

# The New Era

SWEET HOME • LEBANON • AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Serving East Linn County Since 1929

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026

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## Gala highlights music of legends

By Satina Tolman  
For The New Era

SHOCASE brought back its annual gala Saturday, April 11, at the Sweet Home High School auditorium, offering an evening of elegance and high-caliber performances as local artists paid tribute to musical legends.

Before the program began, Sweet Home High School student Obie Christmas serenaded the audience with a flute performance that set the tone for the evening.

The New Era's own Scott Swanson opened the show at the grand piano with Duke Ellington's "Mood Indigo." Swanson, who began playing at age 8 under his mother's instruction, said most of his performances have been at his church. Still, he appreciated the opportunity to share his talent with the broader community.

SHOCASE board member Ward Christman performed twice during the evening, lending his smooth bass-baritone voice to tributes to Frank Sinatra's "Summer Wind" and



Dakota Harris acknowledges the crowd after performing Hank Williams Sr.'s "Hey, Good Lookin'" during the 2026 SHOCASE Gala concert Saturday night at the Sweet Home High School Auditorium. — Kristine Banker photo

Elvis Presley's "Love Me." A former Elvis impersonator, Christman first delivered Sinatra with a relaxed, rhyth-

mic sway, then later returned with signature hip shakes and a curled lip, channeling his inner Elvis.

The contrasting performances showcased both his vocal range and his ability to

See Gala, Page 6

HOMETOWN  
NEWSPAPER OF  
MARY  
GUSTAV

This Week's Top Stories



### Seasons of Life

Lebanon Community Chorus and local middle-schoolers joined forces to present a concert on the "Rhythms of Life." — Page 15



### Court Time

Find out what's happening with Lebanon's tennis teams, and see photos of Sweet Home's first home match in decades. — Page 20



Kylie Fonseca, left, stands with her mother Rebecca Fonseca, center, who was severely injured, and Kayla Fonseca, who was killed in Saturday's crash. — GoFundMe photo

## Local women killed in Hwy. 34 collision

Two people, Lebanon and Sweet Home residents, were killed in a head-on collision Saturday evening, April 11, near Milepost 14 on Highway 34, outside of Lebanon, Oregon State Police reported.

OSP troopers responded at 6:43 p.m. According to OSP, a preliminary investigation indicates that a gray Hyundai Elantra operated by Rebecca

See Hwy. 34 Crash, Page 18



Sweet Home residents participate in the annual March Against Child Abuse on Main Street Saturday morning. — Photo by Scott Swanson

## Sweet Home marchers, speakers highlight problem of child abuse

By Scott Swanson  
Of The New Era

Sweet Home residents gathered Saturday, April 11, for the community's annual March Against Child Abuse, hosted by

the Sweet Home Police Department.

The event included an approximately mile-long walk along Main and Long streets, the planting of a pinwheel garden on the

lawn outside SHPD, and remarks from Sweet Home Community Services Officer Sean Morgan and from Jennifer Cabral-Ireland, — See March, Page 20



## Obituaries

### Vicki Leach

Jan. 20, 1969 - April 10, 2026

Vicki Lynn Leach, 57, of Sweet Home, passed away peacefully on April 10, 2026 after a courageous seven-year battle with ALS.

She was born on Jan. 20, 1969, in Lebanon.

Vicki remained deeply connected to the community she called home throughout her life. She was a devoted wife, mother, and friend whose strength, kindness, and love touched everyone who knew her. Throughout her illness, she faced each day with resilience and grace, inspiring those around her with her courage.

Vicki dedicated 25 years of service to the Oregon Department of Forestry, where she worked as a dispatcher and played a vital role in supporting wildfire crews by coordinating and running food services on multiple fires over the years. Her work placed her at the heart of Oregon's wildfire response community, where she was respected and appreciated by many.

Vicki also gave back generously to her community, volunteering for 25 years with the Oregon Jamboree. She was a familiar and valued presence at the event until ALS forced her to step away, something she did with the same quiet strength that defined her life.

She is survived by her loving husband, Alvie Leach; her mother, Roberta "Bobbi"; her children, Tiffini, Phillip, Marcus and Emily; and grandchildren Grayden, Gabriella, Hayden, Isabelle, Perry, Kate, Lincoln, Michael, Noah and Oz, who were the center of her world.

She was preceded in death by her nephew, Tristan (2009), whom she raised. Her family will forever cherish her unwavering love, guidance, and the countless memories they shared together.

Vicki will be remembered for her warm heart, her dedication to her family and community, and the steady, giving spirit she carried into everything she did. Her legacy lives on in the lives she touched and the love she gave so freely. She will be deeply missed and forever loved.

A celebration of life will be at noon Saturday, April 18, at the Sweet Home VFW. The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made in her memory to ALS research. Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.



### Robert Brendle

June 13, 1935 - April 10, 2026

Robert Lee Brendle, 90, of Sweet Home, passed away April 10, 2026.

He was born June 13, 1935, to Florence Lee (Stubbs) and Thomas Harry Brendle in Vernonia.

He lived in Oregon most of his life and graduated from Sweet Home High School in 1953. He was in the Army from 1957 to 1959. Robert was a lab technician/scientist in research and development. He was a member of the Oregon Small Woodlands Association and Tree Farm System.

Robert liked art sculptures, paintings and poetry. He also enjoyed tree farming. His favorite quote was "If you're not having fun, you're not doing it right".

He is survived by his wife, Mary Louise Brendle of Sweet Home; children Robert L. Brendle, Jr and wife Katherine of Portland, Ken Leyson and wife Leisha, and Carrie Weninger of Federal Way, Wash., four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

He was preceded in death by his son, Michael James Brendle (2026); his sister Barbara; and his brothers William (Bill) and James (Jim).

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements.

### Carolyn Wilkerson

Aug. 14, 1936 - April 4, 2026

Carolyn Mae Wilkerson, 89, of Sweet Home passed away April 4, 2026.

She was born Aug. 14, 1936, to Velma (Clark) and Sanford Gunter in Redlands, Calif.

She grew up in Southern California and moved to Sweet Home in 1969. She was an elementary teacher for 26 years.

Her hobbies included art and crafts, golf, playing bridge and fishing. She loved to travel and to cook.

She is survived by her husband of 69 years, Felix Wilkerson; her daughter Mishell Swartwout of Grants Pass; and son Michael Wilkerson of Sweet Home; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her son, Matthew Wilkerson (2020); and sister Cathie Slocum (2025).

### Death Notices

**Jerry D. Hay, 70**, of Sweet Home, passed away Sept. 5, 2025.

A celebration of life will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 25, at Sweet Home Senior Center, 880 18th Ave.

Sweet Home Funeral Chap-



el is handling the arrangements. For updated information, visit [www.sweethomefuneral.com](http://www.sweethomefuneral.com).

A celebration of life will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 25, for **Raynard Edward McCormick Jr.** of Brownsville, who passed away Feb. 10 at the age of 86.

The memorial will be held at the Brownsville Recreation Center, 234 Park Ave. In lieu of flowers, remembrances can be made to the OSU College of Engineering or OSU baseball team through the Oregon State University Foundation, 4238 SW Research Way, Corvallis OR 97333.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements. For updated information, visit [www.sweethomefuneral.com](http://www.sweethomefuneral.com).

**Christopher Rowton, 55**, of Sweet Home, passed away April 12, 2026.

Viewing will be from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Friday, April 24, at Sweet Home Funeral Chapel. A graveside service will follow at 12:30 p.m. at Gilliland Cemetery. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Sweet Home Funeral Chapel is handling the arrangements. For updated information, visit [www.sweethomefuneral.com](http://www.sweethomefuneral.com).

## Circuit Court

**Tanner Jordan Acosta, 26**, placed in diversion program after pleading guilty to DUII (liquor) with a .19% BAC.

**Richard Anthony Bagg, 34**, sentenced April 10 to 25 mos. prison and two years post-prison supervision after pleading no contest to assault IV. Dismissed: assault III.

**William Medford Bass, 54**, sentenced March 27 to one year suspension of a drivers

license, 48 hours jail, 24 mos. bench probation and a \$2,000 fine after pleading guilty to DUII (liquor) with a .19% BAC.

**Johnny Ray Bishop, 54**, sentenced March 30 to lifetime revocation of a drivers license, 210 days jail, 48 mos. bench probation and \$3,255 in fines and fees after pleading guilty to DUII (liquor) with a .153% BAC and criminal driving while suspended or revoked. Dismissed: reckless driving.

**Stefanie Michelle Brock, 35**, sentenced March 30 to three days jail, 18 mos. supervised probation and a \$200 fine after pleading no contest to burglary II.

**Teresa Elaine Buchanan, 54**, sentenced March 26 to one year suspension of a drivers license, 30 days jail, 24 mos. bench probation, and \$1,255 in fines and fees after a jury found her guilty of DUII (liquor), failure to perform duties of driver - property damage, recklessly endangering another person, reckless driving and criminal mischief II.

**Judith Cid-Pena, 33**, charged March 25 with DUII (liquor).

**Devon Lee Clement, 24**, charged April 9 with burglary II, criminal mischief II and interfering. Bail set at \$15,000.

**James Raymond Robert Collins, 27**, charged April 8 with DV strangulation and DV assault IV. Bail set at \$10,000.

A charge against **Max William Dendo, 22**, of online sexual corruption of a child II was dismissed without prejudice.

**Coby James Emmitt, 31**, sentenced March 30 to 45 days jail, 24 mos. supervised probation and \$400 in fines after pleading guilty to forgery I and identity theft. Dismissed: theft I, criminal driving while suspended or revoked, unlawful possession of meth.

**Gage Austin Ferrando, 20**, was charged in October 2025 in Polk County with two counts of sexual abuse II, two counts of unlawful sexual penetration I and seven counts of sexual abuse I, all acts involving a female under 18 within a one- to three-day period. He was sentenced April 1 to 150 mos. prison and 45 mos. post-prison supervision after pleading guilty to two counts sexual abuse I. All other charges dismissed. Ferrando is appealing a separate case wherein he was sentenced after pleading guilty to fleeing or attempting to elude, and appealing another case wherein he was sentenced after pleading no contest to rape I.

**James West Fortenberry, 41**, placed in diversion program after pleading no contest to DUII (liquor) with a .07% BAC. Dismissed: unlawful possession of cocaine, reckless driving and failure to perform duties of driver - property damaged.

**Scotty Lee Foster, 43**, placed in diversion program after pleading no contest to DUII.

**James Jonathan Scott Georgelis, 43**, sentenced April 10 to 18 mos. prison, 36 mos. post-prison supervision and a \$200 fine after pleading no contest to burglary I. Dismissed: theft I,

unlawful possession of meth.

**Matthew David Graber, 42**, sentenced March 23 to one year suspension of a drivers license, 240 hours jail, three years bench probation and \$1,255 in fines and fees after pleading guilty to DUII (liquor) with a .12% BAC. Dismissed: reckless driving.

Charges against **Nicholas Tyler Gray, 38**, of assault III and criminal mistreatment I dismissed without prejudice.

**Phillip Sean Groce, 64**, charged March 27 with two counts of DUII (liquor) and two counts of reckless driving.

**Kyle Austin Hanscam, 33**, sentenced April 9 to 30 mos. prison, three years post-prison supervision after pleading no contest to burglary I and theft I. Dismissed: unauthorized use of a vehicle, criminal mischief II.

**Eric Ray Harvey, 53**, charged March 30 with arson II, reckless burning, criminal mischief II and unlawful possession of meth. Charges allege he damaged Four Seasons Farm Market in Lebanon with fire or explosion. Security: \$10,000.

**Ethan Michael Hawk, 24**, charged April 3 with DUII (liquor) and refusal to take a test for intoxicants. He was placed in the diversion program after pleading no contest to DUII.

In two cases, **Scott Kevin Heinz, 38**, was sentenced March 27 to lifelong revocation of a drivers license, 30 mos. prison, 24 mos. post-prison supervision, \$1,000 fine, \$828 restitution to victim, and drug or alcohol treatment after pleading no contest to DUII

(controlled substances and/or cannabis) x2. Dismissed: criminal driving while suspended or revoked x2, reckless driving, criminal mischief II.

**Robert Hernandez Jr., 48**, charged March 24 with unauthorized use of a vehicle, unlawful entry into motor vehicle and theft III.

**Daniel Lane Hodson, 52**, sentenced March 26 to 15 mos. prison, two years post-prison supervision and a \$200 fine after pleading no contest to unlawful possession of meth. Dismissed: delivery of meth.

**Sarah Jean Kalina, 45**, charged April 7 with harassment, interference with making a report, theft II, robbery III, criminal mischief II, reckless driving, DUII (liquor) and resisting arrest. Bail set at \$20,000.

**Caden Jason Scotty King, 28**, sentenced April 10 to 90 days suspension of drivers license and five days compensatory service in lieu of jail after pleading no contest to failure to perform duties of driver to injured persons.

**Gavin D. Lefevre, 31**, charged April 1 with DUII (liquor).

**Richard Duane Lippert, 71**, charged April 9 with three counts of sodomy I, regarding a subject under 12 years old at the time of the alleged offenses. Bail set at \$100,000.

**Kyle Joseph Lynch, 27**, charged April 7 with theft I.

**Bradley Marion Pugh, 42**, sentenced March 23 to 18 mos. prison and two years post-prison

See Circuit Court, Page 8

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# Public Safety

- Information herein is sourced from law enforcement and fire agencies. Details, which may not always be available in time for our weekly publication, are updated on our website as information becomes available. - Addresses noted generally denote the location of the incident or arrest, occasionally indicating the origin of the call.

- 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. A Roman numeral indicates the degree of a charge: theft I (first-degree theft).

- Following are abbreviations that may appear in our log reports:

**AMC** (Albany Municipal Court), **DU** (Driving uninsured/without insurance), **DUII** (Driving while intoxicated), **DWS** (driving while suspended), **FTA** (failure to appear), **FTC** (failure to comply), **FTOTCD** (Failure to obey traffic control device), **LCJ** (Linn County Jail), **LCSO** (Linn County Sheriff's Office), **LCCC** (Linn County Circuit Court), **LCJC** (Linn County Justice Court), **LMC** (Lebanon Municipal Court), **MIP** (Minor in possession), **PV** (Probation Violation), **SHMC** (Sweet Home Municipal Court), **SHPD** (Sweet Home Police Department), **SLCH** (Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital)

### APRIL 12

#### SWEET HOME POLICE

2:39 a.m. - Katherine Marie Berghoffer arrested at Benton County Jail on SHMC warrant for FTA in theft case. Cited to appear May 4.

