announced last week that 2025 will be the final year for its Oregon Jamboree Music Festival.

The SHEDG Board of Directors released a statement July 8, three weeks before the 2025 event, announcing their decision to end the annual festival after 34 years.

This year's festival in Sweet Home is scheduled for Aug. 1-3, featuring headliners Clay Walker, Shane Smith and the Saints, and Jordan Davis.

"While this is not an announcement the board wanted to have to make, as one of the last remaining nonprofit country music festivals in the country, we are deeply proud of the positive contributions we have made to our community and the memories we have helped create for festival attendees over the years," said Heather Search, president of the SHEDG Board of Directors.

Current SHEDG board members are: Search; Vice

President Rob Poirier, Tracey Weidner, Sherri Gregory and Dawn Waldrop.

Multiple Challenges

Poirier, who has been involved with the Jamboree since 1997 in a variety of capacities, said that production and talent costs for festivals such as Sweet Home's have risen, while ticket sales have declined "as consumer concert event interest has shifted to large single-artist stadium-style events over multi-day music festivals."

"At the end of the day, the board determined that the numbers simply didn't pencil out and the costs of running the event outpaced revenue from ticket sales and sponsorships," he said in an email. "Frankly, the Oregon Jamboree has been able to go on for the length it has because of our dedicated fans, sponsors, volunteers and staff."

Home-Grown Production

The Oregon Jamboree has always been distinctly home-grown.

It was born out of a community effort generated by a series of economic blows

in the late 1980s to Sweet Home's timber industry – fire danger, a strike, and then the shutdown of millions of acres of federal timberland due to the listing of the northern spotted owl under the federal Endangered Species Act. Significant layoffs and mill closures resulted.

Alex and Debbie Paul, former publishers of The New Era, recounted the economic turmoil in a 2017 newspaper article.

Sweet Home, then a community of 6,000, lost 1,000 jobs, Alex Paul said. Some 30 years ago, every piece of wood necessary to build a house was produced in Sweet Home. Today, it's down to veneer and specialty products.

At one point, there were 30 empty storefronts on Main Street, Debbie Paul said.

The community rallied in various ways and then-mayor Dave Holley worked with the state economic development agency to complete an economic analysis for Sweet Home. The grassroots

See Jamboree, Page 16

Hometown
Newspaper of
**ONITA
FOX**



**SPEED HUMPS
INSTALLED ON
1ST AVENUE
PAGE 16**



**CHIPS 'N' SPLINTERS
TAKES AUDIENCE ON
FUN TRIP OUTDOORS
PAGE 10**



**NEW SAMARITAN CEO
EXPLAINS CHALLENGES
FOR LOCAL HOSPITALS
PAGE 6**

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DATE	HIGH	LOW	PRECIP
July 8	92	56	0.00
July 9	85	55	0.00
July 10	85	60	0.00
July 11	88	55	0.00
July 12	93	61	0.00
July 13	98	63	0.00
July 14	98	53	0.00

PRECIPITATION

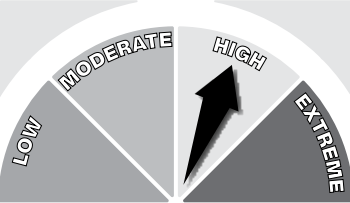
Year to date: 19.24
July 17, 2024: 18.79

FORECAST

DAY	WEATHER	HIGH	LOW
Thur	Sunny	90	53
Fri	Sunny	90	55
Sat	Partly Cloudy	86	53
Sun	Mostly Sunny	83	53
Mon	Mostly Sunny	83	54
Tues	Mostly Sunny	84	54
Wed	Sunny	89	55

CURRENT LEVELS

Foster Reservoir: 635.6
Green Peter Res.: 952.2



TODAYS FIRE DANGER IS
HIGH

The fire danger information provided is current at the time of publication. For the latest and most accurate updates, please visit: oregon.gov/odf

PUBLIC SAFETY

Information for the Public Safety report and Courts in The New Era is sourced from local law enforcement and fire agencies. Incident details, which may not always be available from agencies in time for publication in our weekly paper edition, is often updated online as information becomes available. Addresses provided generally denote the location of the incident or arrest, occasionally indicating the origin of the call. It is crucial to emphasize that our reporting of an individual's arrest or citation for a crime does not imply guilt. Determination of guilt can only be established through legal proceedings in court. We commit significant effort to following through as cases move through the judicial process.

Following is a list of abbreviations that may appear in our log reports: LCSO (Linn County Sheriff's Office); SHPD (Sweet Home Police Department); OSP (Oregon State Police); LCCC (Linn County Circuit Court); LCJC (Linn County Justice Court); SHMC (Sweet Home Municipal Court); LMC (Lebanon Municipal Court); FTA (failure to appear); FTC (failure to comply). A roman numeral listed after a charge means that the charge is that numbered-degree: theft I (first-degree theft).

July 13
12:44 a.m. - Caller reported large group in Thriftway parking lot, 621 Main St., yelling and squealing tires. Officer responded, contacted large group of juveniles,SWH who departed.
8:09 a.m. - Overdose reported in 4600 block Mahogany Lane. Officer responded, victim transported to hospital by medics.
8:13 a.m. - Illegal camp located along Calapooia River in area of Upper Calapooia Dr./McClun Rd. Campers were instructed on proper way to leave area after use.
3:30 p.m. - Caller reported that motorhome parked in area of 10th Ave./Elm St. has been there for weeks and obstructs stop sign. Officer responded, determined that RV did not obstruct sign enough to tow as hazard. Posted with 48-hour notice.
5:37 p.m. - OSP responded to boating collision at Calkins Boat Ramp, 44529 Quartzville Rd. According to OSP, Bayliner rear-ended docked pontoon boat. Due to agitated situation, OSP assisted information exchange. Boat operators' identities not clear in police report.
7:58 p.m. - Jack E. Counts, 36, arrested by LCSO on SHMC warrant for FTA in fraudulent use of credit card case. Cited to appear Aug. 13.
9:59 p.m. - Brian Michael Keegan, 64, arrested for DUII, reckless driving, and cited for unsignaled turn, 41st Ave./Osage St. Cited and released. Chrysler Cruiser impounded.
10:05 p.m. - Eric Encinas, 46, of Cottage Grove, cited on unspecified AMC, LMC and LCCC warrants, 50300 block Quartzville Rd. Report taken.

CIRCUIT COURT

Warrants are out on the following individuals: Travis Alexander Ayres, Christopher Frances Ciullo, Kelsey Nicole Ciullo, Hope Marie Connors, Ashlee Dee Flanagan, Sean Doyle Gay, Nicholas Gregory Godell, Aaron Thomas Halvorson, Noe Hernandez-Reyes, Marcus Wesley Hesson, Michael Trevor Hilton, Faron Walter Kennedy, Tyler Bruce Lanz, Charles James Marvel, Thomas Junior McCarthey, Bryce William McGowan, Eric Wayne McKnight, Carrie Lynne Miller, Thomas Elbridge Miller, James Keith Mortensen, Nicholas Alan Nelson, Daniel Austin Phillips, Tammy Lavonn Robinson, James Ryan Ronton, Kristina Marie Sleutel, Joshua Alexander Williams
Steven Lee Ballweber, 36, charged July 11 with robbery III, harassment and theft III.
John Paul Smith, 52, charged July 7 with criminal mistreatment I and assault IV.

July 12
12:34 a.m. - Dustin Clarnau, 50, of Lebanon, arrested for criminal trespass II, 27300 block Peoria Rd., Halsey.
7:50 a.m. - Two anglers cited by OSP for fishing without a license at Foster Reservoir. Cassidy Leigh Sullivan, 33, of Sweet Home, cited for no resident angling license. Justin Denherder, 39, city of residence not listed, also cited for angling violation, and cited for four warrants out of Benton County Circuit Court, LCCC, LMC and AMC.
9:09 a.m. - Nathan David Lewis, 33, of Sweet Home, cited for failure to file report of change of residence for sex offender registration and for failure to carry proof of insurance, Fern Ridge/Liberty roads.
10:27 a.m. - Travis Samson, 33, of Sweet Home, cited for driving uninsured, 600 block Main St.
11:02 a.m. - Hunter Ringheimer, 31, of Sweet Home, cited for driving while suspended, driving uninsured, and on unspecified warrant. Shauna Ray Harden, 31, arrested by LCSO on SHMC warrant for FTC in eluding police case, FTA in theft case. Cited to appear July 23. 2000 block Main St. Report taken.
12:59 pm. - Marine deputies issued three citations and conducted one water rescue on Foster Lake.
1:58 p.m. - Caller reported traffic signals out at intersection of Holley Rd./Main St. Outage caused by pole fire in McQueen Drive area, to which Sweet Home fire personnel responded.
3:53 p.m. - Crash reported in 1300 block Main St. between pedestrian, identified as Katherine Walker, and a 2009 Lexus G47, operated by Sherri Gregory, according to SHPD. According to SHPD, Walker hit front of Gregory's vehicle as she was pulling out and then left location. Walker was later located with minor scrapes to her knee, but refused medical attention.
3:58 p.m. - Marine deputies and OSP trooper rescued couple stranded on Middle Santiam after their kayak was washed away in rapids, 43700 block North River Dr.
4:25 p.m. - Caller reported that male borrowed vehicle and was supposed to return

it several days previously, but was no longer responding to caller. 43500 block Wiley Creek Dr. Vehicle entered as stolen.
4:52 p.m. - Caller reported crash in 1500 block Main St. Damages over \$2,500. Investigation continuing. Further details unavailable.
8:21 p.m. - Caller reported someone burning weeds in 2300 block Cedar St. Officer responded, contacted responsible parties, who were warned but "uncooperative."
10:10 p.m. - Ryan Nugent arrested for DUII, reckless driving following traffic stop in 28000 block Ridgeway Rd. Cited and released.
11:45 p.m. - Rudy Inga Soto arrested for driving while suspended, driving uninsured and driving without headlights, 1900 block Main St. Vehicle impounded.
July 11
3:42 a.m. - Calvin Alvin Ames, 59, arrested on LMC warrant, 46th Ave./Main St. Cited and released.
5:03 a.m. - Richard Glenn Leslie, 59, of Springfield, cited for speeding, 54/35,
See Public Safety, Page 11



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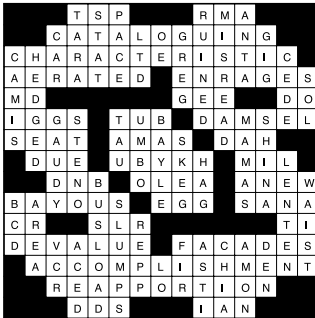
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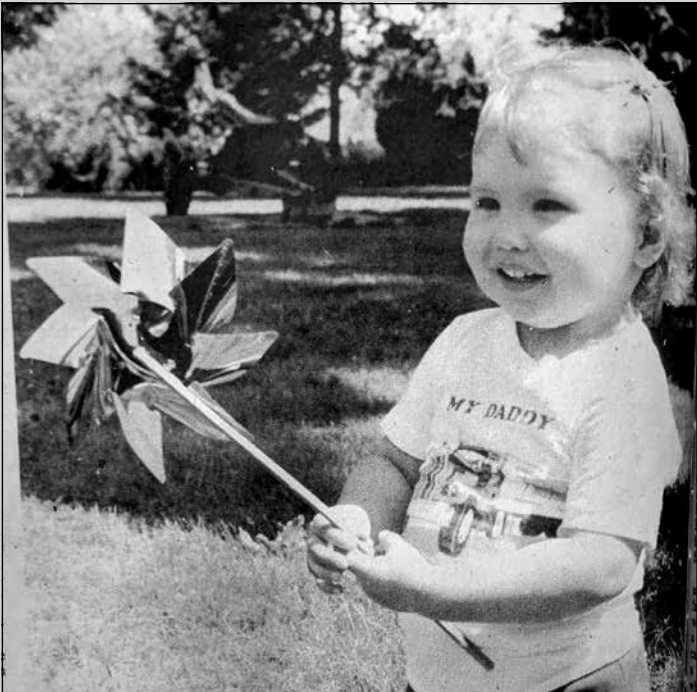
Crossword KEY
Puzzle on page 12



SUDOKU KEY
Puzzle on page 12

4	6	7	2	3	1	8	5	9
1	5	8	9	4	6	2	7	3
9	3	2	5	7	8	1	4	6
6	4	1	7	9	5	3	2	8
2	9	3	6	8	4	5	1	7
8	7	5	1	2	3	6	9	4
7	8	6	4	5	2	9	3	1
3	2	4	8	1	9	7	6	5
5	1	9	3	6	7	4	8	2

FROM OUR FILES



Alicia Gregory, 21 months old, gets ready for the Sportsman's Holiday Junior Parade in 1975.

July 20, 1950

The city's first flag pole was erected on the side of the local police station. But first, the antennae for the new police-fire two-way radio system was installed on the pole's top. The radio control unit was installed in the police station. Thieves ransacked three businesses houses on Friday. Stolen from Mac's Automotive Service were a generator and starter tester. Stolen from the bus depot was \$35 in silver. Stolen from Lee's Pastime was a gold wristwatch valued at \$57.50.

July 17, 1975

A Linn County Circuit Court judge ruled that a state law allowing the state Health Division to force annexations when a health hazard is declared to exist is constitutional. Unless his decision is successfully appealed, the Foster-Midway area must annex to the City of Sweet Home, a situation that neither the majority of residents in that area nor the Sweet Home City Council seem to want. Charlotte Alford was crowned Miss Teenage

Oregon at the pageant held in Portland. She competed against 26 other girls. The judges said she got top ratings in all categories. Lots of children – and adults – have been cooling off on hot afternoons at the Sankey Park wading pool. The water is turned on from 1-4 p.m. on warm days. Activities available at city parks include badminton, croquet, ping pong, softball, kickball, prison ball, frisbee, scoop catch, tennis, horseshoes, touch football and arts and crafts.

July 19, 2000

The Army Corps of Engineers said its decision to end the Foster Mud Flat Races was required by the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act. They also said that restrictions on motorized boating were possible. City Council adopted a 60% increase in various building permit fees (structural and mechanical). The city started its building program in 1995, using building codes reflective of the 1979 Uniform Building Code Fee Schedule.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fluoride decision 'deeply troubling,' 'alarming'

Editor:

The recent decision by the City Council to repeal the fluoride ordinance is deeply troubling – not only because of the outcome, but also because of the process. This change affects the health of all 10,000 residents of our community. Yet the first public notice of the repeal appeared only in the July 2 edition of the local newspaper, with no meaningful effort made to solicit public input or encourage open dialogue. For a policy with such far-reaching public health implications, the lack of transparency is alarming. The mayor noted that the city received multiple requests to remove fluoride – a classic example of a vocal minority influencing policy while the silent majority, generally satisfied with the status quo, remained unheard due to lack of outreach. While a public comment period technically existed, no real effort was made to inform or invite participation from the broader community. One councilor cited consultation with a dentist, from outside Sweet Home, who supported fluoride removal. Yet public health policy cannot hinge on isolated anecdotes. Sound decisions must be grounded in peer-reviewed

evidence and expert consensus, not selective conversations from an individual naysayer. No legitimate forum for debate was provided. Testimony was limited to three minutes per speaker, reducing complex scientific issues to sound bites. This is especially concerning given the flood of misinformation and fear-based claims circulating about fluoride. A thoughtful, city-level discussion should have preceded any vote. Some council members spoke of representing their constituents, yet failed to seek input from the wider community or put the issue to a public vote. A policy originally approved by the people was quietly overturned by seven council members, with no scientific justification provided. Not a single peer-reviewed study has been cited to support this repeal. In a particularly questionable move, the council conducted two of three readings of the ordinance in a single night. While this may have been legally permissible, it gave the appearance of a rushed and poorly handled process. Compounding the concern, one councilor was unable to remotely participate in that meeting due to technical problems at City Hall – raising further questions about

fairness and transparency. Equally concerning is the fact that the City Health Committee was neither consulted nor informed, and local or state public health experts were not brought into the conversation. The omission is glaring. Suggestions that residents can simply “take supplements” or “just brush their teeth” fail to recognize that fluoride supplements are expensive and impractical, and that brushing does not replicate the topical as well as systemic benefits of fluoridated water – particularly for children, the elderly, and those without regular dental care. Concerns raised about a federal court case in California are misleading. The case hinges on misinterpretations of the National Toxicology Program report. This report examined studies from foreign countries such as China and India with much higher fluoride levels due to environmental pollution, not water fluoridation. The federal judge explicitly noted in his ruling that the NTP report was not designed to evaluate a potential risk of harm from drinking water containing fluoride at the optimal U.S. level of 0.7 mg/L. As with all substances, dosage makes the difference between benefit and harm. Vitamin A and D are essen-

See Letters, Page 5

The New Era

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LETTERS

From page 4

tial to life, but can be toxic in excess.

There is also a significant question of legal accountability. If the fluoridation system has been non-functional since 2019, the city may be in violation of its own ordinance.

Moreover, funds have reportedly been appropriated in the municipal budget for the repair and operation of the system, yet those funds appear to have gone unused. This raises serious concerns about potential negligence, mismanagement of public resources, and exposure to liability.

Public health experts overwhelmingly support community water fluoridation at 0.7 ppm as safe and effective. This isn't fringe science – it's backed by virtually every major public health institution in the world.

The current U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, has stated: "Community water fluoridation is one of the most practical, costeffective, equitable, and safe measures communities can take to prevent tooth decay and improve oral health."

Just across the river, the city of Camas, Wash., voted on July 7 to maintain its fluoridation Program – recognizing its public health value. Notably, Camas has a poverty rate of 5.1%, compared to

17.4% in Sweet Home. The need here is greater, not less. This repeal was not based on evidence, not rooted in science, and not conducted with adequate transparency. Sweet Home deserves better.

Let's prioritize public health over politics, science over anecdotes, and transparency over expedience.

I urge the city to hold a public forum or town hall – inviting residents, healthcare professionals, and public health experts – to openly discuss the facts, concerns, and values surrounding water fluoridation. If the council truly seeks to represent the will and well-being of the community, then transparency and inclusive dialogue must come first.

Dr. Ivan H. Wolthuis, DMD
MAGD
Sweet Home

Fluoride decision
process flawed
Editor:

Placing fluoride into a community water system is a very controversial subject.

This is a topic that should be thoroughly discussed by the impacted citizens, regardless of one's beliefs about the topic. The recent decision by the City Council to repeal the fluoride ordinance put in place over 60 years ago by the citizens of Sweet Home is deeply concerning.

This change affects the health of all 10,000 city residents in our community.

The first public notice of the repeal appeared on the City Council Agenda of June 24, 2025. Following this Council Meeting, the New Era included an article about this subject in their July 2 edition of their newspaper. To my knowledge, no meaningful effort was made to solicit public input or encourage open dialogue.