3:08 a.m. - Caller reported loud music in area of 400 block Juniper. Officer responded, contacted male who was advised of complaint and agreed to turn down music.

10:07 a.m. - Caller reported female had taken unknown amount of pills, was "acting out of the ordinary," 700 block 6th. Officer responded, female transported by medics.

10:10 a.m. - Dog bite reported in 1300 block Poplar. Officer responded. Juvenile female appeared to be OK and parents declined medics. Skin was broken, so quarantine order was served.

3:11 p.m. - SHPD conducted death investigation following cardiac incident in 4100 block Osage. Report taken.

4:19 p.m. - Caller reported

male with juvenile on front of motorcycle, with no helmet, riding in 900 block 42nd. Caller reported that when male rode by he asked her if she had an issue with it. According to SHPD, officer responded, contacted male who refused to identify himself, told him he was trespassed from caller's property.

10:11 p.m. - Caller reported he had been choked by another male. Office responded, report taken for assault III and strangulation, 3700 block Long.

10:48 p.m. - Heather Lynn Rootlieb arrested on LCCC warrant for FTA in unauthorized use of motor vehicle case, possession of stolen vehicle and FTA on criminal citation. Arrest followed report of male and female who had been "arguing all day." Parties separating. 5300 block Poplar. Rootlieb cited and released.

#### LEBANON POLICE

Lebanon police had not submitted a log for this date in time for publication. When available, log will be updated at lebanonlocalnews.com.

#### LCSO/OSP SWEET HOME/S. COUNTY

1:47 a.m. - Crash reported in 28000 block Peoria, Halsey. Trenton Kirchoff, 21, of Harrisburg, arrested for DUII, reckless driving, two counts of reckless endangering and assault IV. Also cited for failure drive within lane. Crash caused several thousand dollars of damage to home and property at location, according to LCSO.

8:52 a.m. - Deputies assisted motorist with deceased ducks, 31500 block American, Halsey. 2:57 p.m. - Colton Rictor, 24, of Sweet Home, arrested on two counts of violating conditional release agreement, and for disorderly conduct II. 27900 block Riggs Hill. Lodged at LCJ. Report taken.

#### LCSO/OSP LEBANON

3:29 a.m. - Amanda Paguaga, 37, of Albany, cited for DWS, DU, 2300 block S. Main Rd.

5:05 a.m. - Mark Sweat, 69, of Sweet Home, cited for DU, 400 block W. Airport.

2:41 p.m. - Deputies responded to report of animal abuse in 31200 block 1st. Investigation determined that actions and behavior of suspect were noncriminal, but suspect was advised of Oregon statutes and warned that behavior was alarming and that suspect might need to find alternative ways to discipline animal.

10:53 p.m. - Crash reported in

39100 block Griggs. Report taken.

### APRIL 11

#### SWEET HOME POLICE

1:11 a.m. - Officer located male on roof at 1223 Main, threatening to harm himself. More officers and LCSO deputies responded. Male, 24, was talked into coming down and was taken into protective custody, transported to SLCH for mental health evaluation.

8:25 p.m. - Ashley Kay Miles arrested by Albany police on SHMC warrant for FTC in theft case. Cited to appear May 4.

9:47 p.m. - Brian Scott Holden arrested by Lebanon police on SHMC warrant for FTC in theft case. Cited to appear May 4.

#### LEBANON POLICE

Lebanon police had not submitted a log for this date in time for publication. When available, log will be updated at lebanonlocalnews.com.

#### LCSO/OSP SWEET HOME/S. COUNTY

11:15 a.m. - Brooke Miller, 23, and Samuel Castillo-Lara, 26, both of Lebanon, cited for theft III following report of theft from farm stand, 28300 block Liberty. Report taken.

12:28 p.m. - Deputy removed rocks from roadway in 48300 block Quartzville.

12:42 p.m. - Colton McKay, 30, of Sweet Home, cited for DWS, 1800 block Main. Report taken.

3:56 p.m. - LCSO responded, county Road Department, removed downed tree blocking roadway in 42700 block North River.

#### LCSO/OSP LEBANON

2:31 a.m. - Eric Hahn, 49, of Sweet Home, cited for DWS, DU, 2600 block S. Santiam Hwy. 7:55 a.m. - Richard Walls, 55, of Lebanon, arrested on warrant, possession of meth. 1900 block

S. Main. Lodged at LCJ. Report taken.

8:00 a.m. - George Allen, 20, of Sweet Home, cited for DU. Vehicle towed. River Dr./Huckleberry Lane. Report taken.

1:13 p.m. - Juvenile arrested following hit and run crash involving injury, 32600 block Hayden. Report taken.

6:43 p.m. - LCSO and OSP responded to double fatal crash in 35300 block Hwy. 34. Report taken.

7:20 p.m. - Kenneth Saylor, 40, of Sweet Home, arrested on warrant, 34700 block Wheatland. Report taken.

### APRIL 10

#### SWEET HOME POLICE

4:43 a.m. - Austin Alan Ross, 28, arrested by Lebanon police on SHMC warrants for FTA in four theft cases, FTA in attempt to elude case. Cited to appear May 4. Lynette Irene Johnson, 47, arrested on SHMC warrant for FTC in criminal driving case. Also cited to appear May 4.

11:54 a.m. - Police, LCSO responded to disturbance in 1300 block Elm. As deputy turned on to Elm from 16th, he heard a female yelling for help, standing in a doorway with a male standing in the driveway. According to LCSO log, female told deputy she was having mental health issues due to her mother's passing away the previous week and the male was not "supportive enough" for her. Both parties said nothing physical had occurred. SHPD arrived to take over the call. Female agreed to calm down for the day.

12:59 p.m. - Caller from 1400 block Poplar reported that someone had broken into shop at location. Officers responded,

See Public Safety, Page 9

## Sweet Home resident arrested on sex counts

A Sweet Home man was arrested Wednesday, April 8, on multiple sex charges, Sweet Home police reported.

Richard Duane Lippert, 72, arrested at 3:36 p.m. on three counts of sodomy I, three counts of rape I, three counts of sex abuse I and three counts of incest I.

According to court documents, the alleged incidents took place in 2017 and 2018, involving a victim under age 12.

Lippert was lodged at Linn County Jail, where he remained Monday with bail set at \$100,000, according to the Linn County Sheriff's Office.

According to Sweet Home Police Sgt. Geoff Hamlin, the victim's mother reported the situation to police. Hamlin said that because the case was still open with the District Attorney's Office "and given its sensitivity," he couldn't say much.

## Investigation leads to search at Lebanon massage parlor

Lebanon police assisted with the search of a Lebanon business believed to be involved in an illicit massage parlor ring on Tuesday, April 7.

The Lebanon Police Department helped the Oregon Department of Justice serve a search warrant at Foot Reflexology & Massage, at 2710 South Santiam Hwy., Lebanon, following a history of complaints and recent investigation that led to evidence suggesting the business may

be involved in the illicit massage parlor industry and other illegal activity.

A search of the business revealed Foot Reflexology & Massage was providing unlicensed massage services, as well as having ties to other illicit massage parlors throughout the western states and country. Multiple other code and ordinance violations were located inside the business.

Fen Miao Bao, 64, was taken into custody during the

investigation and ultimately cited and released for practice of massage without a license.

A massage parlor owner in Dallas was recently arraigned on charges around prostitution after Dallas police officers opened an investigation into Moon Spa, where they were offered sexual favors from employees. The business was also operating without a license. The business owner, Tsai Hsia Wu, was arrested and charged with pro-

moting prostitution, sexual abuse III, prostitution, and violation of a massage license or permit requirements.

The Lebanon investigation is ongoing. Anyone with additional information is asked to contact Det. Sgt. Jeremy Weber with Lebanon Police Department at 541-258-4342, or Attorney General Communications Director Jenny Hansson with Oregon Department of Justice at 971-273-8498.

### Comfortably Dumb by Bruce Quast



### TEMPERATURES

DATE	HIGH	LOW	RAIN
4/7	65	38	0.00
4/8	68	37	0.00
4/9	70	41	0.00
4/10	72	46	0.02
4/11	62	44	0.25
4/12	58	40	0.00
4/13	58	40	0.00

### RAIN IN INCHES

Year to date: 9.35  
4/16/25: 18.50

### FORECAST

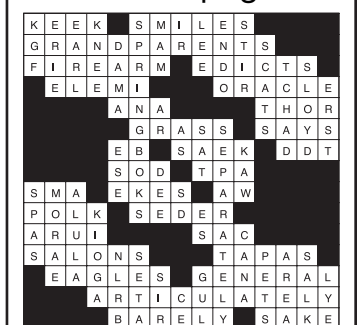
DATE	WEATHER	HIGH/LOW
4/16	Showers	56/34
4/17	Cloudy	63/37
4/18	Cloudy	69/48
4/19	Showers	59/43
4/20	Showers	58/43
4/21	Showers	61/43
4/22	Showers	61/40

### LAKE LEVELS

Foster 614.5  
Green Peter 987.4

### CROSSWORD KEY

Puzzle on page 17



### SUDOKU KEY

Puzzle on page 17

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

## From our Files



Bernie Thornton caught this seven-pound steelhead while fishing the Quartzville area with "Mousey" Farlow in 1951. The 28-inch fish was taken on a three pound test leader. Steelhead, especially of this size, are a rarity in Quartzville Creek.

### APRIL 19, 1951

Sweet Home's high school board authorized a call for bids for the community's anticipated new swimming pool after nearly five years of dreams, plans and fundraising. Bids will give pool planners an idea of construction costs, what work can be done now and how much more money will need to be raised. The pool fund currently has \$16,000, gathered largely through Frontier Days celebrations. The money falls short of needed funding, but is expected to be the start of a state-approved "place to swim" as the board aims to provide "a usable swimming pool stripped of all unessential items."

Three boys, one 13 years old and two 16 years, were apprehended on Brush Creek and returned by state police to the Skipworth school at Springfield. They had stolen a Springfield car, abandoned it off Brush Creek Road, and attempted to steal a

Crawfordsville car but ran it into a pole.

### APRIL 15, 1976

Efforts to save and restore television channels 11 (8) and 5 (12) for residents in the general Holley and surrounding areas met with initial success, but there is more work to be done. East Linn Telecasters Inc. has been canvassing the areas in a fundraising effort to refurbish a long-standing translator stationed on Fern Ridge, defray power bills and put the service back on its financial feet. About \$3,800 has been raised, but more families are asked to contribute the \$20 donation to secure the service.

### APRIL 18, 2001

Funds from the Oregon Department of Transportation helped Linn Shuttle acquire four new 20-passenger buses in the amount of \$250,000, which they had been working to obtain

for more than two years. They will replace vehicles that were bought as interim transportation since the old ones had as many as 325,000 miles on them. They will be used to transport people to Albany and back, many of whom are college students, and the Sweet Home Dial-A-Bus program.

The City of Sweet Home commissioned a landscape architect to develop a planting plan for the downtown median strip, to include flowering perennials, ground cover, trees and decorative lamp posts. The Sweet Home Community Foundation committed matching funds up to \$3,000 to complete the project.

Sweet Home High School's equestrian team asked the school board for recognition as a school sport. It was accepted as a club sport last year, but the sport can't receive recognition and participants can't receive a letter.

## Letters to the Editor

*Editor's note: Starting with this issue, we will accept letters to the editor regarding local May 19 Primary Election candidates and issues. Letters must be civil. Space permitting, we will run as many as possible. Letters that repeat points already made in previously published letters will not be accepted, or may be edited for length (with approval from the writer). Letters MUST include the writer's first and last name and city of residence. They must also include a working phone number (which will NOT be published) for our staff's use, should we need to contact the writer.*

### Proven leadership matters in House race

Editor:

As many of you know, I don't typically align with Republican candidates, and I rarely involve myself in their primary elections. However, this year feels different—and important enough for me to speak up.

In the race for House District 11, there are multiple Republican candidates. While I respect the process, I also believe that leadership matters deeply, regardless of party. From my perspective, one candidate stands out as someone who will genuinely serve the interests of our entire community.

As a Democrat, I don't have a vote in the Republican primary.

But I do care deeply about the future of our region, and I know many of you feel the same. I encourage those who can vote in this primary to take a close, thoughtful look at who will lead with integrity, collaboration, and a true commitment to the people.

I strongly believe Angelita Sanchez is that candidate.

Angelita is a local business owner, a proven leader, and someone who has consistently shown up for our community. From her work on the Sweet Home City Council to her advocacy across the state, she has demonstrated a willingness to listen, collaborate, and take meaningful action.

Her deep roots in Oregon, spanning five generations, give her a strong understanding of our region's needs. More importantly, she has put in the time and effort to build relationships, support local industries, and advocate for fairness and responsible leadership during both everyday challenges and times of crisis.

What stands out most to me is her ability to bring people together—setting aside personal differences to focus on what truly matters: the well-being of our communities and the future of our region.

Elected leaders should rise

above party loyalty and represent the people they serve. For those participating in the Republican primary, I respectfully ask you to consider supporting Angelita Sanchez for House District 11.

**Scottie McKee**  
Former Sweet Home  
City Councilor

### Different look at HD11 Primary

Editor:

As the Republican primary for House District 11 takes shape, I think it is worth taking a step back and looking at this race from a slightly different perspective.

This is shaping up to be an interesting matchup between Sweet Home City Councilor Angelita Sanchez and Lebanon Mayor Ken Jackola.

Angelita Sanchez announced her campaign back in July of 2025. At that time, she was already well known in Republican circles for her years of involvement, leadership, and volunteer work supporting candidates and causes across Linn County and the state.

Mayor Jackola, on the other hand, entered the race much later in February of this year. What stands out to me is that when Sanchez announced, Jackola was not registered as a Republican. He was a non-affiliated voter and later changed his registration in order to run

in the Republican primary.

That is something voters should at least think about.

We have seen situations like this before. When party affiliation changes close to an election, it raises a simple question. Is this about conviction or about opportunity? Oregon voters recently watched something similar with Oregon State Representative for house district 32 Cyrus Javadi, where party alignment and key votes raised concerns about consistency. It is not about direction of the switch, it is about whether the principles stay steady.

In contrast, Sanchez has a long track record as a consistent Republican. She served as Secretary and later Vice Chair of the Linn County Republicans and also took on a statewide role as Election Chair for the Oregon Republican Party. She played a part in organizing opposition to Oregon Measure 117, which voters ultimately rejected.

More importantly, she has shown up. Regularly. Consistently. Not just during election season, but year after year.

I saw that firsthand when I served as Chair of the Linn County Republican Central Committee. Sanchez was at meetings twice a month, sometimes stepping in when I was out of town. That kind of steady involvement matters more than campaign slogans.

She has also earned the

support of local leadership, including endorsements from 2 out of 3 Linn County Commissioners: Will Tucker and Roger Nyquist.

To be clear, this is not about tearing down Mayor Jackola. He may very well be doing a good job in Lebanon. But running as a Republican for state office should mean something more than just filing paperwork and changing a registration.

Voters in House District 11 have a choice between someone who has been committed to Republican values and grassroots work for years, and someone who only recently joined the party before entering the race.

That is not a complicated decision.

While I do not live in House District 11, I care about these communities. I spend time in Sweet Home at Foster Lake, and my son attends school in Lebanon. Because of that, I am paying attention, and I am supporting Angelita Sanchez.

That is my viewpoint.

**Ben Roche**  
Albany

### Propriety should start at the top

Editor:

In response to the letter by Mike Hall (April 8), I quite agree with him that explosive-laden language is not something we should encourage for the signs at our rallies, especially with youth present, or really anytime.

Perhaps it doesn't help that our president chooses words and threats that are equally as offensive. I am especially referring to his recent Easter message on his Truth Social post: "Open the f\_kin' Strait, you crazy bas\_\_ds, or you'll be living in Hell."

Yep, on Easter.

**Marilyn Belcher**  
Lebanon

THE  
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# Opinion: Residents battle escalating costs in last affordable housing

By Barb Schafer

Judy Annin and Lynn Cole were friends and co-workers for decades. After their husbands passed away, both had decided to move to Twin Cedars Mobile Home Park in Lebanon, a senior living park for residents 55 and older.

To date, Annin has been there for 11 years, while Cole moved in three years ago.

Both had retired from careers in which they had worked professionally in support services for senior citizens, and they were planning ahead for affordable living for themselves. Traditionally, such mobile home or manufactured home parks have offered a reliable way to live in a decent home affordably.

Until several years ago, most mobile home parks were owned by “mom and pop” organizations, where you could reach the owners with any concerns, and there was plenty of communication and respectful, often friendly relationships were built.

Some residents at Twin Cedars have lived there for many decades. They bought their home and rented the lot from the owners, who lived in Lebanon and managed the park. In those days, the owners might have raised the lot rent \$15-25 when it was necessary to maintain the park, and for many years, the rent didn't increase much.

Then came the corporations.

In recent years, large corporations have been buying manufactured home parks across the states, able to far outbid most would-be local purchasers. The parks are seen by some as “cash cows.” These same corporations also started buying up lots in Oregon, even in Lebanon.

After two years of corporate ownership at Twin Cedars, the move-in cost increased by

100%. Meanwhile, monthly rates grew significantly, too. The lot that rented for \$825 in 2023 had risen to \$1,300 in 2025 and will increase again next year.

While manufactured home owners can move their home off the lot, the cost to do so far outweighs the benefit.

“Mobile homes are not mobile,” Annin emphasized. “Our homes could not be moved. If moveable, the cost would be similar to moving an older home of any kind.”

But as rates increase, the owner must remain in good standing for the rental of the lot. If they fall behind, they can be evicted.

Some have had to simply move away, leaving behind their home and the equity they thought they were building. Thus, their home becomes the asset of the corporation, which can, once the owner has abandoned the property after eviction, remodel and resell it.

Shortly after Cole moved to Twin Cedars, she and Annin met other residents who, they said, complained about the rapidly increasing costs. As prices rose substantially and they were unable to contact the corporate owners, the ladies began meeting more regularly with their neighbors.

“At our first meeting, we had 20-25 attendees,” Annin said.

She was researching housing, noting that the rent had gone up more than 14% the prior year. People were complaining about the landlord and what he was charging, but Annin reminded them, after looking it up, that he wasn't breaking the law.

Then the letter writing began.

“We had an idea,” she said. “We were all going to write a letter and all sign it.”

There were letters to state representatives, and there were more meetings.

The corporation that owned Twin Cedars appeared unreachable. Annin and Cole said they just wanted a chance to sit down with someone to talk about the issues. Still, despite letters, emails and phone call attempts, there continued to be no response from the owner corporation.

According to the residents, the locally hired manager was “clearly” uninterested in questions about issues residents had, simply telling them that they needed to follow his rules “because I told you so,” Annin said.

So the residents hired an attorney who contacted the park manager about park rules that were not legal, one of which included denying access to the clubhouse.

After that, the clubhouse was reopened. But rent raises were still a concern for the residents.

The regular meetings among residents became educational. The group discovered it was legal to offer to buy the park themselves, but when they tried to look into that option, they learned the park had already been sold to another corporation.

“We realized we needed as much help as possible,” Cole said.

They reached out to HUD, the Housing Authority and CASA of Oregon (Community and Shelter Assistance Corporation) for help.

Cole and Annin were learning together as they worked together.

“Because our park had already been purchased by a real estate investment firm, it was too late for CASA to help, but CASA has helped other park tenants throughout Oregon to purchase their parks,” Cole said. “We also learned that the HUD Price grant (Preservation and Reinvestment for Community Enhancement) helped

CASA finance the tenant-owned parks. That gives tenants some control of their parks as well as keeping rental costs reasonable.”

Meanwhile, Cole, a retired registered nurse, said she was becoming more concerned about the park residents who were battling health issues, stressing over cost increases and, in several cases, unable to keep paying the higher costs of staying in their own home.

Both Annin and Cole have been senior advocates for most of their lives. They have been working together on and off since 1997, primarily supporting seniors. They couldn't just let this happen to their neighbors.

“It's amazing how we grew in our contacts and started getting invitations to learn more,” they said. “A network began to grow around our little group. We organized people to write to their representatives.”

They also started a Facebook page, Manufactured Homeowners of Oregon.

Other states responded and neighbors discovered the issues weren't local or even just statewide, but that it is a nationwide concern.

As they continued to meet and educate themselves on housing laws, more neighbors were forced to leave their manufactured home behind because they could no longer pay the lot fees. The pair also said they both heard about some people who, to get out from under an overwhelming lot-rent debt, sold their homes to the corporation for \$1.

Estimates suggest that by 2030, 40% to 60% of manufactured home parks will be owned by large corporations. In Lebanon, 80% to nearly 100% of these parks are investor- or corporate-owned. Another way to look at it is that Lebanon's manufactured home parks are owned by out-of-

state corporations, mostly sold by “mom and pop” investors.

But meeting the residents became empowering for Annin and Cole and their neighbors.

Through their efforts and those they recruited, after thousands of hours of effort, Oregon State House Bill 3054 passed both chambers and was signed into law in June 2025.

The act limits space rent increases in manufactured home parks to 6% per year. It also prohibits certain sale conditions and mandates a study on park utility systems. It is slowly beginning to help some residents.

Both political parties are interested in issues of homelessness and affordable housing. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, as well as U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, are among those who are working on housing issues.

Cole and Annin said this has been a learning curve and an exhausting experience, but they're proud of the results so far. They agree that their 37-year friendship and professional history together made them more able to step in to work so hard for people, most of whom they would never meet.

“People don't listen to you when you're angry,” Annin said. “We needed to learn how to share our story so folks would listen.”

When Gov. Tina Kotek signed HB 3054, residents of Twin Cedars Manufactured Home Park were invited to attend.

“We were sitting in the Senate Chambers peanut gallery and they called each senator's name for a vote.”

The vote passed. The two friends and their neighbors had begun to make a difference in their park and around Oregon, perhaps beyond.

- Barb Schafer is a Lebanon resident

## Chinese AI firm suspected of hacking area newspaper's Facebook

For nearly half a century, McKenzie River Reflections has chronicled life along the McKenzie River, serving as a trusted voice in our community since 1978. But last week, the newspaper encountered an unusual and troubling disruption.

On the morning of April 2 — just a day after the release of the annual April Fool's edition — the paper's official Facebook page was mysteriously renamed “Marketing AI Lexi.” Thousands of posts, including decades of historic images and articles, were re-labeled under the new, misleading name.

The motives behind the takeover remain unclear. However, media experts note it may reflect a growing national trend: the rise of “zombie newspapers.” These are defunct publications that continue to publish online content despite no lon-

ger operating as legitimate newsrooms.

“Zombie newspapers” can appear active, posting articles regularly, but investigations have revealed much of their content is either AI-generated or attributed to fabricated bylines. Such practices raise serious concerns about misinformation and the erosion of public trust in local media.

Similar cases have been reported in Oregon. The Ashland Daily Tidings, founded in 1876 and closed in 2023, still maintains an active website publishing near-daily articles, many of which appear to be automated and carry fake bylines — sometimes even misusing the names of real journalists. After Medford's Mail Tribune ceased operations in 2023, its digital presence vanished entirely, later replaced by the Rogue Valley Times, which has

since reduced its operations, illustrating the precarious state of local journalism.

The takeover comes as Oregon continues to experience a decline in local news coverage. Studies indicate more than a quarter of small-town newspapers in the state have closed in recent years, leaving 68 percent of Oregon's incorporated cities — and three entire counties — without dedicated local news sources.

The entity controlling the McKenzie River Reflections' page, Marketing AI Lexi, was launched by Guo Zhenyu, who left Alibaba in 2024 to create an AI-driven advertising platform. Lexi produces ad campaigns within Meta's online ecosystem, and the company has already reported rapid international growth.

Even in communities where newspapers survive,

many outlets are now owned by hedge funds or large media chains, often operating with skeleton staff. Critics call these operations “ghost newspapers” for their limited reporting and reduced community coverage.

Social media is a crucial distribution channel for small newspapers, meaning that the takeover of an account can instantly sever a paper's connection with its readers. In this case, decades of historical content accumulated by McKenzie River Reflections have been repurposed under a different identity.

Following the name change several supporters of the newspaper started complaining on the Marketing AI Lexi Facebook page its content was the property of River Reflections. In response, Marketing AI Lexi deleted all previous Reflections posts

dating back to 2011.

While the circumstances remain under investigation, media analysts warn this could signal a new tactic: hijacking the digital identity of historic newspapers to lend credibility to unrelated or AI-generated content. Such practices blur the line between legitimate journalism and deceptive publishing, compounding the challenges posed by “zombie news” sites.

In response, McKenzie River Reflections Publisher Ken Engelman said he has filed multiple complaints with Facebook and reported the theft of intellectual property to both the Lane County District Attorney and Oregon's Attorney General. Legal action is also under consideration as the situation continues to develop, he said.

- This article courtesy of McKenzie River Reflections

**GALA**

From page 1

embody the style of each legendary artist.

High school student Ember Ogden performed Barbra Streisand's "Smile," accompanied on piano by her sister, Kelly Johnson. The sisters delivered a graceful performance, and Ogden's blue eyes sparkled even more brightly than the sequins on her evening gown.

Ogden, appearing in her third gala, said her favorite part of the event is hearing the variety of performers. Johnson, who has played piano for 17 years, traveled from Newberg to accompany her sister.

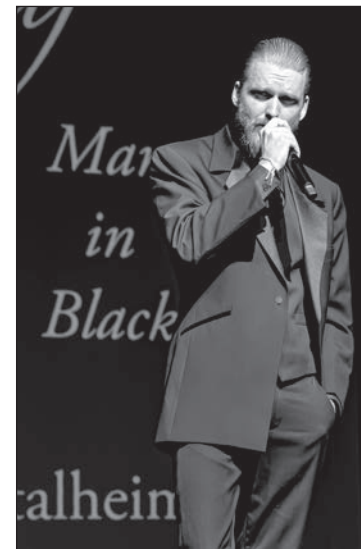
Although only 21, Dakota Harris displayed the stage presence of a seasoned performer. Playing his guitar, he honored Hank Williams Sr. with "Hey, Good Lookin'."

He later returned to the stage for two back-to-back performances in contrasting styles, first delivering Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" with his own flair, then shifting to Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World."

In the latter, Harris sounded strikingly similar to Armstrong, using a gravelly tone that closely matched the jazz legend's signature voice. He even mimicked a saxophone solo vocally, drawing visible amazement from audience members.

Harris, who lives in Eugene, said he enjoys singing blues and country and frequently performs Elvis Presley songs. He was discovered by organizer Shirley Austin when he won last summer's Tallman Brewery Tap and Talent event in Lebanon.

Melody Jordan, a local favorite, performed three songs during the evening. Strumming her guitar and smiling brightly, she paid tribute to



Gala performers, above, salute the audience following the concert. At right, Matthew Stalheim sings Johnny Cash's "Man in Black." Below, Amanda Wilde, accompanied by Buzzy Strings, sings "Coal Miner's Daughter." See more photos at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com) and [lebanonlocalnews.com](http://lebanonlocalnews.com).  
— Kristine Banker photos

Patsy Cline with "Walking After Midnight" and Stevie Nicks' "Dreams." The self-proclaimed "Swiftie" closed out the show with Taylor Swift's "Our Song."

"Walking After Midnight" held special meaning for her, Jordan said. "As a kid, my dad had his pedal steel set up in the living room and would practice daily. It's a song he played frequently, so there's a special connection to it. Plus, I only learned the chords a few days prior and enjoyed the challenge of performing it live."

The 2025 SHOCASE Showdown Talent Show winners, Amanda Wilde and guitarist Buzzy Strings, returned to the stage to pay tribute to Loretta Lynn's "Coal Miner's Daughter" and Janis Joplin's "Me and Bobby McGee."

The pair has also performed at several events organized by Shirley Austin, including programs for her nonprofit, the Opening Act Foundation, at the VFW hall and other local venues. Wilde and Strings are members of the band Blue

Collar Jesus, which is set to release a new song titled "Happens All the Time" on April 24.