For a policy with such far-reaching health implications, I believe the pros and cons should have been discussed and the research shared with our community.

While a public comment period technically existed, very few members of the public even knew removal of the fluoride from Sweet Home's water system was a topic being considered.

Normally, a change of a city ordinance has a minimum of two public hearings, one when the change is placed on an agenda and the second at the council's following meeting. This did not happen. Both the first and second readings were conducted at the June 24, 2025 meeting.

The second reading was by Title only. No public comments were heard. The third reading and the vote on this topic was conducted at the next council meeting on July 8, 2025. The public was given a chance to speak at this meeting. Those wishing to speak were given three minutes to talk. No discussion was permitted.

One person spoke in favor of removing the fluoride and three spoke in favor of keeping the fluoride.

This fluoride issue was voted in by the citizens of Sweet Home in 1964 and discussed again in public forums in 2014. No legitimate forum for debate this time.

This is especially concerning given the flood of misinformation and fear-based claims circulating about fluoride. In my opinion, a thoughtful, city forum for discussion should have preceded any vote.

A few council members spoke of representing their constituents, yet failed to seek input from the wider community or put the issue to a public vote. A policy originally approved by the people was quietly overturned by five council members voting for removal and two voting against.

Again, I heard no scientific justification provided nor a single study cited to support this repeal.

Equally concerning is the fact that the City Health Committee was neither consulted nor informed. A joint meeting between the Health Committee and the councilors was scheduled to be held an hour before the June 24 th meeting but it was canceled.

The Health Committee had its regular meeting the next day, June 25. Not a single mention of the fluoride removal was made by city staff

or any councilor. To my knowledge, not a single local, county, nor state health expert was brought into the conversation. Regardless of where you stand on this issue, shouldn't there have been an opportunity for open, unbiased discussion taken place before a final decision was made?

I did appreciate that Councilor Sanchez suggested at the July 8 meeting that staff investigate the possibility of the city providing some form of fluoride supplement alternatives, particularly for children, the elderly, and those without regular dental care. However, no direction was given to the staff to look into this idea.

I am not advocating for fluorinating the city's water system. I am advocating for the public to have an open, non-biased discussion that shows both sides of this issue and then letting the public vote on this issue. I suggest that our Sweet Home citizens speak with their own dentist or healthcare provider about this topic.

Get the real facts about fluorinated water and make up your own mind. If you want a voice in this issue, please notify our city councilors.

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Larry Horton
Concerned Citizen
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New CEO Cahill explains ‘significant challenge’ facing Samaritan Health

By Scott Swanson
Of The New Era

Seventeen years into his career as an administrator with Samaritan Health, Marty Cahill has gotten to know the nonprofit health provider pretty well.

But this year, as he has taken over as CEO of the five-hospital chain, which serves an area stretching from Lincoln City to Lebanon and Corvallis, a lot has changed.

Cahill, who is in his “mid-50s”, came to Samaritan after, he said, getting interested in the world of health services while working in sales for Pfizer.

“You walk around, talking to clinicians about pharmaceuticals, the benefits of your medication over the benefits of your competitors’ medica-



Photo courtesy of Samaritan Health Services
Samaritan CEO Marty Cahill

tion – I realized after a number of years that that was not going to be my career,” Cahill said.

“I was interested, intrigued by hospitals. I was intrigued by the hospital administration component of it.”

Cahill had grown up in Massachusetts and found Oregon, he said, after meeting some people from Eugene while working a summer job at the beach when he was in college.

“I came out for the summer and never left,” he said. “I transferred my credits from New England to the University of Oregon and never left.”

“Mt. Hood, Mt. Bachelor, Sunriver, the Oregon coast – everything’s like within four hours of, you know, Eugene and Portland. If you look at the summers with no humidity, no bugs, it’s way different than New England.”

Having graduated from

the U of O in 2001 with a bachelor’s in sociology, Cahill worked for Pfizer for 5½ years, then moved to Samaritan as director of physician relations for a year and a half.

“I met with all of our clinicians, kind of like an ombudsman,” he said. “I talked to all the community docs, you know, any issues or concerns they had. I tried to address them, from Samaritan’s perspective, tried to make sure they had all the information.”

Meanwhile, he was working on an MBA in organizational behavior from Marylhurst University, which he completed in 2008.

While doing his graduate work, Cahill lined up an interview with then-Samaritan President and CEO Larry Mullins, who was midway through his 25-year career with the organization.

“I just talked to him about hospital operations, hospital administration, and we talked for seven or eight months, and he hired me and the rest is history.”

In 2008 Cahill was named CEO of Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital, where he stayed until 2015, when he took over as CEO of Samaritan Lebanon Community

Hospital.

He was at SLCH until November of 2023, when he became senior vice president and chief operating officer of Samaritan under Doug Boysen, who had succeeded Mullins.

The day after Christmas 2024, Boysen announced he was planning to step down from the role in 2025 and Cahill was named to replace him, which took place May 19.

Community Concerns

He took the helm literally as turbulence began rippling through Samaritan’s ranks and surrounding communities, including east Linn County, sparked by talk of impending closures of some services in some Samaritan hospitals, including Lebanon.

Cahill issued a statement a few days after the talk began circulating, confirming that Samaritan administrators had indeed identified some possible cuts to general surgery, orthopedics, women’s and children’s services and urology.

Samaritan nurses and others held a rally on May 27 outside Samaritan’s corporate

See Samaritan, Page 15

CHURCH DIRECTORY

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

-Matthew 18:20



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Santiam Wrestling Camp celebrates 25th year in Sweet Home

By Keeghan Gittins
For The New Era

When some 250 boys converged on Sweet Home High School last week for the Santiam Wrestling Camp, it marked the 25th year for the event.

Wrestlers from around the state attended the three-day camp, which started in 2000 as the training camp for the Junior Nationals tournament in Fargo, N.D. That year it drew about 100 athletes. Now it is the biggest in Oregon.

"Fargo," whose real moniker is the USA Wrestling Junior and 16U National Championships, held July 10-19 this year at the Fargodome in Fargo, N.D., is one of the largest youth wrestling tournaments in the country, drawing more than 8,000 competitors in 2024.

One Sweet Home wrestler aiming to place is Jesse Landtroop, who won his second straight state title as a sophomore this year.

"I think it's very good to go to camp because I'm training when other people aren't," Landtroop said. "I like that it is hosted in Sweet Home."

The camp is co-directed by Steve Thorpe and Tomas Rosa of Sweet Home, and Mike Si-



Photos by Keeghan Gittins

Coaches David Rubio, right, and Andres Nicacio, both of Corban University, demonstrate a move for campers at the Santiam Wrestling Camp. At right, Cody Sieminski of Sweet Home prepares to take an opponent to the mat during a drill.

mons, coach of Thurston High School, a perennial state contender at the 5A level.

This year's camp featured multiple former camp participants who have gone on to wrestle in college or win national titles, including Roseburg alum Nash Singleton, a PAC-12 champion from Oregon State; former McKay wrestler David Rubio who won a national title for Corban University; Roseburg alum Hunter Sparks, a national champion at Eastern Oregon University; and former Sweet Home wrestler

Kobe Olson, who also wrestled for EOU last year.

Also leading camp sessions were Linfield Head Coach Frank Johnson, Corban Head Coach Kurtis Clem, and high school coaches Dan Herb (Banks), Ken Thompson (Irrigon), Shane Sheppard (Sweet Home) and Luke Larwin (Bend).

"This camp has something to offer to every kid that attends it," Herb said. "It has kids who are first-year wrestlers training with kids who are multiple state champs."

Larwin said he likes the

price: There's not another camp around where you can go for four days, get this kind of training, and get fed at such a low price," he said.

Local coaches emphasized that the camp is a group effort.

"The high school opens its facilities, and the administration, maintenance staff, cafeteria workers, and transportation department all play key roles in making the event run smoothly," Thorpe said.

Said Rosa: "I don't think there are many schools that would allow a camp like this

to happen on their campus. "Once again, our school and community opened up their arms to not just benefit the Sweet Home wrestling program but create opportunities for kids all over Oregon."

The camp puts heavy focus on drills, techniques, and strategies that athletes can take back to their home programs.

"There are not a bunch of egos that get in the way of building Oregon wrestling," Simons said. "It's truly one of the purest things in our sport."



Photo by Cindi Hamar

As her fellow court members applaud, Natalie Conn is crowned Sportsman's Holiday Queen by last year's Queen Peyton Markell.

CORONATION

From page 1

"4-H makes the leaders of tomorrow," Wright said.

Wagner's was Camp Attitude, founded in 1998, which provides special-needs children and their families with weeklong camp experiences.

"I have seen the lasting impact that camp makes for the families with Jesus Christ," Wagner said.

Pratt's was the Kids Food Pack program, which was founded 15 years ago and served 120 children this year.

"I remember what it was like to get a food pack; I was

one of those kids," she said.

Morris' was Heartland Humane Society, which has fostered homeless pets since 1966 with 95% success rates.

"Heartland made a home for pets and people who love them," she said.

Duncan's was Sweet Home Emergency Ministries, founded in 1980, which provides food packs, Manna Meals dinners, Back to School backpacks, Christmas boxes and compassionate services to Sweet Home residents.

"They are caring and have even served 967 pets with food," Duncan noted.

Conn's was Meals on

Wheels, whose 40 volunteers serve 400 local people.

"It is the gratitude of the people that make it worth it," she said. "They are not only delivering food, but a sense of care."