Matthew Stalheim, a third-generation Sweet Home resident, served as announcer for the evening, his smooth voice filling the auditorium as he introduced each performer and the musical legend being honored.

He also stepped into the spotlight with an emotional rendition of Johnny Cash's "Man in Black." With eyes closed, listeners could easily imagine Cash himself on stage, as Stalheim's deep bass-baritone captured the iconic sound. Stalheim said his love for Cash began with storytelling. "It started as tales," he said.

"Songs from that time, folk songs and old country, were sung from the heart, and I think that's the point of music, to be moved. As a young kid, it was like story time listening to these greats."

Kathy Scheele's lively personality and distinctive soprano made her a natural fit for Dolly Parton's "Jolene."



She delivered the song with a hint of Parton's velvet warble and a pronounced Appalachian-style twang. This marked Scheele's fourth appearance in the gala. Austin first discovered her talent during a karaoke contest she entered with her mother and has encouraged her to perform ever since.

Scheele said she loves "ev-

erything" about the gala and credited Austin for her continued support. "I love Shirley. She has always supported me so much," Scheele said. "Every show she has, she reaches out to see if I can do it. She is the reason I do this."


SHOCASE board member Sean Morgan moved across

See Gala, Page 7

**Church Directory**

**Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

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11:00 am Worship  
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# OSU Extension report outlines 2025 activities, programs

OSU Extension-Linn County offered and was involved in a wide variety of activities in Linn County, according to the annual "Investing in Linn County 2025 Impact Report," issued recently by the department.

The complete report can be viewed at <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/county/linn/news>.

Below are some highlights by department:

## 4-H Youth Development

Participation in 4-H totaled 656 youth members assisted by 165 volunteer leaders. Some 570 kids exhibited at the annual fair in July and the annual livestock auction brought in more than \$1.6 million.

- Caden Foley, a Sweet Home High School student and Lebanon resident, represented Oregon 4-H at the national congress in Atlanta, Ga.

- Twenty youths from Linn County were among 100 young people who participated in the High Desert Leadership Retreat in Redmond.

- 280 students and teachers took part in the Lafayette Elementary School field day in Albany.

- A total of 300 students from 12 Linn County classrooms took part in the 4-H embryology project, a 21-day program that enables young people to investigate the life of a chicken and participate in activities that teach animal needs, genetics, technology, physiology, record keeping and more.

- A total of 144 young people completed the tractor safety class, a 22-hour pro-

gram that meets the requirements of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. For more on the class, visit <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/4h/youth-tractor-safety-certification>.

- Thirteen teen ambassadors in grades 7-12 representing Linn County and 21 Linn County 4-H'ers attended the Four Rivers 4-H camp and 39 kids, ages 5-8, participated in the Cloverbud Explorers Club.

## Master Gardeners

- A total of 41 certified Master Gardeners and 13 interns volunteered 6,078 hours, valued at more than \$211,000, in 2025. More than 1,700 pounds of garden produce was donated to area food pantries.

- Nearly 100 people attended the 11th annual BEEvent Pollinator Conference and seven cocoon harvesting classes were held.

- Master Gardeners participated at Farmers Markets, mobile plant clinics, the demonstration garden at the Fair & Expo Center, community seed swaps and the Linn County Fair.

- Six Seed to Supper classes taught by five volunteers were held in Scio.

## Small Farms

- The Willamette Women's Farm Network has 296 members; the Regional Farmer Network has 489 members; the monthly Small Farms Newsletter goes out to 871 homes monthly.

- The program conducted eight farm tours, 10 workshops, the Living on the Land Series, six Veteran Farmer-

conducted events, two dry farming project field days, and more than 900 people attended the annual Small Farms Conference.

## Family/Community Health

- Family and Community Health with Small Farms, worked to increase local food access for 40 low-income families.

- \$10,000 was used to purchase fruits, vegetables and organic meat from local farms.

- Forty-three family and older adults participated in the Walk with Ease program developed by the Arthritis Foundation to reduce pain, build confidence in being physically active and improve overall health. 180 contacts and OSU Extension hosted the Linn County Juvenile Department's Pathways to Success program.

- Master Food Preservers tested 109 pressure canner gauges, held six public workshops and answered 32 hotline calls in Linn County.

## Forestry and Natural Resources

- Several skill-building workshops were held, including the fall woodland weed workshop, Stop the Bleed Training, for farmers and rural landowners and a basic forestry short course.

- County working groups included an Emerald Ash Borer survey and monitoring; Emerald Ash Borer task force; Linn County Noxious Weed Committee, Linn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan Advisory Committee.

- The Extension Service

conducted four tree farm tours and gatherings with woodland owners and co-educators, three workshops and four classes presented at conferences.

## Wildfire Preparedness

Regional Fire Specialist Dr. Kayla Bordelon of the Extension Service helped land a successful \$8.9 million federal grant, headed by Sweet Home Fire, to strengthen wildfire resilience in eastern Linn County along the Highway 20 and South Santiam River Corridor, including Lebanon. Bordelon also co-founded the Mid-Willamette Valley Prescribed Burn Association, that has 146 members representing landowners, land managers and volunteers.

## Groundwater Health

A \$49,999 grant in partnership with Crossroad Communities provided 103 Linn County households with coliform bacteria, arsenic and nitrate well water tests. The Extension Service held numerous free nitrate screening events at communities and events throughout the county.

## Livestock and Forage

Some 213 people participated in the monthly livestock webinar series with themes ranging from "Buying and Selling Livestock" and "So, You Want To Have a Milk Cow" to "Pasture Nutrition" and "Managing Mud and Manure on Your Farm."

The Extension partnered with the Oregon Forage and Grassland Council to host an inaugural two-day symposium, featuring speakers from Oregon, Washington, Idaho,

Montana and New Zealand. There were 135 participants.

## Field Crops

- The Mint Pest Alert Outreach newsletter has been distributed for 12 years, and is credited with improving pest control and decreasing pesticide spray use.

- Some 384 people attended crop and pest management meetings in September and January.

- Pesticide education programs focused on improving pest control and using fewer pesticide sprays.

## Extension Resources for Public

Resources accessible by Linn County residents include:

- OSU Extension youth portal, providing educational resources by subject and by grade level at: [extension.oregonstate.edu/families-health/youth](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/families-health/youth).

- Food Hero budget-friendly and nutritious recipes at: [foodhero.org](http://foodhero.org).

- Extension experts in family and health, community development, food and agriculture, coastal issues, forestry, programs for young people, and gardening at: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/ask-extension>.

- Extension publications and more at: [catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu](http://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu).

- Monthly Linn County E-News at: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/newsletter/linn-county-e-news>.

- Bi-Monthly GROWING newspaper at: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/newsletter/growing>.

# Veterans Services lands \$1.5 million for locals

By Alex Paul

Linn County Communications

Linn County Veterans Services helped local veterans obtain more than \$1.53 million in benefits during the nine months from July 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026, Program Manager Dee Baley-Hyder told Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker at their April 7 meeting.

Baley-Hyder said this is tax-free income that benefits veterans, a surviving spouse or family members.

The tally from Jan. 1 through March 31 of this year was \$323,856.76.

Baley-Hyder said that now that there are three accredited veterans services officers on staff, her office has been able to reduce waiting times for appointments from six to eight weeks to under two weeks.

Turnaround time for emails and calls to veterans has also been more efficient, Baley-Hyder said in a written report.

Staff members participated at a Veterans Information Fair March 7, sponsored by

the American Legion Post 61 in Junction City.

She reported that there will not be a spring Honor Flight to Washington, D.C., but there will be one in the fall and her office will help with it.

Baley-Hyder said Rob McKibben, who has been a veterans services officer for 20 years, is going to retire at the end of April.

Nyquist said that although Linn County has done a good job assisting our veterans, he would like to see even more people getting the help they deserve. He asked Baley-Hyder to reach out to other veterans programs statewide and perhaps nationwide, to learn what others are doing to locate and help their veterans.

## In other business the commissioners:

- Approved an invitation to bid on resurfacing of roadways and parking spaces at Whispering Falls Campground near Idanha. This is a U.S. Forest Service campground, but it is managed by Linn County Parks and Recreation.

- Announced that the 2026-

2027 Linn County Budget Hearings will begin at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, April 27 and run through Friday, May 1, at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Road East.

- Were asked by rural Brownsville poultry farm operator Eric Simon if the commissioners would consider adjusting the one-mile setback rule pertaining to Confined Animal Feeding Operations that was approved in December 2023. Simon purchased 60 acres near Scio with plans to develop a large-scale poultry facility — producing more than three million chickens per year — but neighbors strongly opposed the project. Simon believes his project should be "grandfathered in", although a court ruled the original permit was invalid because the state had enacted new, stricter rules in 2023. suggested that Simon could apply for a conditional use variance through the Planning & Building Department. Bids will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Monday, April 27. The project will be paid for by the Forest Service.

## GALA

From page 6

the stage during his soulful rendition of Jim Croce's "Time in a Bottle," offering an emotional tribute. Morgan's baritone voice and heartfelt delivery resonated with the audience.

"I just love Jim Croce," Morgan said. "'Time in a Bottle' is one of my oldest favorite songs. It's ingrained in my earliest memories and is as much a part of my young childhood as Johnny Cash."

Event organizer Austin said the Gala continues to fulfill its mission of showcasing community talent.

"This year's Gala was so fan-

tastic," she said. "The whole reason we started it was to showcase the talent we have in our community. Each year we choose a new theme, and it's always something special."

Austin said performers are often discovered through local competitions, karaoke events and talent searches. She added that the committee is also interested in including dancers in future programs.

Anyone interested in participating in or helping to organize future SHOCASE productions is invited to reach out to board members through their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/shshocase>) or their website (<http://sweethomeshocase.org>).

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# Donation boosts Lebanon museum fundraising efforts

By Sarah Brown  
Of The New Era

"Lebanon has a history worth preserving, and the town should have a museum."

That's the message the Lebanon Museum Foundation wants the community to understand and believe, according to Linda Ziedrich, vice president and one of the foundation's founding members.

It didn't take long shortly after the museum foundation's formation eight years ago that the museum group started receiving collections of historical significance to the city. But all that is currently sitting in storage.

Recently, Scroggin's Mill Rural Heritage gifted the foundation a \$13,822 gift following the sale of Scroggin's Mill and dissolution of the organization, which planned to turn Scroggin's Mill into a museum, primarily for logging, lumbering and farming equipment.

Lebanon's museum board issued a press release stating "the gift from Scroggin's Mill Rural Heritage brings the museum closer to finding a home for its collection and opening the doors to the public."

According to Paul Aziz, president of the Lebanon Museum Foundation, the financial gift raises their cash stash to just over \$25,000 toward a \$250,000 goal intended to secure a safe building for a local museum.

"With the recent donation to the foundation, we are in a better position to be able to look at options," Aziz said.

And they are open to "all options," he said.

The Lebanon Museum Foundation was born through Aziz, who, as mayor at the time, initiated the move to bring a museum to Lebanon after community input for the Lebanon 2040 Vision in 2015 revealed a strong interest in preserving Lebanon's history.

But this hasn't been the first time interested parties attempted to give Lebanon a museum. Several different efforts have come and faded since the 1970s, including Scroggin's Mill Rural Heritage.

According to Pete and Jan Boucot, founders of Scroggin's Mill, the non-

profit had to end its efforts due to a lack of support to get it opened. The overall scope would have cost a lot, as fixing the roof alone would have cost upwards of \$200,000.

The City of Lebanon had donated \$500 toward fencing, but "very few people" showed interest in continued support.

"After a number of years it just made sense to us to shutter our organization and donate the money to the museum and the Lebanon Genealogical Society," Pete Boucot said.

Albany & Eastern Railroad purchased the Scroggin's Mill property. Boucot told The New Era his understanding is that the new owner wants to protect the historical building and is considering using it as a train museum.

In 2018, an ad hoc committee for the city was formed, which created the basis of the Lebanon Museum Foundation. Since then, the museum board has toured local museums, collected hundreds of items and continues to raise money for its future home.

To kickstart their efforts, the City of Lebanon seeded the foundation \$10,000, and a former Lebanon museum effort donated its own collection. Since then, other collections have been acquired, including, according to curator Thonni Morikawa, "an incredible collection of historical phones" from someone who worked 40 years at the original telephone company in Lebanon, WWI and WWII uniforms (one of which was donated by Frank Groves), Bohle Creamery items donated by Dorothy Page from her family's Lebanon Creamery Company, and photographic collections from five different donors.

There are also several collections "on hold" by the donors themselves until a big enough space can be found to house them.

Without a building, many of the collections remain hidden from public view in a temperature-controlled storage locker.

"It bothers my curatorial senses to have everything shoved in a storage unit," Morikawa said.

The board has looked at "numer-



Lebanon Museum Foundation members, including President Paul Aziz, foreground listen as Glenda Hopkins, right, of the East Linn Museum in Sweet Home explains its operations during a tour of the museum. — File Photo

ous" buildings during the past few years, but none of them so far have worked out, Aziz said.

They looked at Linn-Benton Community College's annex building next to the hospital, the old CenturyTel building on S 2nd Street, the former Elks Lodge on Maple Street, the former Lebanon Express building on Grant Street, the current liquor store building on Main Street "and quite a few others that have come and gone on the market," Aziz said.

They also tried working with organizations that might be interested in donating a building, but no one has yet been responsive to that idea, he said.

When the foundation set a goal for \$250,000, they figured that would be enough to buy a building, Ziedrich said. Today, it might just be enough to renovate a building.

"We really won't know how much we need until a suitable building becomes available and the owner or an intermediary is willing to hold it for us while we raise any money required to buy it," she said.

More recently, the board reached out to the city and City Council with their continued need for the right building. City Manager Ron Whitlatch said he'd like to do a property

inventory and return to council with any properties that might be something they'd want to take off the city rolls.

"So we are hopeful," Aziz said, suggesting the city might make some property available for a museum.

Meanwhile, the foundation stays busy behind the scenes, hosting historical presentations and tours, partnering with community organizations, cataloging and cleaning donations, scanning old photographs, recording oral history stories from locals, applying for grants and other fundraising opportunities, and maintaining its website and social media presence.

With a collection worth keeping for future generations, all the Lebanon Museum Foundation really needs is \$250,000 and/or a temperature-controlled, securable building that is, at minimum, 800 square feet with accessibility for people with disabilities.

As a nonprofit organization, Aziz reminds the community that all donations are tax deductible. For more information, visit LebanonMuseum.org.

"I think the board members will all feel greatly relieved when we've settled on a building," Ziedrich said.

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## CIRCUIT COURT

From page 2

supervision after pleading guilty to aggravated harassment for spitting at a police officer.

**Jeffrey Duane Alan Richter, 36**, charged March 27 with DUII (liquor), reckless driving and felon in possession of a restricted weapon.

**Logan Robert Rodriguez, 22**, placed in diversion program after pleading guilty to DUII with a .11% BAC.

**Brandi Lea Simmons, 30**, sentenced April 3 to 15 days compensatory service in lieu of jail, 24 mos. bench probation and a \$100 fine after a jury found her guilty of theft II. Dismissed: burglary I.

**Dalisa Ruth Smith, 56**, sentenced April 8 to 36 mos. prison, three years post-prison supervision and \$400 in fines after pleading no contest to unlawful possession of controlled substance - Schedule II and unlawful possession of meth. Dismissed: manufacture or

delivery of controlled substance within 1,000 feet of school, felon in possession of a firearm, two counts manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance - Schedule II.

**Travis Trent Stach-Sells, 36**, charged March 27 with unlawful delivery of meth, unlawful possession of meth, felon in possession of restricted weapon, and failure to carry or present license.

**Obediah Jeremiah John Teixeira, 46**, charged April 13 with DUII (liquor and/or cannabis), recklessly endangering another person, disorderly conduct II, obstructing governmental or judicial administration, refusal to take a test of intoxicants and DWS.

**Robert Patrick Torstrom, 43**, sentenced to three years suspension of a drivers license, 30 days jail, 48 mos. bench probation and a \$1,000 fine after pleading guilty to DUII (liquor) with a .082% BAC, two counts assault IV, and criminal mischief II. Dismissed: two counts recklessly endangering another

person.

**Joseph Brock Umphress, 37**, placed in diversion program after pleading no contest to DUII (liquor) with a .15% BAC.

**Nicholas Trevor Wells, 34**, charged April 10 with attempted assault IV, criminal mischief III and two counts of burglary I. Bail set at \$20,000.

**Travis Allen Wilverding, 37**, charged April 6 with DUII and reckless driving.

**Owen Wayne Winters, 50**, sentenced April 6 to 60 days jail, 18 mos. prison and two years post-prison supervision after pleading no contest to DV assault IV, DV strangulation and failure to report as a sex offender. Dismissed: attempt to commit Class B felony.

**Isabella Rean Wynn, 23**, charged April 10 with supplying contraband. Bail set at \$5,000.

**Stephen Todd Yingling, 63**, sentenced April 7 to two days jail, 18 mos. bench probation and a \$100 fine after pleading no contest to assault IV. Dismissed: coercion.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**  
From page 3

located two juveniles, who fled on foot and on bicycle. Officers located one juvenile, who was trespassed from location.

12:59 p.m. - Hunter Ryan Crawford McCord, 21, arrested on LCCC warrants for FTA in possession of meth case, and five separate FTA cases, on Benton County Circuit Court warrants for FTA in DWS and theft cases, and AMC warrant for FTA in DWS case. 1400 block Poplar. Lodged at LCJ. Officers located McCord while on separate call, listed above.

3:30 p.m. - Caller from 1200 block 46th reported neighbors burning trash. Officer responded, contacted occupant who put fire out and was warned for city code violation.

4:01 p.m. - Jessey Allen Tenbusch, 31, cited for DU, 6000 block Main.

9:56 p.m. - Caller reported male lying on sidewalk in 1400 block 24th. Officer responded, contacted male, who denied needing medics and was advised where he could sleep for night.

11:25 p.m. - Caller from 6000 block Main reported loud music at neighboring trailer park. Officer responded, determined that music was coming from local business, which was advised to lower volume.

**LEBANON POLICE**

Lebanon police had not submitted a log for this date in time for publication. When available, log will be updated at lebanonlocalnews.com.

**LCSO/OSP SWEET HOME/S. COUNTY**

9:16 a.m. - Corinda Gail Stubbs, 56, of Sweet Home, cited for speeding, 54/35, 300 block E. Bishop, Brownsville.

11:33 a.m. - Keith Wesley Barnes, 54, of Sweet Home, cited for speeding, 64/45, DU, 24600 block Hwy. 228, Brownsville.

7:31 p.m. - Deputies responded to report of overdose in 100 block Washburn, Brownsville. Patient transported by medics. Non-criminal.

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# Eagles sweep series with Mohawk to even league record

East Linn's baseball team raised their season record to 6-3 Thursday, April 9, with a doubleheader win over Mohawk to complete its three-game series with the Mustangs.

The Eagles won Thursday's game 12-2 and 22-4 wins after beating Mohawk 15-4 on Tuesday.

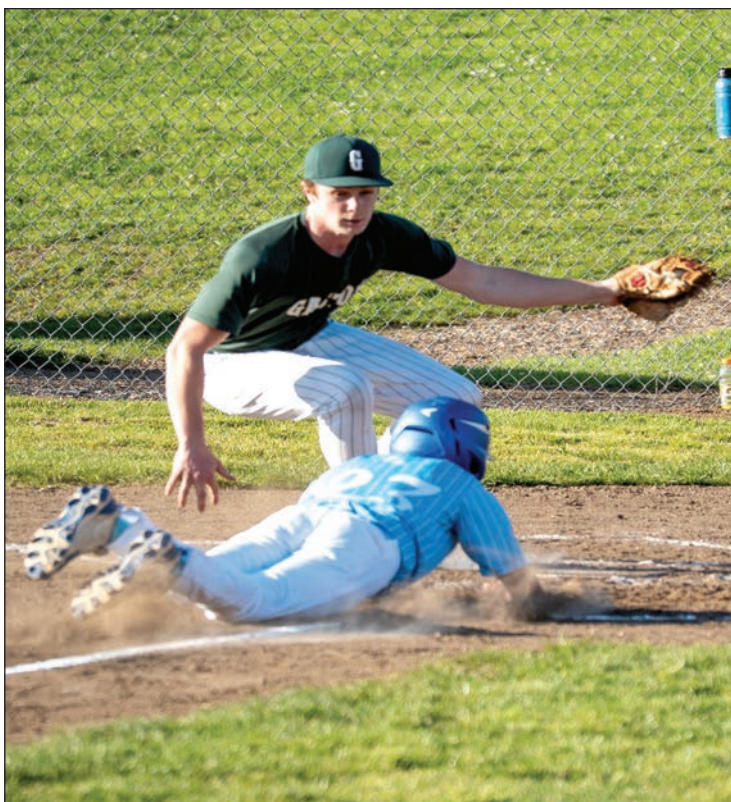
East Linn's only losses so far were in late March to No. 1-ranked Crosshill Christian 10-0, 11-0, 25-5, to open Special District 3 play, but bounced back to beat Gaston 7-6 on April 6 in a non-league match-up before re-entering league play. The wins over Mohawk even their league record at 3-3 going into this week.

In the top of the twinbill at home against East Linn Thursday, the Eagles had a 10-0 lead before the visitors scored in the top of the fifth, the hosts matching that to end the game on the mercy rule.

Blake Burns went the distance for East Linn, striking out five and walking two, while allowing six hits against 23 batters over the five innings.

Blake Burns, Chase Fenerty and Jesse Younger all led the team at the plate, each going 2-3, one of Younger's a double. Younger and Owen King both finished with three RBIs.

The second game on Thursday featured an even greater offensive display by the Eagles, thanks to an 11-run second



East Linn's Nolan Hooper slides into home under the tag at home against Mohawk on April 9. - Cole Harnar photos

inning, which led to another mercy-rule finish in the 22-4 win.

Blake Burns and Asher Taylor combined on the mound for East Linn, who had five players go 2-3 at the plate. Casey May and Isaiah Blount both drove in four runs for the hosts, who got a double from Blount.

In the April 7 game at Mo-

hawk, the Eagles started things off quickly with three runs in the top of the first, followed by 10 more in the third inning. The Mustangs answered with four in the bottom of the frame, but that was it for the hosts, as ELCA added two more in the top of the seventh to win 15-4.

Leading the Eagles at the



Casey May delivers a pitch against Mohawk. See more photos from the game at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com) and [lebanonlocalnews.com](http://lebanonlocalnews.com).

plate were Fenerty, who went 2-5, including a home run, with five runs batted in; Nolan Hooper, who was 2-4 with three RBIs and scoring three himself; Taylor, who was 2-4, both doubles, and scored twice; and May, who was 2-4 with two RBIs.

Fenerty went 2.2 innings, giving up two hits and all four

runs for Mohawk, and striking out five. Younger took over for a little over three innings, striking out six and allowing just two hits.

Up next, starting Tuesday, April 14, is a homestand against Santiam, followed by a road double-header hosted by the Wolverines.

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# Locals come away with wins at Banks track meet

Sweet Home and East Linn Christian both competed Saturday, April 11, at the Rob Frank Invitational hosted by Banks.

The meet included a mix of 19 schools, almost all from northwest Oregon. Team scores were not calculated.

Winners for Sweet Home were senior Dillan Davis in the 400 (23:51), senior McKenzie Miller in the 300 (11:01.11), with teammate Emma Whitton, a sophomore, second in a personal-best 11:50.31, and senior Selah Wright first in the javelin with a PR of 104-6.

Other top-five finishers for Sweet Home boys were junior Landon Murray, second in the 100 (11.67), with sophomore Sam Barringer fourth in a PR of 11.79; Davis second in the 200 (23.51); junior Nick Larson second in the 110 hurdles (17.48) and fifth in the 300 hurdles (46.14); Murray, Barringer, Davis and freshman Brayden Driver second in the 4x100 (44.95); junior Gavin Tyler third in the shot (46-11) and fourth in the javelin (130-8); senior Cannon Klumph fifth in the discus (118-9); Barringer fourth in the high jump (5-10) and second in the triple (38-11½); and junior Kaeson Walker fifth in the triple (37-1).

For the Husky girls, Miller was fourth in the 1500, in a PR of 4:58.81; junior Brooke Elder, senior Delainie Pratt, junior Noelle Helfrich and senior Loralai Mark were second in the 4x100 relay (54.42); Mark was third in the high jump (4-4), with junior Amara Gonzales in fourth (4-4).

"We did really well," Sweet Home Head Coach Nathan Whitfield said, noting that his team came away with 18 personal bests, along with 10 season-bests from the veterans.

"We're still in training mode. We're not setting up anything big for competition yet. Seeing these improvements, we're



Left, Dillan Davis takes the handoff from Kaeson Walker last week during a track meet pitting Sweet Home against Stayton and Newport. Right, Loralai Mark long jumps against Stayton and Newport. She placed third at the Rob Frank Invitational, which included 19 teams, on Saturday. See more photos from the meet at [sweethomenews.com](http://sweethomenews.com).



seeing where the kids are at and they're doing pretty good."

### Eagles win at Rob Frank

East Linn sophomore Ryder Howard won three events for the Eagles: the high jump with a season's best 6-2, the long jump with a personal best of 20-6, and the triple jump with another PR, 38-9.

For the Eagle girls, Lexy Kauffman was first in the 400 (59.92, a PR) and second in the 200 (26.98), and combined with sophomore Kaylyn Kauffman, and juniors Avery Runyon and June Cowan to win the 4x100 relay in 53.60. Sophomore Macy Modderman won the discus (95-10) and junior Tessa Salvage took first in the high jump (4-8).

Other top-five finishers for the East Linn boys were Howard, fourth in the 200 (23.34) and senior Josh Rehart, right behind him in fifth (24.39). Senior Hank Davidson was second in the pole vault (12-0) and sophomore Cole Pennington was fourth in that event (10-0) and fifth in the long jump (18-6).

Senior Bella Albert was

fourth for the girls in the 3000 (12.53.55, a PR) with freshman Morgan Lalonde right behind in fifth (12.58.52, also a PR). Cowan was second in the long jump (16-4, a PR) and third in the 300 hurdles in a PR of 52.29. Senior Svetlana Manner was third in the pole vault (8-6, a PR) and fifth in the javelin (98-11), while Tatiana Manner, also a senior, was fourth in the pole vault (8-0).

Up next for East Linn is a trip to Kennedy Thursday, April 16, followed by a trip to Toledo on April 23, and the Meet of Champions at Sweet Home April 25.

### Sweet Home boys win three-way

Sweet Home's boys scored 74 points to beat Stayton (63) and Newport (35) in a three-way meet matching Oregon West Conference teams Tuesday, April 7, at Husky Field.

The girls were third with 50 points, behind Newport (70) and Stayton (55).

With the Rob Frank meet coming up in four days, coaches curtailed the number of events for the Huskies' top

athletes, so they had limited entries, particularly in girls events.

The Huskies posted 42 personal bests on the boys side and 23 on the girls.

Winners on the track for the Sweet Home were Landon Murray in the 100 (11.65, a PR), Ryker Burr in the 400 (54.98), Nick Larson in the 110 hurdles (17.39), Logan Anderson in the 300 hurdles (47.71, a three-second personal best); and the 4x100 team of Murray, Sam Barringer, Kaeson Walker and Dillan Davis (45.17).

In the field, Sam Barringer

won the high jump with a leap of 5-8 and the triple jump in 38-10½. Larson cleared 10-6 to win the pole vault.

For the girls, McKenzie Miller was the lone winner on the track, clocking a personal best of 5:04.13 in the 1500.

Selah Wright won the javelin with a throw of 92-4, and Delainie Pratt cleared 7-6 to win the pole vault.

Sweet Home will compete Wednesday, April 15, at Stayton, then again on April 22, with North Marion at Stayton before hosting the Meet of Champions on April 25.

- Photos by Scott Swanson



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# Lebanon girls' golf roster numbers soaring as program takes shape

By Scott Swanson  
Of The New Era

Lebanon's girls golf team is on the upswing, big time, from where the Warriors were just three years ago.