Chafin's was Special Olympics Unified teams, "Where everyone gets the opportunity to be on and part of a team."

Princesses earned the following contributions for each of their chosen charities: Heartland Humane - \$603; 4-H - \$622; Special Olympics Unified Teams - \$858; SHERM - \$925; Kids Food Packs - \$956; and Meals on Wheels - \$2,404.

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Logger Olympics and Cut the Gut



Photo by Keeghan Gittins

Wiley Farris works on setting a choker during the Logger Olympics Saturday. See more photos of the action at sweethomenews.com.



Photo by Keeghan Gittins

Kaden Dodd of Melcher Logging competes in the relay during the Logger Olympics.



Photos by Mack Knebel

It's all about classics Friday night during the Cut the Gut cruise, above. At right, Travis Luttmmer stamps a cruiser's passport at a checkpoint at The Point Friday during the event. See more Cut the Gut photos at sweethomenews.com.

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Sportsman's Holiday Parade



Sportsman's Holiday Court members, left, wave from their float on Main Street during the Sportsman's Holiday Parade Saturday morning. Above, a young spectator is engrossed in the action on Long Street. Below left, Sweet Home Senior Center members Jean Holcomb and Shirley Schumacher carry their banner while, below, the Sweet Home Rodeo's float is well-represented with equine presence on Long Street. See many more photos at sweethomenews.com.

Photos by Miriam Swanson and Carissa Larson



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Thank you, Dave—never stop bringing a smile to everyone's face every day!

Chips 'n' Splinters strikes chords with local audience members

By Satina Tolman
For The New Era

The annual Chips 'n' Splinters variety show lit up the Sweet Home High School auditorium Wednesday night with music, laughter and heartfelt community spirit.

The performance, directed by SHOCASE board member Shirley Austin, is organized by the nonprofit SHOCASE and features a rotating cast of local talent.

Last year's show paired David Dominy with Ward Christman, but with Christman unavailable this year, Dominy was joined by longtime friend Kyle Fischer, a Jefferson resident and worship leader at Eastside Christian Church in Albany.

Their natural chemistry brought charm and energy to the stage.

Fischer, who grew up around theater and began acting at age 7, said it was "a lot of fun to get back in the spotlight."

Dominy said this year's show was "a blast."

"We had so much fun!"

Performing alongside Fischer made the experience especially meaningful, he added, because of their personal connection and shared history.

The evening opened with playful banter about Christman's absence, joking that he may have been abducted by Bigfoot — until Bigfoot himself wandered onstage, chasing the two men off and drawing gasps and giggles from children in the crowd.

Throughout the show, Dominy showcased his vocal and piano talents with stirring renditions of "Pure Imagination," "What a Wonderful World," and "You Raise Me Up."

Fischer brought out his guitar for a crowd-pleasing per-



Photos by Satina Tolman

Sportsman's Holiday Junior Court members, with Rooty, the A&W Bear, perform a song about hunting a bear.

formance of "Country Roads," and the pair teamed up for a moving medley of "All Creatures of Our God and King" and "Gratitude."

The production featured a blend of comedy, music, and community highlights. The 14 members of the Sportsman's Holiday Junior Court were introduced, and then they delighted the audience with "Going on a Bear Hunt," capped off by an appearance from "Rooty," the A&W Bear.

The Sportsman's Holiday Princesses also took the stage to introduce themselves and share the names of the seven charities they're supporting this year. (See more details on pages 1 and 7.)

This year's theme, "Camp Santiam," inspired a Saturday Night Live-style skit featuring a campfire scene.

Jen Casteneda, Melody Jordan, Blake Keesecker, Joel Keesecker, Milt Moran and Lagea Mull played campers, while Matthew Stalheim, who stepped into his role just minutes before curtain, portrayed a quirky camp counselor.

Young camper Karly Ketsdever added charm as she periodically wandered the stage

with binoculars, seemingly searching for Bigfoot.

Jaeric Cvitanich, a Sweet Home native discovered by Austin during the "Tap and Talent Search" at Tallman Brewing in Lebanon, brought down the house with his performance of "On the Other Line" and his original song, "Home Sweet Home."

The heartfelt lyrics of Cvitanich's debut resonated deeply with local audience members:

"There's a welcome sign going 55 on the west side of town,

There's a road service station with a hand-painted mural that's starting to fade out...

We have bull elk screaming at the top of the Cascades,

We have kokanee and steelhead swimming in our rivers and lakes...

It doesn't sound like much, but that's what my home Sweet Home is all about..."

Cvitanich, who began writing music during the COVID-19 pandemic, performed his original songs onstage for the first time.

Melody Jordan, who has performed at the Rainbow Room in Hollywood, lit up the auditorium with an energetic ren-



David Dominy, left, and Kyle Fischer perform during Chips 'n' Splinters. See more photos at [sweethomenews.com](https://www.sweethomenews.com).

dition of "Soak Up the Sun." Sporting sparkly thigh-high boots and aviator sunglasses, she delivered full Sheryl Crow vibes.

Amanda Wilde and Tori Clark brought retro flair with sky-high foam wigs and poodle skirts in a lively version of "Be My Baby," drawing nostalgic cheers from the crowd.

Stalheim, a Sweet Home native who recently returned after serving in the U.S. Army, delivered a hauntingly accurate rendition of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire," followed by a humorous take on "Foolish Questions."

"If you closed your eyes, you would've sworn Johnny Cash himself was on stage," one audience member whispered.

Speaking about discovering his voice, Stalheim said: "My grandpa was from Arkansas, and we were both raging Johnny Cash fans. I grew up singing along to his music so much that I guess somewhere along the line we just synced up. I've been singing since I was a wee lad, but I've never done any show before. This was my first performance ever."

Wilde returned to the stage

in a more contemporary outfit to beautifully perform "Have You Ever Seen the Rain," paying homage to the wet weather that gives the Northwest its lush beauty.

Clark closed out the camp theme with a comedic rendition of "Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh," drawing big laughs.

In a town with deep Christian roots, the "All Creatures/Gratitude" medley performed by Dominy and Fischer struck a particularly heartfelt chord.

The show's grand finale brought the entire cast together in front of a giant waving American flag projected across the backdrop as the audience rose to their feet in patriotic reverence for "God Bless the USA."

Before the final song, Dominy honored his father, a Marine Corps veteran with a personal tribute.

"My dad is the ultimate patriot," he said. "He bleeds red, white and blue."

Director Austin was beaming after the show: "I think it went very well, and I am very pleased!" she said. Of the local talent featured, she added, "They are all awesome!"

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PUBLIC SAFETY

From page 3

100 block W. Bishop Way, Brownsville.

9:21 a.m. - Regina Marie Frier, 55, arrested by Corvallis police on SHMC warrant for FTA in placing offensive substance in water case. Cited to appear July 23.

10:46 a.m. - Kristin Mengore, 53, of Cascadia, cited for driving while suspended, driving uninsured and failure to register vehicle, 27000 block High Deck Rd.

10:58 a.m. - Waylan Bias, 39, of Sweet Home, cited for driving while suspended, driving uninsured, 27000 block High Deck Rd.

1:31 p.m. - Crash reported near Milepost 39 on Hwy. 20, east of Sweet Home. According to OSP, westbound Ford F250 pickup driven by Richard Frances McKay, 41, crossed into oncoming lane due to driver fatigue and collided head-on with eastbound United Parcel Service truck driven by Jamil Karim Braithwaite, 49. Braithwaite was transported by medics to Samaritan Lebanon Com-

munity Hospital. McKay was transported by his wife for suspected minor injuries and was cited for careless driving. Both vehicles were towed.

4:05 p.m. - Caller reported pickup that drives recklessly in area of 25700 block Old Holley Rd. Requested extra patrol.

4:08 p.m. - Crash reported near Milepost 19 on Hwy. 20. According to OSP, a Ford Maverick driven by Dayla Elizabeth Rowles, 50, of Lebanon, was turning left off Waterloo Dr. onto Hwy. 20 when it struck a Lincoln Navigator driven by Lindsey Marie Waltman, 43, of Sweet Home, which was eastbound in the A lane. No injuries reported. Both vehicles towed. Rowles cited for several unspecified traffic violations.

4:33 p.m. - Deputy located illegal camp on Army Corps of Engineers property, 48700 block Quartzville Rd. Armando Pimentel, 23, of Sacramento, Calif., cited for violation of fire restrictions.

4:53 p.m. - Caller reported male throwing rocks at vehicles in 3200 block Main St. Officer responded, contacted

male who was upset that a car had almost hit him in the crosswalk and was throwing rocks. Male was counseled on his actions.

5:00 p.m. - Deputy located illegal camp Army Corps of Engineers property, near Milepost 6, 46600 block Quartzville Rd. Camp unoccupied at time.

6:41 p.m. - Officer came upon crash in 4100 block Main St. According to SHPD, Andrii Storozhuk 1955 Chevy two-door driven by Melody Hutchinson

8:53 p.m. - Deputies contacted individuals camping on Army Corps of Engineers property, 46000 block Quartzville Rd. They were informed their camp was illegal. They agreed to leave.

9:03 p.m. - Deputies contacted individuals camping on Army Corps of Engineers property, 46700 block Quartzville Rd. They were informed their camp was illegal; they left.

9:10 p.m. - Jordan Nixon, 25, of Sweet Home, cited for no valid operator's license, careless driving and failure to carry proof of insurance, 700

block Long St.