That was when Coach Bart Baldwin arrived to take over a program with a roster barely large enough to field a varsity team of five girls. But they were a good group, he said.

"That group of girls I inherited, all five girls on the team averaged a 4.0 GPA. We were recognized by the state as the highest GPA in the entire state for spring sports, which was a nice feather in the cap."

Last year the Warriors had nine golfers; this year they have 18.

"It's going really well," Baldwin said last week as he worked with the golfers who showed up at Pineway Golf Course for a practice session during the parent conferences break.

This is a young roster – six are back from last year's team which included seniors Nora Horne and Julia Morse, with four sophomores and three juniors.

Returnees are now-juniors Carmen Johnson, Sierra Miller, Inez O'Driscoll and Lucy O'Driscoll, along with sophomores Sophie Culbertson and Bailey Lester.

The team is led by three of those – Culbertson, Lester and Miller, who return from last year's varsity and are joined this year on the top five by Johnson and freshman Kapri Collins.

Miller is the lone player who was on that 2024 team when Baldwin took over.

The roster also includes senior Tenaya Garcia, who is new to the program; sophomores Aniah Bremner and Ani Olson; and freshmen Kapri Collins, Saharra Garcia, Leilahni Hall, Julia Hearn, Quinn Miles, Violet Miller,



This year's Lebanon girls golf team includes, from left, Coach Bart Baldwin, Kapri Collins, Kourtlyn Starr, Violet Miller, Carmen Johnson, Bailey Lester, Sophie Culbertson, Sierra Miller, Ani Olson and Leilahni Hall. Not able to be present for this photo (on a non-school day) were Aniah Bremner, Saharra Garcia, Tenaya Garcia, Julia Hearn, Quinn Miles, Inez O'Driscoll, Luci O'Driscoll, Jillian Stuck and Victoria Taggart.

Kourtlyn Starr, Jillian Stuck and Victoria Taggart.

Baldwin, who is assisted by Johnny Garcia, said he's fielding both a junior varsity and a junior varsity 2 team when possible this year.

It's a work in progress, Baldwin said.

"They'll be back next year and with the team that we have, we're hoping to have a team either this year or next year that can get into the regional tournament, be one of the top 3 teams in our league."

Baldwin, who teaches at Ralston Academy, also coaches volleyball at Seven Oak Middle School.

He played golf at Central High School in the late 1980s, "and I've always loved it."

"I kind of stopped playing golf for a while because the fishing got pretty good in my life, but now that I'm back here and they had an open-

ing, I thought, 'You know, this is something I like to do.'"

The Warriors are nearing the midway point of their season, with two tournaments under their belt and four to go.

They will play at Mallard Creek April 27, then host the Mid-Willamette Conference championship tournament May 11-12 at Mallard.

Lebanon finished seventh with 482 points in a MWC match at Cross Creek in Dallas on April 6, which was won by Crescent Valley with 382 points, followed by Corvallis (403) and West Albany (412).

Culbertson led the Warriors, shooting 107, with Miller finishing with 112 after, Baldwin noted, "getting a little overheated."

"She was like, maybe, like 12 over par in the last three holes and she was only like, 40 over par all day," the coach

said. "It's there. Her game's definitely there."

"We have some players that can shoot low and their scores are starting to drop. So I'm actually pretty excited about it."

Both Culbertson and Miller have a shot at the district tournament, he said.

"We have some pretty strong teams in the league. So if we could get some individuals qualified for regionals, that would be great. And then from there, it's kind of up to them on if they can, you know, shoot low and get to the state tournament."

He said his goal now is to get his JV golfers to the point where they can shoot "double bogey golf."

"If they can get to, like, a 54 on for nine holes, that would be great."

The ultimate goal, especially for newcomers who

aren't ready to tee off from the box yet, he said, is "I just want them to love the game and start to develop because over the time, we're going to get their scores to where they're starting to play from the tee box in order to play the whole game."

Baldwin said both his program and the boys have gotten support from the community, especially from Pineway's Mitchell Glasser, whose family has owned the course for generations, who recently donated separate checks for \$1,200 each to the Warriors programs.

Also, he said, the high school Booster Club has donated \$1,000 to support a summer camp for middle-schoolers that the high school teams are holding after school lets out in June "for, hopefully, three Tuesdays."

## The *ICEBOX* Performer Of The Week



This week's ICEBOX performer of the week goes to Chet!

Our freight team has been busy over the past few months, and with a few team members out, Chet has really stepped up wherever he's needed. He's been putting in the work, jumping in to help, and doing it all with a positive attitude.

That kind of drive is what keeps things moving here at Radiator Supply House.

Thanks, Chet, for all your hard work and dedication, we appreciate you!



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# Local teachers seek win for science, school funds

By Sarah Brown  
Of The New Era

Brooklyn McElroy, a science teacher at Lebanon High School, Amber Arceo-Bigoni, an agriculture teacher at Sweet Home High School, and Serenity Wilson, an elementary teacher at Hawthorne, are participating in the "America's Favorite Teacher" competition for a chance to help their school, inspire their students and support The Planetary Society.

Currently in round four of nine elimination rounds, McElroy is placing second in her group, Arceo-Bigoni is in sixth in her group, and Wilson is in second place in her group. Round four ends at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 16.

For the teachers who place in the top five of their group, they will go on to the next round to compete for first place in their group, which will move them on to the next level of rounds.

The competition is a fundraiser to benefit The Planetary Society, which supports the advancement of space science and exploration, but

also provides a cash prize to the winner who will use the money to help their school.

Voters can cast one free vote a day, or donate to the cause for additional votes.

McElroy said that, as a science teacher, she's passionate about supporting the local community. By participating in this competition, she's placing herself in a position to win \$25,000, which she intends to put toward the rebuilding of the high school's Heath Stadium, which was recently demolished due to structural damage.

"This historic space hosts football games, track meets, graduations and community events," she said. "I want to give back to the students and community who welcomed me with open arms by helping preserve a safe, meaningful gathering place full of memories and school pride for future generations."

Arceo-Bigoni plans to split the cash prize into scholarships and to purchase better demonstrative equipment for her engine and hydro-



Local teachers Serenity Wilson, left, and Brooklyn McElroy are among the leaders in the "America's Favorite Teacher" competition. - Contributed photos

lics lab.

"I would also try and use it to start a heavy equipment operator program at my school," she said.

Wilson wants to invest the money into her school's playground.

"We are working to make the playground more accessible for the students," Wil-

son said. "I would also put it towards school supplies to provide for students who can't afford to bring any. I was that kid in school who could not afford to bring in supplies, so I don't want any students to ever have to experience that."

If McElroy, Arceo-Bigoni or Wilson win, they will also be awarded a trip to Hawaii and a feature in Reader's Digest, and Bill Nye "the Science Guy" will visit their school for a motivational assembly.

"I became a science teacher because I love creating experiences students enjoy and remember years later," McElroy said. "Teaching allows me to spark curiosity and build confidence while preparing future mothers and fathers, engineers, doctors, nurses, scientists, politicians, entrepreneurs and world leaders. Every lesson helps students learn to think critically, solve problems and use science to shape their futures and improve the world around them."

For Arceo-Bigoni, being a teacher means being an influence to those who may be feeding the future world.

"The average farmer in America is over 75 years old," she said. "We need new generations of tradesmen, farmers, ranchers, researchers and engineers to feed the world. I can help start a small drop in that big pond."

And for Wilson, she said she became a teacher so she could provide a safe space at school for the kids who need it.

"When I was in school, I needed a safe space; I needed a place to go where I felt comfortable and seen," she said. "I became a teacher because I want to be a safe space for children. I want to make a difference, even if it is one small change."

To vote for McElroy, visit [AmericasFavTeacher.org/2026/brooklyn-mcelroy](http://AmericasFavTeacher.org/2026/brooklyn-mcelroy)

To vote for Arceo-Bigoni, visit [AmericasFavTeacher.org/2026/amber-r-arceo-bigoni](http://AmericasFavTeacher.org/2026/amber-r-arceo-bigoni)

To vote for Wilson, vis-

## Montgomery Gentry to perform as County Fair's Friday headliner

Southern rock artist Montgomery Gentry, featuring Eddie Montgomery, will round out the 2026 Linn County Fair main stage entertainment lineup, performing at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, July 17, the Linn County Fair Board announced last week.

Montgomery Gentry, featuring Eddie Montgomery, joins a lineup that includes Frankie Ballard, who will perform on Thursday, July 16, and The Band Perry, which will take the stage on Saturday, July 18.

"The origins of much of Montgomery Gentry's music relates to agriculture and rural America," said Roger Nyquist, a Linn County commissioner and Fair Board member. "We think fairgoers are going to enjoy this show."

Montgomery Gentry has a long history of making hit music, starting in the 1990s, when Eddie Montgomery and Troy Gentry — both Kentucky natives — teamed up to take country music by storm.

In 2017, Troy Gentry died in a helicopter crash, but Montgomery Gentry lives on because the duo promised each other they would continue their musical legacy even if something happened to one of them.

Montgomery Gentry performed at the Oregon Jamboree in 2002 and 2009.

Today, Eddie Montgomery continues to entertain audiences with southern rock hits and has collaborated with Charlie Daniels, Toby Keith,



Eddie Montgomery fronts Montgomery Gentry, which will perform on Friday at this summer's Linn County Fair.

Five for Fighting and The Allman Brothers Band.

As one of the most recognizable voices in a generation of country singers, Eddie Montgomery continues to tour coast-to-coast behind a time-tested collection of rowdy and heartfelt songs.

That collection grows with the new release — "Home Run," a six-song EP that includes hard-working stories, fatherly wisdom, brotherly appreciation and a boot-stomping reworking of Montgomery Gentry's first single "Hillbilly Shoes."

With five No. 1 country radio hits, a Grand Ole Opry membership and a Kentucky Music Hall of Fame induction under his belt as part of Montgomery Gentry, the man in the hat shows no signs of slowing down.

After all, why would any-

one walk away from a dream-come-true?

"I'm livin' life," Montgomery said. "I'm so happy that I gotta sit on my hands to keep 'em from wavin' at everybody."

"Home Run" debuted Nov. 1 via Average Joes Entertainment.

Ahead of the release, Montgomery unleashed a 25th anniversary edition of "Hillbilly Shoes," a signature country-rocker originally released as Montgomery Gentry's first single and the opening track of the duo's debut album Tattoos & Scars.

General admission to all three concerts is free. Reserved seating is available at <https://www.linncountyfair.com/concerts>.

The Linn County Fair & Expo Center is at 3700 Knox Butte Road East, Albany.

### THE NEW SWEET HOME TIMBER CITY AMERICAN LEGION POST 133

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BINGO STARTS AT 5:30 PM

4 Bingo Cards for \$20. Door Prizes.  
Every Bingo Winner wins a gift card.  
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AMERICAN LEGION POST 133  
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109 W. HOLLEY RD., SWEET HOME.

MORE INFORMATION CALL KAT @ 541-554-6376

## Sports Roundup

### Sports Roundup: SH boys second at Trysting

Sweet Home's boys finished second in a six-team Oregon West Conference match Monday, April 6, at Trysting Tree in Corvallis.

The Huskies shot 350, behind Cascade (329) and ahead of North Marion (372), Newport (374), Stayton (384) and Philomath (429).

Junior Trent Harvey was the individual winner, shooting 79 to lead his team. Sophomore Henry Gainer was second (88), followed by sophomore Evan Malabago (90), a rookie to golf, sophomore Blayne Schuster (93) and senior Lynkin Royer (98), who's also new to high school golf.

The Huskies played their only home tournament Monday, April 13, at Mallard Creek, against the same teams.

### ELCA golfers finish in pack

At Emerald Valley in Creswell Wednesday, April 8, East Linn finished 11th, right behind Corvallis, Seaside and Marshfield, with a 365, in the 15-team field that included some major players in golf among the small schools in western Oregon.

Bandon was first with 312, followed by South Medford (324) Madras (335), Blanchet (336) and Marist (338).

The all-sophomore Eagles were led by Grady Knurowski with 2-over-par 74, good for fifth place individually, followed by Anderson Kropf (94), Dailey Kirkpatrick (97), Liam Medford (100) and Parker Caddick (104).

East Linn was back at Shadow Hills in Marshfield Monday, April 13.

### Husky girls third in golf

Sweet Home's girls finished third in a tournament hosted by Blanchet Wednesday, April 8, which included 14

teams, though only five had the five golfers necessary to score as a team.

The Huskies shot 438 as a team, as Santiam Christian took first with a 409, followed by Taft (430). Philomath had a 472 and Newport 495 to round out team scoring.

Junior Tori Victor was eighth overall, finishing with a 97 to lead Sweet Home, followed by sophomore Taelyn Coleman, a rookie to high school golf, with a 105. Senior Isabella Wagner was third for the Huskies with 115, followed by sophomore Lynmikka Damag, also new to high school golf, with 121 and senior Eleanor Larsen (127).

Salem Academy's Chloe Johnston was the individual winner with 75, followed by teammates Ellie Gladow in second (76) and Sloane James fourth (87). Santiam Christian's Akira White was third (84).

### Warriors sixth at Diamond Woods

Lebanon finished sixth out of nine teams in a Mid-Willamette Conference match April 6 at Diamond Woods in Monroe.

The Warriors finished with 364 points as Corvallis won with 320, with South Albany a distant second (353), just ahead of West Albany (354).

Senior Sam Tunstill shot 83 to lead the Warriors, followed by junior Joey Squires (89), senior Austin George (92), sophomore Tanner Lee (100) and sophomore Jeremiah Emerson (103).

Senior Jaden Offutt finished with 93, but was not seeded in the top 5, so did not contribute to the team score.

### Lebanon girls top MWC foes in track

In a four-way meet Tuesday, April 7, with Central, West Albany and Woodburn,

Lebanon's girls finished first in both varsity and junior varsity competition, the varsity Warriors scoring 92 points, over West Albany (79), Central (74) and Woodburn (11).

The boys were second in both the junior varsity and varsity competitions, Lebanon finishing with 76 points in the latter, behind West Albany (82) and ahead of Central (61) and Woodburn (33).