10:00 p.m., - Deputies contacted individuals camping on Army Corps of Engineers property, 49900 block Quartzville Rd. They were informed their camp was illegal and told to move. They did.

11:25 p.m. - Deputies contacted individuals camping on Army Corps of Engineers property, 48900 block Quartzville Rd. They were informed their camp was illegal and told to move. They did.

July 10

1:17 a.m. - Jessica Lea Nofziger, 40, arrested on AMC warrant for FTA, 1300 block 44th Ave. Cited and released.

1:53 a.m. - Deputies assisted SHPD in search for missing person in Greenville Rd./Rowell Hill area. Male found alive, transported to hospital. Report taken.

10:14 a.m. - Caller reported that RV parked on curb outside Sweet Home Ranger District headquarters, 1200 block 44th Ave., prevented dump truck from backing into driveway. Officer responded, contacted owner of RV, who agreed to move it.

12:01 p.m. - Deputy found missing man out of Marion County alive and well, 45800 block Old Hufford Dr. Report taken.

12:15 p.m. - Katrina Lynn Gray arrested by Albany police on SHMC warrant for FTC in theft case. Cited to appear July 23.

12:35 p.m. - Loa Ann Louise Branton arrested on SHMC warrant for FTA in theft case, LMC warrant for FTA in driving while suspended case, and LCJC warrant in theft case. 600 block 7th Ave. Cited and released.

1:55 p.m. - Shannan Richardson, 35, of Sweet Home, cited for driving while suspended, driving uninsured, 1500 block Main St.

7:23 p.m. - Steven Lee Ballweber, 36, arrested on SHMC warrant for FTC in hit and run case, LMC warrant for FTA in criminal citation case and AMC warrant for FTC in contempt of court case. Also arrested on Albany warrants. Released to Albany police. 1900 block Long St.

See additional public safety reports at sweethomenews.com.

City of Halsey seeks funding for Phase 2 of well project

Halsey City Administrator Briana Parra provided an update on Phase 2 of the well project during the City Council's July 8 meeting.

Parra reported the city had applied for \$350,000 through the EPA Thriving Communities Grant, but the funding was cut during administration changes at the federal level. While it's possible the grant may be reinstated, timelines for that are uncertain.

The city also submitted for state directed funding, but were not selected for further consideration. Parra said she's not surprised by that decision because Halsey had already received legislative funding for the project, and she suspects they would want to spread the money to other communities in need.

Still, they are in the running for federal directed funding in the amount of \$708,000, which would also allow for upgrades at the wa-

ter treatment plant. Halsey's project is one of 15 projects that Congresswoman Janelle Bynum is advocating for, Parra said.

There are other grants she is looking into, one of which could provide up to \$2.5 million if Halsey's projects are eligible.

The city is still waiting to finish the water rights permit amendment for the new access point, a transfer of water rights. Parra said they need to do additional water testing to show the well is functional, but will need to install a pump first. Testing should be ready to go in late August to mid-September.

Also, while the city is aware of some water line leaks in the system, staff recently began getting calls about water pressure seeming to oscillate at certain parts of town, Parra said. Staff were able to identify electrical issues taking place at the water treatment plant, but after that

was fixed they identified a malfunctioning jockey pump. It was easily replaced.

Sheriff's Office Report

During Linn County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Steve Frambes' report to the council, he said they are 10 hours short for June, so they plan to make up for it in July and provide extra patrol staff. There were seven fatal incidents last month, which hindered LCSO from being able to fulfill their obligations to some municipalities.

On June 17, LCSO responded to a single-car crash at a railroad crossing. Frambes said witnesses reported seeing a railroad crossing arm go down, then up before quickly going down again onto a log truck. The arm broke.

In other business:

• Parra reported City Hall will be closed on Friday, Aug. 22, so staff can prepare for the annual Summer BBQ and Movie Night. The council agreed to do a Sharing Hands

food drive during the barbecue event.

• The council reviewed three logo options for the city and agreed to bring them before the community for a future vote to take place soon either via Facebook or at the Summer BBQ.

• Parra updated the council on city ordinance violations of tall vegetation and storage of junk or vehicles. She said the city is preparing to cite a couple of "habitual violators" and potentially move forward with abatement, which will cost the city money.

• The council renewed a three-year intergovernmental agreement with the Sheriff of Linn County, providing the city 864 hours of law enforcement a year in the amount of \$80,023 for year one, \$84,024 for year two, and \$88,223 for year three.

• The council renewed a two-year intergovernmental agreement with the Rural Economic Alliance, a multi-

city, collaborative effort for economic development.

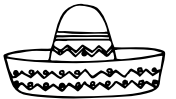
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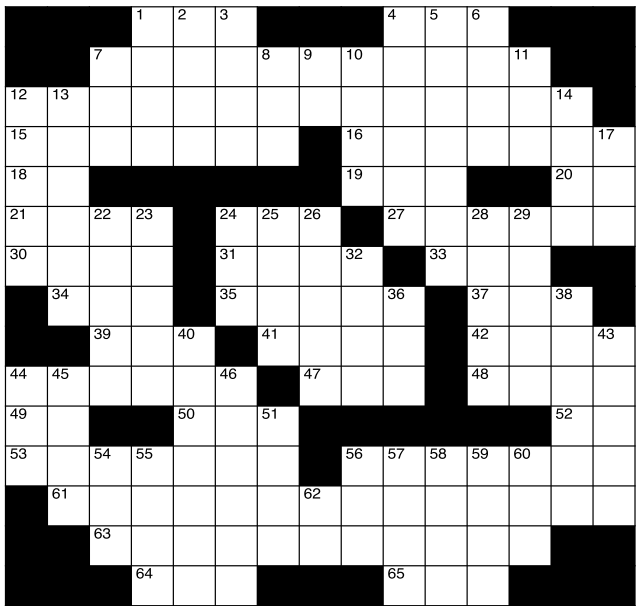
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Measurement (abbr.)

4. Returned material authorization (abbr.)

7. Sorting

12. Attribute

15. Poked holes in

16. Angers

18. Doc

19. MLB journeyman pitcher Dillon

20. Not don't

21. Snubs someone

24. Where kids bathe

27. One might be in distress

30. Chair

31. Music industry honors (abbr.)

33. Dash

34. Owed
35. Caucasian language

37. One thousand (Span.)

39. Musical style drum and bass

41. Evergreen trees native to warm climates

42. Begin __: start fresh

44. Marshy outlets

47. A chicken lays one

48. Yemen's largest city

49. Conversion rate

50. Single Lens Reflex

52. Atlanta rapper

53. Reduce the importance of

56. Faces of buildings

61. Something achieved

63. Distribute again

64. Tooth caregiver

65. 007's creator

CLUES DOWN

1. Skater Lipinski

2. Data

3. Single step

4. Destroyed financially

5. Fail to interpret correctly

6. Fava d'__: tree found in Brazil

7. Vehicle

8. Limited

9. Old English

10. Aussie golfer Norman

11. Job

12. Loose-fitting undergarments

13. Protected by balancing

14. Give up

17. Fifth note of a major scale

22. Extravagantly bright

23. Takes dictation

24. 19th letter of Greek alphabet

25. Rounded knob (biology)

26. French philosopher Pierre

28. Mothers
29. Dardic ethnic group

32. Supports the rudder

36. An ugly evil-looking old woman

38. Of a fasting time

40. Filled with passengers

43. Below the ribs and above the hips

44. Binary-coded decimal

45. 51 is a famous one

46. Goes into a funk

51. Chief O'Hara actor

54. Videocassette recorder

55. Scored perfectly

56. Type of tree

57. __ Spumante (Italian wine)

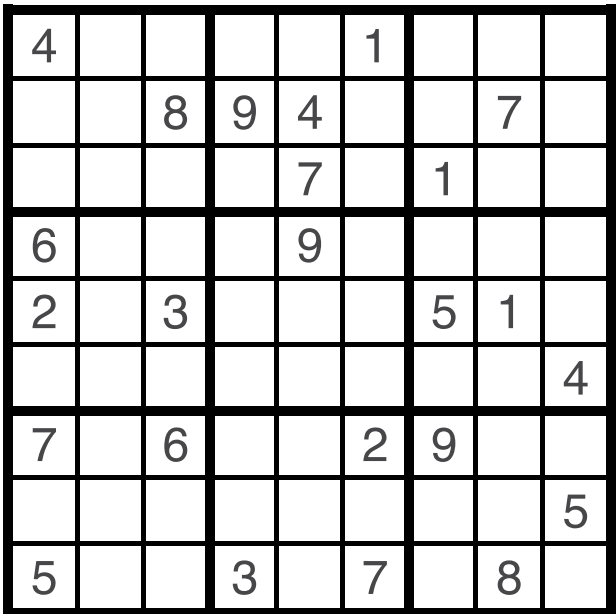
58. Popular commercial "pet"

59. Supreme god of Ancient Egyptians

60. Room in a home

62. __ and behold

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You are hereby required to appear and defend the complaint filed against you in the above entitled action within thirty (30) days from the date of the

first publication of this summons, and in case of your failure to appear and answer, plaintiff for want thereof will apply to the above entitled court for the relief prayed for in its complaint, to-wit:
1. For the principal sum of \$11,006.00, plus late fees in the amount of \$156.87, plus accrued interest in the amount of \$1735.92 through April 2, 2025, plus interest accruing on the principal balance at the contract rate of 10.74 percent per annum (\$3.238 per diem) from April 3, 2025, until the date judgment is entered;
2. For Plaintiff's reasonable attorney fees, costs and disbursements incurred herein;
3. For interest on the sum of paragraphs 1 and 2 above at the contract rate of 10.74 percent per annum, from the date judgment is entered until paid in full; and