Top-three finishers on the track for the boys in varsity competition were senior Bohdi Brown, who actually finished with the same time in the 100 as West Albany's Cole Butrlalkorn (11.47) but was listed as second in results; sophomore Eadon Marshall in the 200 (24.52, a personal best); senior Cade Weber, first in the 800 (2:07.57, a PR); freshman Xavier Macedo, first in the 3000 (10:41.05), ahead of senior David Brandt, who was second (10:43.16); sophomore Tyler Deckert, third in the 110 hurdles (17.98, a PR); and the 4x100 team of Brown, Weber, senior Logan Large and sophomore Luke Johnson, second behind Central (43.86) in 43.97.

### Lebanon baseball heads into league

Lebanon's baseball team wound up its preseason schedule with a close 9-8 loss on the road Tuesday, April 7, at Cleveland.

The Warriors (2-7) were supposed to play McKay at home on Friday, but thanks to a mixup, no officials appeared for the game, which was rescheduled for a doubleheader Monday of this week.

The Cleveland game had its ups and downs. Lebanon scored a run in the top of the first but Cleveland, also nicknamed the Warriors, responded with three runs

in the bottom of the inning. Lebanon's bats woke up in the top of the third, the visitors scoring seven runs on six hits.

Cohen Vandiver banged a RBI double as part of the rally. The score remained 8-3 until Cleveland tied things up with five runs in the bottom of the sixth.

Lebanon was unable to add any additional runs and the hosts were able to manufacture one run in the bottom of the inning to record the win.

The Warrior offense scored eight runs. Cole Gerig, Treyton Enright, Jaiden Von Ruden, Cohen Vandiver, Austin Turnbridge, Niko Autry and Wyatt Jenkins each recorded a hit. Von Ruden and Vandiver each drove in two runs. The Warriors also stole four bases in the game.

### Warriors finish preseason softball 3-7

Lebanon wound up its preseason softball schedule with a 13-11 win at Willamette followed by a 17-5 loss at home to 6A Nelson and a close 6-4 loss on the road at Century, also a 6A school, all last week.

The Warriors and Willamette battled the entire game. There were three ties and four lead changes.

Lebanon scored one in the top of the first. Willamette scored three runs in both the bottom of the third and fourth to take a commanding lead.

But the Warriors battled back in the top of the fifth with six runs of their own. Each team scored four in the sixth, making it 11-all going into the seventh. Scarlett French delivered a two-run homer in the top of the seventh and the Warriors held on in the bottom of the inning to secure the win.

Three Warriors led the offensive parade. French went

2-3 with the homer, a double and five RBIs. Taelyn Whitney was close behind going two for two with three RBI. Finally, Majestah Nida went two for two including a double and one RBI. Freshman Bristol Hockema pitched the entire game for the win.

On Thursday, the Warriors hosted Nelson. The Hawks took control early and dominated the entire game.

The visitors scored nine runs in the third inning and it was an uphill battle for the Warriors the rest of the game.

Three Warriors got hits. Annastazia Marshal was 1-3, French was 1-1 and a walk, and Jalynn Wilson was one for three with a RBI. The Warriors used Hockema, Marshall and Hailey Myers on the mound.

On Friday, at Century of the Pacific Conference, it was a closer game.

Century scored three runs in the bottom of the first and second innings to take a commanding 6-0 lead.

The Warriors never gave up. They chipped away at the lead, scoring two runs in the third and two more in the fifth. But Lebanon was unable to get any closer and Century won 6-4.

Offensively, French had another strong game, going 1-4 with a double and an RBI. Myers was 1-2 and walked twice, while Marshall was 1-4 with a triple.

Hockema pitched another complete game, striking out three and walking four.

### Sweet Home baseball battles to win

The Huskies won a close one in baseball at home Tuesday, April 7, then got rained out Friday when they were scheduled to play Harrisburg on the road.

They were scheduled to host Marshfield Tuesday, April 14, then finish their non-league schedule Friday at Santiam Christian.

It was a slugfest with North Bend as the teams kept it close the whole way, neither leading by more than a run, with four lead changes, the last in the bottom of the seventh, when the Huskies evened the score at 8-8, forcing extra innings. Both scored in the eighth and then, after Eddie Taylor and the defense kept the Bulldogs scoreless in the top of the ninth, freshman Macen Rosa scored on a double to right field by senior Luke Rosa to give Sweet Home the winning run.

Luke Rosa went 4-5 at the plate, with two RBIs and Kyle Zajic was 3-5, with four runs batted in.

Zajic started on the mound, going three innings before being relieved by Tatum Hoffman, followed by Rosa and Taylor, who pitched the final two innings.



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MON-FRI 7 AM - 4 PM  
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### SWEET HOME IN TOWN TRANSIT

MON-SAT 9 AM - 4 PM  
SHOP LOCAL- 4 TRIPS A DAY  
THROUGH TOWN

Starting March 9th, 2026 there will be a route change. Currently on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays the Sweet Home In-Town Transit (formerly the Shopper) makes 3 trips up to Cascadia. That route will be replaced by our Dial-A-Bus service. Starting March 9th, our riders needing to get to and from this community can call us 541-367-4775 and schedule a ride. Rides cost \$1 each way. Rides must be scheduled 48-72 hours in advance. Eligible pick-up times are available between the hours of 10am-3pm. Outside those times will be on a case-by-case basis.

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# Driver manages to get video of wolf – for real – on Hwy. 126

A Bend man's roadside wildlife encounter in mid-March has led to the first confirmed wolf sighting in the McKenzie Ranger District, according to biologists who reviewed a video recording of the animal.

Jake Rau told McKenzie River Reflections newspaper in an article posted March 19 that he encountered the animal while driving from Bend toward Eugene along Highway 126 east of McKenzie Pass. As he rounded a corner, he noticed what appeared to be a large predator feeding on a deer carcass next to the pavement.

"At first I wasn't sure what it was," Rau said. "It didn't look like a typical coyote. It was bigger and just looked different."

When Rau approached, the animal moved off the road and ran up a nearby bank, briefly giving him a clear side view. Curious about what he had seen, the Central Oregon resident turned his vehicle around and returned to the scene to take another look.

By the time he returned, the animal had come back to the carcass. Rau readied his phone and captured video as the animal ran up the bank again and paused, looking directly toward him before disappearing into the brush.

Remembering he'd passed by the McKenzie Ranger Station, he turned around and



A wolf appears in a video shot by a motorist on Hwy. 126. – McKenzie River Reflections/Jake Rau photo

brought the footage to the office where biologists confirmed what he suspected.

According to Rau, district staff were excited to review the video and identified the animal as a wolf - marking the first verified sighting in the ranger district.

Biologists also told Rau they had recently received other reports of possible wolf activity in the area, suggesting the animals may be moving through or expanding into parts of the McKenzie watershed.

McKenzie Reflections Publisher Ken Engelman said local residents have reported spotting wolves, but Rau's was the first actual photo evidence of a wolf locally.

While wolves are known to inhabit large parts of eastern

Oregon, sightings remain rare. Their naturally cautious behavior often keeps them out of sight even in areas where they are present.

Wildlife officials say wolves can travel large distances and are typically elusive, which may explain why they are rarely seen despite occasional evidence of their presence.

Rau said he reported the sighting to help wildlife managers track the animals and encourages others in the area to stay alert.

"I just wanted to make sure they knew about it," he said. "People around here should probably keep an eye out."

– This article courtesy of McKenzie River Reflections

## 911 panel shutdown OK'd by Lebanon

By Sarah Brown  
Of The New Era

Lebanon City Council members agreed to sign a resolution supporting dissolution of the Emergency Telephone Agency (ETA) and move forward with a levy for the jail during their April 8 meeting.

The ETA decision was in response to a recommendation from the committee overseeing the agency that it be dissolved.

In 1986, eight separate 911 centers (Public Safety Answering Points) in Linn County were consolidated into a single countywide center operated by the Linn County Sheriff's Office under an Intergovernmental Agreement, with oversight provided by a committee made up of local fire and law enforcement representatives. The committee met regularly for the next 39 years.

On Jan. 14, committee members voted to recommend dissolving the committee-led ETA, finding that its original purpose has been fulfilled and that its functions are no longer necessary for ongoing 911

operations.

In order to successfully dissolve the ETA – essentially allowing LCSO to continue operating the 911 center without committee oversight – at least two-thirds of the initial signing parties must approve the termination.

These include Linn County commissioners; Linn, Benton and Lane county sheriffs; the cities of Albany, Brownsville, Corvallis, Eugene, Halsey, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Millersburg, Scio, Sodaville, Springfield, Sweet Home, Tangent and Waterloo; Santiam Memorial Hospital, Lebanon Ambulance, Sweet Home Ambulance, and Detroit/Idanha Ambulance; and fire agencies for Albany, Brownsville, Detroit/Idanha, Harrisburg, Jefferson, Lebanon, North Albany, Palestine, Scio, Sweet Home and Tangent.

In other action, the council voted to move forward with a strategy to ask for a levy supporting the reopening of the municipal jail, after reviewing recent poll results.

City Manager Ron Whitlatch informed the council

that the "general sentiment" of the poll revealed that 63.7% support the reopening of the jail, the percentage dropped to 48.6% after details and cost were revealed, and it rose to 66.3% after they later learned they would not see an increase in their taxes because the city bond would soon be paid off.

He reminded the council to consider some key points: there may be potential "competition" with other local tax measures, the city's current bond that costs about tax payers about \$1.17 per \$1,000 of assessed value will soon be paid off, and the proposed jail levy is estimated to be about \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

During the council meeting, councilors were asked to consider whether they would like to put a levy measure out in the November 2026 election, May 2027 special election (at a cost of \$60,000 to \$100,000), or to not pursue a levy at this time.

Councilors agreed to move forward with a measure for the November 2026 general election.



Lebanon and Albany students kick off the first song in Lebanon Community Chorus' "Rhythms of Life" concert, held April 12.

## Seasons of Life

Lebanon Community Chorus presented "The Rhythms of Life," directed by Tami McWayne and accompanied by Bill Langdon, on Sunday, April 12, at Lebanon High School.

Middle school students from Lebanon and Albany kicked off the concert with "When I Grow Up," a song from a child's perspective reflecting on the benefits they will experience when they're grown up, such as eating sweets every day and being brave enough to fight the creatures under the bed.

According to McWayne, the concert followed the various seasons of life, from the child's eagerness to grow up, to friendships and love, from work to raising children, and from a changing world to the end of life, all of the seasons we walk through making up the rhythm of life.

Bill Boyce, Lisa Gabbard, Juliette Asuncion, Luke Rausch, Susan Fierro, Jane Allen, Kari Bennett, Pattie Serigne, Jennifer Moody, Julia Kirby, Anne Johnson, Eric Bennett and Teresa Clinton performed solos.

– Photos by Sarah Brown

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## Public Notices

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND REQUEST FOR COMMENT NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Sweet Home Planning Commission will hold a public hearing(s) to consider the following request(s).

REQUEST: The applicant is requesting approval of a Variance to allow a reduced lot frontage of 55 feet and 57 feet for a proposed land partition and to maintain an existing 5-foot front yard setback for a pre-existing residential structure. The property currently contains a pre-existing home with a 5-foot front yard setback; however, no physical changes are occurring to this pre-existing setback as a result of the partition. The subject property is located in the Residential High Density (R-3) zone. Pursuant to Sweet Home Municipal Code (SHMC) Chapter 17.14, the required lot frontage is 60 feet. While the proposed frontage changes would individually represent less than a 10% deviation, the City has determined that the cumulative deviation, when combined with the existing nonconforming front yard setback, exceeds the 10 percent adjustment threshold and requires approval of a Variance pursuant to SHMC 17.106.010: "The development standards in this Development Code protect the public health, safety and welfare by establishing standard setbacks, maximum building heights and other development standards that apply to various uses. For lands or uses with unique characteristics the intent and purpose of the development standards may be maintained while allowing for a variance to requirements. A Variance may be approved for those requests resulting in greater than a 10% change in a quantifiable standard." The applicant is therefore requesting a Variance to allow the proposed lot frontages of 55 feet for proposed Parcel 2 and 57 feet for proposed Parcel 3 of Partition Application P26-04 while acknowledging the pre-existing 5-foot front yard setback. The variance is necessary because the development code does not clearly account for pre-existing nonconforming structures during a partition where no actual change to those setbacks is taking place. This request will allow the landowner to develop the property in a manner consistent with neighboring properties to the north and east that feature similar pre-existing non-conforming building setbacks VR26-03 is being filed concurrently with application P26-04. Application P26-04 is reliant on the approval of application VR26-03..

APPLICANT: Andrew Johnson, TerraTech Land Surveyors  
PROPERTY OWNER: Duke Rohner

FILE NUMBER: VR26-03

PROPERTY LOCATION: 2034 Long St, located in Sweet Home, Oregon 97386; Identified on the Linn County Assessor's Map as 32BC, Tax Lot 2900

REVIEW AND DECISION CRITERIA: Sweet Home Municipal Code Section(s): 17.14.030, 17.90.030, 17.106, 17.108, 17.126, 17.130

## Public Notices

HEARING DATE & TIME: May 21st, 2026, at 6:30 PM  
HEARING LOCATION: City Hall, Council Chambers at 3225 Main Street, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386

STAFF CONTACT: Ray Grundy, Planning & Building Permit Tech  
Phone: (541) 367-8113; Email: rgrundy@sweethomeor.gov

You may submit comments or recommendations prior to, or at the public hearing. Written comments submitted by May 7, 2026, at 5:00 PM will be included in the staff report that is provided to the Planning Commission. Written comments that are submitted after that time, but prior to the hearing, will be presented to the Planning Commission at their public hearing. Comments may be emailed to rgrundy@sweethomeor.gov, or mailed or submitted to the Community and Economic Development Department office at City Hall, 3225 Main Street, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386. Please include the file number(s) in the subject line of your comment. The failure of an issue to be raised in a hearing, in person or by letter, or failure to provide sufficient specificity to afford the decision maker an opportunity to respond to the issue precludes appeal to the Land Use Board of Appeals based on that issue. A copy of the application, all documents and evidence relied upon by the applicant and applicable criteria are available for inspection at no cost and a copy will be provided at reasonable cost. A copy of the staff report will be available for inspection at no cost at least seven days prior to the hearing and a copy will be provided at reasonable cost. Please contact the Community and Economic Development Department at 3225 Main Street, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386; Phone: (541) 367-8113. People interested in commenting on this application should submit testimony in writing to the Community and Economic Development Department Office located in City Hall prior to the hearing or attend the meeting and give testimony verbally. Individuals who wish to testify will be given the opportunity to do so by the Chair of the Commission at the Planning Commission meeting. Such testimony should address the criteria in the Sweet Home Municipal Code which are applicable to the request. Notice of the decision on this application will be mailed to the applicant, property owner, those who provided written comments on the proposal, and those who requested a copy of the decision. The location of the meeting is accessible to individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please notify the Community and Economic Development Department Office in advance of the meeting by calling (541) 367-8113.