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4. For such other relief as the court deems just and proper.
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: READ CAREFULLY!! YOU MUST "APPEAR" IN THIS CASE OR THE OTHER SIDE WILL WIN AUTOMATICALLY. TO "APPEAR" YOU MUST FILE WITH THE COURT A LEGAL PAPER CALLED A "MOTION" OR "ANSWER" THE MOTION OR ANSWER (OR "REPLY") MUST BE GIVEN TO THE COURT CLERK OR ADMINISTRATOR WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION SPECIFIED HEREIN ALONG WITH THE REQUIRED FILING FEE. IT MUST BE IN PROPER FORM AND HAVE PROOF OF SERVICE ON THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY OR, IF THE PLAINTIFF DOES NOT HAVE AN ATTORNEY, PROOF OF SERVICE UPON THE PLAINTIFF. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, YOU SHOULD SEE AN ATTORNEY IMMEDIATELY. IF YOU NEED HELP IN FINDING AN ATTORNEY, YOU MAY CONTACT THE OREGON STATE BAR'S LAWYER REFERRAL SERVICE ONLINE AT WWW.OREGONSTATEBAR.ORG OR BY CALLING AT (503) 684-3763 (IN THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN AREA) OR TOLL-FREE ELSEWHERE IN OREGON AT (800) 452-7636.
This summons is published by order of Circuit Court Thomas A. McHill of the above-entitled Court made on the 2nd day of June 2025, directing publication of this summons once each week for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in Linn County, Oregon.
Date of first publication: July 9, 2025
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FLUORIDE

From page 1

have opposed the motion to remove fluoride.

He said during this meeting that the community had only 48 hours (47 hours, 58 minutes, to be exact) to prepare for this topic, and questioned why it was being "cramped through so quickly."

"This was voted in by the people. The least we can do if it's gonna be taken out is put it before the people for a vote," he said. "For seven councilors to be able to take such a huge issue as this and sweep it through without community input, I think, is a major disgrace to our community."

Members of the public also addressed council on the matter.

Larry Horton, who sits on the Health Committee, indicated he believes the city should have approached the committee and the local medical community for their input. He added that if the addition of fluoride was voted on and approved by voters, then it should also be put to the voters to remove it.

Local dentist Ivan Wolthus expressed his support for the fluoridation of the water and added that the matter came up "very quickly and suddenly" with apparently little communication.

"I wonder how much communication and transparency we had with the entire community on this issue," Wolthus said. "This is a subject that really requires some discussion...I think this deserves more discussion and a review of the science and the literature."

One other spoke in opposition to removing fluoride without input from the pub-

lic, and one person supported the council's decision to remove fluoride.

Mayor Susan Coleman apologized for not reaching out to the Health Committee.

Bronson said he would like to see the question placed on the next election's ballot.

Councilor Josh Thorstad said the council was elected by 10,000 people to make these decisions and it's up to the council to "do what's best for Sweet Home."

Councilor Angelita Sanchez addressed Horton's concerns by saying there are conflicting beliefs by dentists on both sides about fluoride, and an idea presented to her by a citizen is for the city to provide fluoride to anyone who wants it.

"You can also get a prescription, you can also brush your teeth," she said. "There are a lot of different ways to get fluoridation outside of city water."

The council adopted the ordinance 5-2; councilors Bronson and Aaron Hegge opposed.

Abatement Leads to Lien

The council approved a motion to place a \$47,779.21 lien on the property at 780 9th Ave. after the city hired a company to clear the property of multiple vehicles.

Deputy City Manager Cecily Pretty's report stated code compliance "issues" regarding vehicles and open storage on the property spanned a number of years - at least as far back as 2009. Since 2023, Code Enforcement had been "actively working" with the property owner, Kenneth Oberg, to resolve code violations, but little improvement was noted.

City Manager Jason Ogden told the council there has been "a longstanding pat-

tern of code violations. The site has a well-documented history of issues, including open storage, public health nuisances and inoperable vehicles."

He said the city made multiple good-faith efforts to work with the property owner.

Oberg was notified in February and again in March this year of pending abatement. It was reported that Oberg told the city he would work on the problem, but the code enforcement officer found "few improvements" weeks later. Abatement work was conducted in April. Final invoices were sent in May.

Taxpayer dollars pay for nuisance abatement work, forcing the city to place a lien on abated properties if the property owner does not pay back the costs.

John Origer, who was hired to do the abatement, said he hauled off more than 40 cars that were "packed in" the lot, and that his crew tried to help Oberg save as much stuff as he could by loading items in his truck to move elsewhere because his shop and garage were "packed to the rafters."

Origer said Oberg was able to reclaim some of his cars that were towed by a different tow company.

"We did what we could to help him out as much as possible," Origer said.

Oberg, 65, addressed the council, telling them he had surgery in October 2024 and was issued a notice by Code Enforcement that he had until October 2025 to clean up the property. He further said he had cleared up a lot of stuff but, come April, Code Enforcement informed Oberg they would have to remove items from the back-

yard as well because it could be seen from the road.

"This crew came in and took every little piece of the stuff I had," he said. "All my yard tools, my lawnmower, my picnic tables, two brand new barbecuers."

He added that he feels like the situation was unjustified.

"I got all kinds of evidence showing that I did the best that I could possibly do," Oberg said. "I think this thing should be reevaluated...I felt the city did something wrong to me. If we can't get it re-evaluated, then I might have to seek legal, higher authorities."

Resident Joseph Sands, who lives adjacent to Oberg, also addressed the council on the matter, stating the problem has been an issue for at least a decade while he's lived next to Oberg. He disagreed that Oberg made "good faith efforts" to clean the property, and said that years of rain ruins and devalues the cars sitting on the property.

"That property's been a source of vermin, dogs running loose, dogs being on other peoples' lawn leaving large amounts of feces, and just being a general nuisance to the neighborhood," Sands said. "When you live by people that treat their property that way, it's not only degrading their own property, but it's also the property the people that live next to them and their overall quality of life."

Former neighbor Aleaha Myers told the council about issues she observed while living next to Oberg's property, including noise, disturbances and "an ongoing buildup of vehicles and debris."

"We also dealt with persistent sanitation concerns from animal waste in the alleyway and on our private

property, as well as an alarming rat population," she said. "Our concerns extended to what we believed to be potential environmental hazards due to the visible storage of fuels, chemicals and oils on site."

As a realtor broker herself, Oberg's property has "significantly impacted" the value of nearby homes, she said.

The council voted 5-1 to place a lien on the property. Sanchez opposed and Hegge excused himself from voting for conflict of interest.

In other business, the council:

- Heard from Jerry Whaley, who complained about a "house cat issue" in the city, with yards "overrun by scat." He asked the council to look into doing something about an apparent cat overpopulation.

- Adopted a revised investment policy, moving the Weighted Average Maturity from two years to 2.5 years.

- Held a public hearing for and approved a special procurement process allowing staff to negotiate a contract with Timber Framers Guild to design and construct a bandstand at Sankey Park.

- Approved an updated fee schedule regarding meeting spaces in City Hall, event support and food trucks.

- Heard from Ogden about a trip he took to Washington, D.C., on July 1 to present at the National Conference for Ending Homelessness. He and FAC's executive director shared about the city's shelter and the community court program.

- Directed staff to look into the possibility of providing fluoride to low income families in the city.



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REAL ESTATE SOLD

Following are Lebanon, Sweet Home, and Brownsville area real estate transactions recorded with the county during late June and July 2025. These are not properties for sale, and some transactions may represent a change in ownership within a family or corporation. Properties are listed by address, property/residence size and purchase price. More sales are posted at sweethomenews.com.

35586 Northern Dr., Brownsville; 1405 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, 1 ½ bath built in 1972; 0.78 acres; \$371,000.

26767 Rowell Hill Rd., Sweet Home; 996 sq.ft., Single wide manufactured home, three bedroom, 1 ½ bath built in 1977; 3.34 acres; \$265,000.

1462 Strawberry Ridge., Sweet Home; 2190 sq.ft., Two story, three bedroom, 2 ½ bath built in 1995; 0.45 acres; \$335,000.

26945 Gap Rd., Brownsville; 660 sq.ft., One story with attic, two bedroom, one-bath built in 1946; 3.56 acres; \$420,000.

2845 Fir Ct., Sweet Home; 1232 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 1997; 0.18 acres; \$365,000.

4608 Airport Ln., Sweet Home; additional details not listed; 0.18 acres; \$50,000.

1037 13th Ave., Sweet Home; 884 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath built in 1930; 0.12 acres; \$290,000.

1622 9th Ave., Sweet Home; 1088 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath built in 1930; 0.32 acres; \$339,000.

815 Main St., Brownsville; 1056 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath built in 1970; 0.23 acres; \$350,000.

973 23rd Ave., Sweet Home; 980 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath built in 1949; 0.34 acres; \$220,401.

2191 Ames Creek Rd., Sweet Home; additional details not listed; 0.5 acres; \$130,000.

846 5th Ave., Sweet Home; 940 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, one-bath built in 1948; 0.22 acres; \$355,000.

28791 Liberty Rd., Sweet Home; 1696 sq.ft., One story, four bedroom, 1 ½ bath built in 1963; 1.08 acres; \$600,000.

40712 Lacombe Dr., Lebanon; 2440 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath built in 1979; 9.42 acres; \$749,900.

408 Depot Ave., Brownsville; 1881 sq.ft., Two story, four bedroom, 2 ½ bath built in 2021; 0.17 acres; \$445,000.

1261 44th Ave., Sweet Home; additional details not listed; 0.18 acres; \$373,000.

1041 Kees St., Lebanon; 1112 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 2006; 0.14 acres; \$330,000.

705 Tangent St., Lebanon; 1056 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, one-bath built in 1910; 0.18 acres; \$159,000.

2590 6th St., Lebanon; 1660 sq.ft., One story, four bedroom, one-bath built in 1960; 0.14 acres; \$350,000.

2401 Ames Creek Rd., Sweet Home; 1389 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 1949; 0.6 acres; \$390,000.

4450 Knotty Pine Ct., Sweet Home; additional details not listed; 0.18 acres; \$417,300.

825 Rose St., Lebanon; 1176 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, 1 ½ bath built in 1970; 0.26 acres; \$379,900.

2301 Main St., Sweet Home; additional details not listed; 0.77 acres; \$500,000.

41625 Marks Ridge Dr., Sweet Home; 2106 sq.ft., One story with basement, three bedroom, 2 ½ bath built in 1980; 5 acres; \$650,375.

1001 Walker Rd., Lebanon; 1409 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 2019; 0.12 acres; \$399,000.

704 Oak St., Brownsville; 1504 sq.ft., One story with attic, four bedroom, one-bath built in 1900; 0.19 acres; \$300,000.

28835 Hiltz Rd., Sweet Home; 2054 sq.ft., Two story, three bedroom, 2 ½ bath built in 1999; 6.2 acres; \$880,000.

920 Dogwood St., Sweet Home; 1041 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, one-bath built in 1974; 0.21 acres; \$310,000.

402 Main St., Brownsville; additional details not listed; 0.11 acres; \$725,000.

783 Pebble St., Brownsville; additional details not listed; 0.11 acres; \$335,900.

789 Pebble St., Brownsville; additional details not listed; 0.11 acres; \$337,900.

5253 Osage St., Sweet Home; 2182 sq.ft., One story with attic, four bedroom, two-bath built in 1940; 0.33 acres; \$300,000.

1355 Tamarack St., Sweet Home; 2024 sq.ft., Two story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 2024; 0.32 acres; \$411,000.

2241 Elm St., Sweet Home; 720 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, one-bath built in 1948; 0.31 acres; \$229,000.

1026 Charlie Ave., Lebanon; 1638 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 2006; 0.18 acres; \$439,900.

555 16th St., Lebanon; 1283 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 1976; 0.23 acres; \$425,000.

1345 Tamarack St., Sweet Home; 2024 sq.ft., Two story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 2024; 0.24 acres; \$403,000.

336 Spaulding Ave., Brownsville; 1764 sq.ft., One story with basement, two bedroom, one-bath built in 1928; 0.45 acres; \$275,000.

128 Spaulding Ave., Brownsville; additional details not listed; 0.03 acres; \$130,000.

973 23rd Ave., Sweet Home; 980 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath built in 1949; 0.34 acres; \$205,134.

28411 Liberty Rd., Sweet Home; 1944 sq.ft., One story with attic, three bedroom, 1 ½ bath built in 1950; 1.98 acres; \$475,000.

3300 Burdell Blvd., Lebanon; additional details not listed; 1.58 acres; \$1,650,000.

920 D St., Lebanon; 1248 sq.ft., Two story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 1999; 0.2 acres; \$382,745.

1039 B Ln., Lebanon; 1100 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, two-bath built in 2002; 0.14 acres; \$362,000.

72 Cedar St., Lebanon; 852 sq.ft., One story, two bedroom, one-bath built in 1942; 0.17 acres; \$286,600.


720 Sherman St., Lebanon; 1378 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath built in 1947; 0.18 acres; \$339,900.

31101 Berlin Rd., Lebanon; 1512 sq.ft., Double wide manufactured home, three bedroom, two-bath built in 2000; 12.33 acres; \$575,000.

1028 4th Ave., Sweet Home; 1018 sq.ft., One story, three bedroom, one-bath built in 1952; 0.11 acres; \$320,000.

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SAMARITAN

From page 6

headquarters in Corvallis, and a change.org petition entitled "Keep Lebanon's Birth Center Open," launched May 13, listed nearly 3,000 signatures by July 1.

'Significant Challenge'

Cahill said Oregon's hospitals are facing "a significant challenge right now" due to increased costs resulting from tariffs and other factors, and accompanying difficulties in collecting reimbursements from the government and insurance companies.

Plus, there is a growing shortage of physicians and nurses, especially those interested in working in rural settings.

"Probably two-thirds of the hospitals in the state are either performing in the red – not making money – or barely breaking even," Cahill estimated.

According to Oregon Health Authority data, Oregon's 60 acute care hospitals, as a whole, saw an improvement in profitable operating margin (profit made after accounting for direct costs of earning that revenue) over the one-year period ending in the third quarter of last year, increasing from -\$9.7 million to \$11.2 million. Samaritan's recent numbers, as posted by OHA, are mixed.

In addition to Lebanon and Lincoln City, Samaritan operates Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis, Samaritan Albany General Hospital and Samaritan Pacific Community Hospital in Newport, all of them acute care hospitals. Its network also includes more than 100 clinics.

Of Samaritan's five hospitals, according to Oregon Health Authority data, Lebanon is the most profitable of the five hospitals, earning a profitable operating margin of \$24,414,294 in 2024, continuing a trend of profitability that extends back to 2014.

North Lincoln and Newport were also in the black last year, to a lesser extent, but Albany and Corvallis finished 2024 with losses that total roughly \$32.3 million, just short of the roughly \$39.6 profitability of the other three.

Cahill said expenses have risen "significantly" since the COVID pandemic "and reimbursements are not matching that."

"They're flat."

And, he added, "insurers are taking longer to reimburse us as well. So not only are we not getting reimbursed what we did five years ago, it's taking longer to collect on that as well."

"It's just hard right now. It's

challenging for Samaritan and it's challenging for the state; quite actually, nationally, it's an issue as well."

Cahill said that although some Samaritan hospitals are in the black, the five are interdependent.

"All five hospitals do a great job. They provide great care. They do great things."

He acknowledged that Lebanon is a "successful" operation with a "positive bottom line," but there's more to the situation.

The Samaritan group is interdependent, he said, recounting how the system came together over time: "It was five independent hospitals that were trying to survive."

The Backstory

Samaritan was founded in 1948 when the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon reorganized Corvallis General Hospital as a not-for-profit facility.

In 1997 the current non-profit came into being when Corvallis merged with Lebanon Community Hospital, which was founded in 1952 by a community effort led by local Mennonites and was managed for decades by Mennonite Health Services.

Albany was added in 1999, followed by North Lincoln (2001) and Newport (2002).

"They came together mainly out of the fact that being alone was not going to be a strategy, moving forward, for them," Cahill said.

He said that because the hospitals are now interdependent, even though in a particular year one might be doing well, "we've got to look at the whole, at all five hospitals, because they're independent."

"The expense of being an independent hospital was too much 25 years ago," he said. "Five hospitals that were within the region recognized that they could not survive on their own. So they came together."

Today, Samaritan emphasizes integrated care, providing patients with coordinated, comprehensive care that addresses all aspects of their health, including medical, behavioral, and social needs, through a holistic collaborative team approach that reduces fragmentation and duplication of care.

It also has the second-largest residency program in the state, with 112 young doctors working in its hospitals and clinics, along with some 650 clinicians.

"We've come together in a way that we provide great care in an integrated way," Cahill said.

Forced Economy

He said that things are

changing, with the financial difficulties Samaritan is facing and the organization is being forced to look for ways to do more with less.

"What we have to look at now, I think, is the fact that reimbursements are flat, hospitals are really struggling to be sustainable."

Samaritan serves the approximately 290,000 residents in Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties.

"How can we take care of 290,000 people with the infrastructure we have in a meaningful, sustainable way?" Cahill asked.

Retiring Practitioners

Then Samaritan is seeing another problem that's complicating all of this, Cahill added: retirements.

"There are more clinicians retiring today than are being created in the residency program," he said. "We're seeing a decline in clinicians. There's not enough nurses being generated in the nursing programs to replace the nurses that are retiring."

It's a complicated problem, he said, noting that one cause is that residency programs are generally capped at the number of residents they accepted 25 or 30 years ago. Now, as Baby Boomers retire, "we're not creating more doctors and the same is true in the nursing program."

"We're having more people retire than we can get educated and through the process."

That, he said, is a "bottleneck" that won't be solved even if hospitals can improve their reimbursement rates.

"There are no easy solutions," Cahill said.

With the lack of available practitioners, particularly those who want to practice in a rural setting, Samaritan branches are "all of a sudden

competing against ourselves" in trying to deliver the same services at all five hospitals, he said.

"We need more clinicians and we need them at all five sites."

"There are not enough anesthesiologists right now, and there's other constraints."

Consolidation Solution?

Faced with a shortage of clinicians and financial shortfalls, Cahill said, the best way to address the issue would be to consolidate certain services. The most likely prospects are women's and children's services, obstetrics, general surgery, orthopedics and urology, the latter being a "growth strategy" for Samaritan.

He noted that for the past 25 years, each of the five hospitals has done "five of everything."

"We believe consolidating services is the best way to ensure the delivery of those services in our system right now, because we think we can't hire the staff to man those services across all five hospitals in a meaningful way. It's becoming cost-prohibitive to do that because there's just not enough doctors to hire."

He said the goal would be to "consolidate services in a safe way to create higher volumes at a site in a more sustainable way, and staff maybe three units instead of five units."

For example, Cahill said, deliveries of babies may take place in Albany instead of Lebanon, though mothers would still visit their OBGYN practitioners at local clinics prior to actually giving birth. Inpatient surgery might take place somewhere other than Lebanon.

"They'd go see their doctor every day that can see them, Monday through Friday, in

the clinic, Cahill said. "If they had outpatient surgery that they needed, they would still get that outpatient surgery in Lebanon."

Public Weigh-In

Cahill said a coterie of "clinicians and some administrators and folks" have weighed the issues and are producing a proposal that will be introduced to the public in the near future.

"We've got to talk to internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, people that have interest in this, and get feedback from everybody," he said, cautioning, "The proposal is not a plan. There's no decision made yet on that proposal."

He said "listening tours" will be conducted, in which local residents would be provided the "data" behind problems and "we have to do a lot of listening."

"This topic is a very emotional topic. And so the first thing that I want to do, that the team wants to do, is listen to everybody, hear the concerns, and then start to address those concerns in a meaningful way with data. We've got to validate the data and make sure we have all the right information, and then we've got to start to talk to people about that as well."

Samaritan is willing to provide speakers for local community groups and service clubs interested in discussing the situation. To connect, email sustainability@samhealth.org. Those interested in voicing their opinion on prospective closures can do so by email at actionnetwork.org/letters/save-our-birth-centers.

"We're looking for all the input that we can get," Cahill said.



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Residents wait to see if speed humps will work

By Sarah Brown
Of The New Era

After decades of trying to decrease traffic on one small stretch of road, residents on 1st Avenue are now seeing the fruit of their labor, or at least they hope to.

The City of Sweet Home installed four three-inch speed humps along 1st Avenue between Highway 20 and Highway 228 on Wednesday, July 9, in an effort to reduce speeding and traffic concerns on the residential street.

Both Tom Hearon and Jeff Parker stood outside to watch the work take place near their front yards.

"I'm ecstatic," Parker said. "I just wish they'd have done it 15 years ago when we asked."

In fact, they even offered to pay for speed humps back then, but were denied the opportunity, he said. However, the city made a move a number of years ago to allow parking on both sides of the street (instead of just one side) as a "traffic calming" strategy, but that apparently didn't work as intended.

"We actually tried to get everybody to park everything on the street to clog it up; it didn't matter," Parker said. "Just more mirrors (got) hit."

Hearon and Parker shared multiple stories about cars, trees and trash cans getting hit

by drivers who, they said, were speeding and lost control over the years.

"I'm excited to see if it works," Parker said about the humps.

According to Sweet Home Police Department's Community Service Officer Sean Morgan, who's monitored the traffic on that street for several years, the median speed on there has gone down to 20 mph just 24 hours after installment. The speed limit is posted at 25 mph. He sat in an unmarked car for 45 minutes and checked drivers with a radar gun.

"Just 12 out of 107 vehicles were over the limit by one to five miles per hour," Morgan said. "None traveled faster than 30 mph in this 45 minute period."

According to data compiled by Morgan, initial results indicate a possibility that the new speed humps are doing their job:

October 2022 - 121 cars; median speed 25 mph; max speed 37 mph; 1-5 mph over the limit = 44; 6-9 mph over = 6; 10+ mph over = 3

March 2023 - 120 cars; median 27 mph; max 46 mph; 1-5 mph over = 54; 6-9 mph over = 14; 10+ mph over = 8

September 2024 - 59 cars; median 23 mph; max 37 mph; 1-5 mph over = 14; 6-9 mph



Photo by Sarah Brown

A road crew applies a thick layer of asphalt and shapes it to form a speed hump on 1st Avenue last week.

over = 1; 10+ mph over = 1

July 2025, after humps installed - 107 cars; median 20 mph; max 30 mph; 1-5 mph over = 12; 6-9 mph over = 0; 10+ mph over = 0

Frank Gallagher, a longtime resident on 1st Avenue and advocate for fixing traffic problems in his neighborhood, said he's helped Morgan with radar trailers and tracking speed on roads during the last few years. He sat with Morgan during the most recent traffic study and was pleased with the results.

"I think it's kind of a 'wait and see' thing to see how effective they are," Gallagher

said. "From what I see of the data we've collected, they're working."

He said the residential street is used as an arterial roadway, with more than 1,000 cars passing through the 1,400-foot drive a day.

There will always be "that 15%" who don't care, he said.

"They don't respect the fact that people live here or the speed is 25 mph, or that it only takes them 45 seconds to get from one end of the street to the other," Gallagher said. "It's the convenience; they don't have to go to the light and back."

But, overall, it appears to

him that the humps are doing what they are intended to do, he said. His neighbors, however, already expressed frustration to him that, in their opinion, they're not working. By working with Morgan on speed tests, though, Gallagher has learned that cars often appear to go faster than they really are.

He added that new, more visible "no commercial trucks" signs have also reduced that type of traffic on 1st Avenue.

The two plan to gather more data in the future to monitor how well the speed humps are – or are not – working.

Last year the City Council initially approved temporary speed tables to see how effective they would be, but last May they unanimously agreed to install asphalt speed humps instead.

Speed tables and speed humps are similar designs, with a few inches of height and long widths intended to encourage speeds of 10 to 20 mph. Speed bumps are typically used in parking lots, designed with short widths that create a jarring sensation that reduces speeds to two to 10 mph.

"After many years we finally got something done, because this street has been misused," Gallagher said.

JAMBOREE

From page 1

SHEDG was founded in 1991 to help the city transition from its timber-based economy.

SHEDG founded the Oregon Jamboree, country music and camping festival in 1992 as a fundraising tool to pay for economic development projects.

The festival was the brainchild of local residents Marge Geil and Leslie Ancke, along with Scott Proctor of the Oregon Department of Forestry, who came up with the idea of a fund-raising concert after Geil and Ancke attended a Wynonna Judd performance back east, and pitched the idea to her of performing in Sweet Home.

Wynonna committed to performing at the concert for two years. She later returned, in 2012 for the Jamboree's 20th anniversary.

It kept going, although in 1995 SHEDG board members and event organizers had to pony up \$62,000 from their own pockets and land a \$50,000 loan from Linn County after that year's production lost \$112,000.

Things improved after that. The 1996 event, featuring Tim McGraw and Faith Hill, finished solidly in the black. By the early 2000s, the Jamboree reported profits of six figures, which continued until another threat arose.

The birth of the Willamette Country Music Festival in 2008 in Brownsville posed serious challenges to the Jamboree's survival.

The competing festival was held two weeks after the Jamboree on a site literally 15 miles down the road for some 10 years, with heavy sponsorship and marketing by Bi-Mart, featuring top-name artists that the nonprofit Jamboree could not afford.

It lasted until 2018, when allegations of unpaid bills began to surface and crowd behavior issues prompted the Linn County Sheriff's Office to decline to provide security.

Although the WCMF's presence was a challenge, Poirier said he believes it made the Oregon Jamboree "better."

"There were challenges, to be sure," he said. "Competing for talent was a big thing, due to the proximity."

"The simple truth, however, is that the WDMF closed its doors and we were able

to continue for many more years."

The WCMF years were closely followed by the COVID pandemic, which forced the cancellation of Oregon Jamboree plans for 2020 and resulted in a late start on planning for the 2021 festival, which was not announced until April of that year.

More recently, Poirier said, fans and artists in recent years are moving to "the larger stadium show experience," which has "impacted festivals in general."

A National Public Radio Planet Money newsletter article published last year reported that "a wave of festivals has been unplugging their microphones and telling pass holders, 'Sorry!'"

The article cited rising costs and "softening demand," which makes it hard to raise prices to cover those rising costs.

"This trend has not been limited to the country music genre," Poirier said. "It has impacted festivals in general."

"We are not the only ones facing these challenges, but it was important to our board that we made this decision in a financially responsible way

when we could still fulfill our commitments to talent, vendors, and our community, and hold one final celebration of this important community event."

Poirier acknowledged that producing the Oregon Jamboree has become more complex over the decades.

"In the earlier years, things were simpler, but we've always had a reputation for having a clean and family-friendly venue," he said.

"This largely volunteer-run event has certainly evolved into something this community should be proud of. We impacted the local economy for sure. More importantly, we found a place for every community member to pitch in and be proud to be a part of something great, according to his or her ability."

A Visitor Profile and Economic Impact Assessment produced by the Jamboree in 2022 reported that approximately 14,500 people attended the festival that year, spending an estimated \$3 million at the event and an additional \$1.5 million in the community outside the event.

"This visitor spending, combined with the resulting

supply chain purchases and spending of wages, created a total economic impact of \$6.6 million in additional business revenue, along with 59 jobs and \$2.2 million in salaries and wages," the assessment stated.

Asked about the future of SHEDG as an organization, Poirier said that will be determined once this year's festival is over.

"As with any announcement of this scale, there are still some logistical details being worked out," he said. "Currently, the board is focused on supporting our staff and volunteers in making the 34th annual Oregon Jamboree the best event ever. We have a lot of people to thank and a whole lot of reasons to celebrate."

"Once this event has concluded, those are the very questions the board will turn its attention to. We will certainly provide updates to the community as we know more about the future of SHEDG."

For more information about what this means for 2026, including information on 2026 ticket refunds, visit www.OregonJamboree.com/closureFAQs.