(4/15)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND REQUEST FOR COMMENT. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Sweet Home Planning Commission will hold a public hearing(s) to consider the following request(s).

REQUEST: The applicant is

## Public Notices

requesting approval of a three-parcellandpartitionThe applicant is proposing to partition an approximately 27,858-square-foot lot into three parcels per Sweet Home Municipal Code Chapter 17.98. Proposed Parcel 1 shall be approximately 17,724 square feet, Proposed Parcel 2 (containing an existing home) shall be approximately 5,126 square feet, and Proposed Parcel 3 shall be approximately 5,008 square feet. The subject property is located in the Residential High Density (R-3) zone. The applicant is also requesting a Variance to allow for a reduced lot width of 55 feet for Parcel 2 and 57 feet for Parcel 3, where the standard minimum width is 60 feet. Additionally, the request seeks to formally recognize an existing 5-foot setback for the preexisting home on Parcel 2. No physical changes to the pre-existing structure's setbacks are occurring as a result of this partition. Pursuant to Sweet Home Municipal Code (SHMC) 17.106.010, the City has determined that the cumulative nature of these deviations—specifically the frontage reductions combined with the existing nonconforming setback—exceeds the 10 percent adjustment threshold and requires a Variance. Application P26-04 is being filed concurrently with Application VR26-03. Application P26-04 is reliant on the approval of application VR26-03. Both applications shall be heard by the Planning Commission pursuant to SHMC 17.120.010: Applications for more than one land use action and permit for the same property may, at the applicant's discretion, be heard or reviewed concurrently. Multiple land use requests involving different processing Types shall be heard and decided at the higher processing Type. For example, an application involving a Conditional Use (Type III) with an Adjustment (Type II) shall be reviewed and decided as a Type III request. APPLICANT: Andrew Johnston, TerraTech Land Surveyors

PROPERTY OWNER: Duke Rohner

FILE NUMBER: P26-04

PROPERTY LOCATION: 2034 Long St located in Sweet Home, Oregon 97386; Identified on the Linn County Assessor's Map as 32BC, Tax Lot 2900

REVIEW AND DECISION CRITERIA: Sweet Home Municipal Code Section(s): 17.14.030, 17.58, 17.90.030, 17.98, 17.108, 17.126, 17.130

HEARING DATE & TIME: May 21st, 2026, at 6:30 PM  
HEARING LOCATION: City Hall, Council Chambers at 3225 Main Street, Sweet Home, Oregon 97386

STAFF CONTACT: Ray Grundy, Planning & Building Permit Tech  
Phone: (541) 367-8113; Email: rgrundy@sweethomeor.gov

You may submit comments or recommendations prior to, or at the public hearing. Written comments submitted by May 7, 2026, at 5:00 PM will be included in the staff report that is provided to the Planning Commission. Written comments that are submitted after that time, but prior to the

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(4/15)

## Public Notices

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(4/15)

**Sweet Home Police Department  
1950 Main St., Sweet Home, OR  
97386  
(541) 367-5181**

**Notice of intent to dispose of  
property under ORS 98.245**

*The Sweet Home Police Department has in its physical possession the unclaimed personal property described below. If you have any ownership interest in any of the unclaimed property, you must file a claim with the Sweet Home Police Department within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice or you will lose interest in that property. You may file a claim that presents proof satisfactory that you are the lawful owner or security interest holder of the property. The unclaimed property may be donated to a nonprofit organization or another government agency; retained for use by the City of Sweet Home; destroyed; or sold at public auction through govdeals.com,*

## Public Notices

ebay.com or Facebook at any time after the 30-day period expires, April 15-May 15, 2026 (PP 26-01):

Wallet for Brandon Thomas, keys, photos, ODL for Carl Hoogestegar, gift cards, ID for Danny Kleiven, credit cards for Mandy House, insurance card for John Ramirez, knives, channel locks, lighters, vaping devices, corded hand saw, jacket, tool kit, binoculars, doorbell, camera, clothing, blankets, toys, handgun.  
(4/15)

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE  
STATE OF OREGON  
FOR THE COUNTY OF LINN  
Probate Department**

In the Matter of the Estate of  
CHRISTY M. CORL, Deceased.  
Case No. 26PB03144

NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on April 6, 2026, Kyle J. Berge, was appointed as Personal Representative of the above-referenced estate. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them, with vouchers attached, to the Personal Representative or to Stacey D. Mealer, Attorney, at the addresses listed below, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, or the claims may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or the attorney for the Personal Representative.

Personal Representative  
Kyle J. Berge  
40990 Lacombe Drive  
Lebanon, OR 97355  
(541) 971-8597

Attorney for Personal Representative  
Stacey D. Mealer, Attorney  
OSB#023915

PO Box 81 ~ 1195 Main Street  
Suite 2  
Sweet Home, OR 97386  
(541) 270-2406 ~ Mealer@  
actionnet.net  
(4/15)

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Linn Soil and Water Conservation District will be held on Tuesday, May 12th at 5:00 p.m. at OSU Extension, 33630 McFarland Rd., Tangent, Oregon. For further information or to RSVP, contact Debra Paul at 541-926-2483; email: debra.paul@or.nacdn.net.

(4/15 - 4/22)

**Summons By Publication  
To: Axl Lee Gallagher**

You have been sued by Megan Gallagher, the Petitioner, in the District Court in and for Bannack County, Idaho, Case No. CV03-26-00657.

The nature of the claim against you is for Divorce with Minor Children.

Any time after 21 days following the last publication of this Summons, the court may enter a judgment against you without further notice, unless prior to that you have filed a written response in the proper form, including case number, and paid any required filing fees to the Clerk of the Court at [mailing address, physical address (if different from mailing address) and telephone number of the

**Public Notices**

district court clerk] 624 E Center St. Pocatello, ID 83204 Phone number 208-915-2604 and served a copy of your response on the other party, whose mailing address and telephone number are: 1624 N. Arthur # 1 Pocatella, ID 83204 phone number 208-915-2604

A copy of the Summons and Petition/Motion can be obtained by contacting either the clerk of the Court or the other party. If you wish legal assistance, you should immediately retain an attorney to advise you in this matter.

Date: 3/17/2026  
Clerk, by: Brandy Peck, Deputy Clerk  
(3/25 - 4/15)

**Notice of Application for Allocation of Conserved Water CW-149**

CW-149 filed by Lee Holdings, LLC, 34309 Highway 34 SE, Albany, OR 97322, proposes to convert 399.2 acres from big gun overhead irrigation to a drip irrigation system under Certificate 98556 with a September 16, 2015, priority from two wells in Oak Creek Basin. The project is expected to conserve approx. 1.33 cubic feet per second (cfs) and a max. duty of 399.2 acre-feet (AF). The applicant also proposes to convert 136.04 acres from big gun overhead irrigation to a drip irrigation system under Certificate 98658 with a July 27, 2018, priority from a well in Oak Creek Basin. The project is expected to conserve approx. 0.6 cfs and a max. duty of 136.0 AF. The Applicant proposes 25% of the conserved water under each right, being 0.33 cfs/99.8 AF under Certificate 98556 and 0.15 cfs/34.0 AF under Certificate 98658 be protected in the source aquifer.

The project appears to be consistent with the requirements under ORS 537.470. Any interested person may submit written comments directly related to CW-149 within 20 days of the last date of newspaper publication, being by 5:00pm on April 15. Comments should be sent to the attention of the ACW Program, Water Resources Department, 725 Summer Street NE, Suite A, Salem, OR 97301.  
(4/8 - 4/15)

**NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Brownsville Rural Fire District, Linn County, State of Oregon, to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027, will be held at Fire Station 61 600 E. Blakely Ave, Brownsville, OR. The meeting will take place on April 28th, 2026 at 6:30 pm. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the budget message and to receive comment from the public on the budget.

This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed programs with the Budget Committee. A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after April 17th, 2026 at Station 61, 600 E. Blakely Ave. Brownsville, OR, between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:00 pm.  
(4/8 - 4/15)

**Public Notices**

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF LINN Probate Department**

In the Matter of the Estate of ANTHONY BRIT JEWELL, Deceased.

Case No. 26PB03264  
NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on April 8, 2026, Michelle Jewell, was appointed as Personal Representative of the above-referenced estate. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them, with vouchers attached, to the Personal Representative or to Stacey D. Mealer, Attorney, at the addresses listed below, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, or the claims may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or the attorney for the Personal Representative.  
Personal Representative Michelle Jewell  
4302 Airport Road  
Sweet Home, OR 97386  
(541) 520-6552  
Attorney for Personal Representative Stacey D. Mealer, Attorney  
OSB#023915  
PO Box 81 ~ 1195 Main Street Suite 2  
Sweet Home, OR 97386  
(541) 270-2406 ~ Mealer@actionnet.net  
(4/15)

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF LINN Probate Department**

In the Matter of the Estate of DARLINE LOUISE BYRD, Deceased.

Case No. 26PB03364  
NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on April 10, 2026, Jason Lee Byrd, was appointed as Personal Representative of the above-referenced estate. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them, with vouchers attached, to the Personal Representative or to Stacey D. Mealer, Attorney, at the addresses listed below, within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, or the claims may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or the attorney for the Personal Representative.  
Personal Representative Jason Lee Byrd  
1396 Cascade Drive  
Lebanon, OR 97355  
(541) 777-9632  
Attorney for Personal Representative Stacey D. Mealer, Attorney  
OSB#023915  
PO Box 81 ~ 1195 Main Street Suite 2  
Sweet Home, OR 97386  
(541) 270-2406 ~ Mealer@actionnet.net  
(4/15)

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON FOR THE COUNTY OF LINN PROBATE DEPARTMENT**

In the Matter of the Estate of PATTY D. ELLIS, Deceased.

**Public Notices**

Case No. 26PB03041  
NOTICE TO INTERESTED PERSONS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned has been appointed Personal Representative of the above estate. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them to the undersigned Personal Representative in care of the undersigned attorney at: 319 Sixth Street SW, Albany, OR 97321 within four months after the date of the publication of this notice, as stated below, or such claims may be barred.

All persons whose rights may be affected by the proceedings in this estate may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the Personal Representative, or the attorney for the Personal Representative. DATED and first published April 15, 2026.

Personal Representative MICHAEL D. ELLIS  
3780 S. Santiam Hwy.  
Lebanon, OR 97355  
Attorney DAVID B. BECKHAM  
319 Sixth Avenue SW  
Albany, OR 97321  
(4/15)

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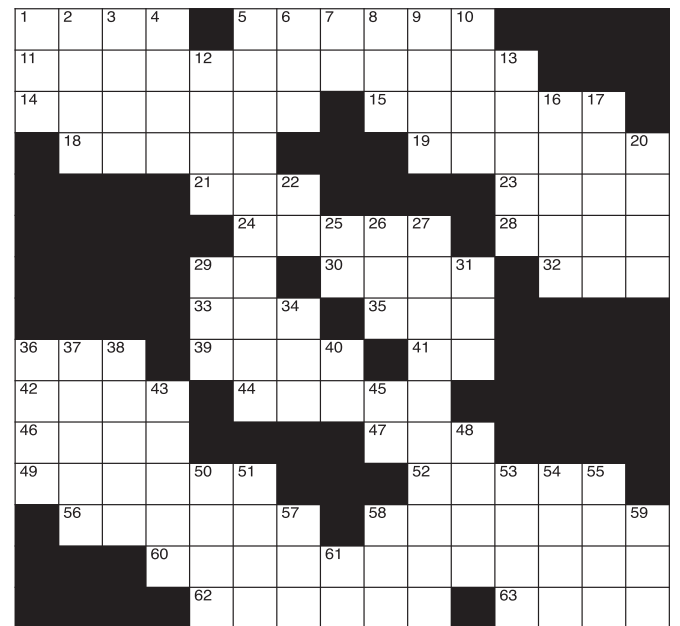
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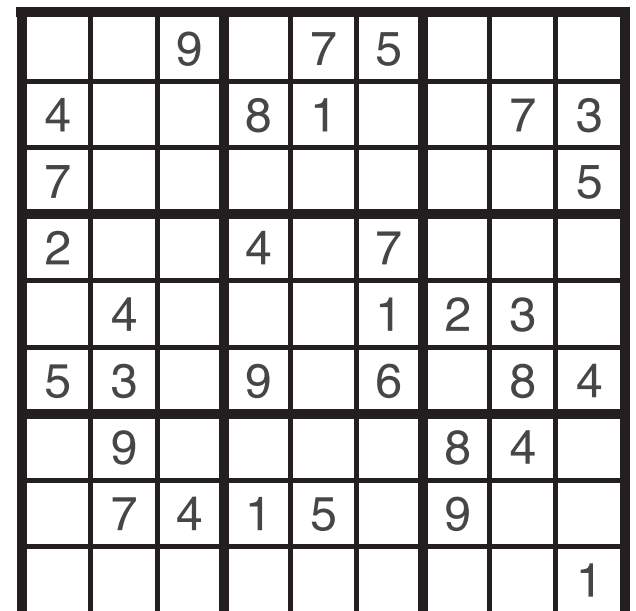
**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Defunct social networking service
- 5. Facial expressions
- 11. Forebears
- 14. A portable gun
- 15. Decrees
- 18. Resin obtained from tropical trees
- 19. One who divines the future
- 21. River in Oregon
- 23. Norse god of thunder
- 24. It's on the lawn
- 28. Speaks
- 29. Polish beer
- 30. Ethnic group in Laos
- 32. Insecticide
- 33. Surface of the ground
- 35. Third-party access
- 36. Senior officer
- 39. Makes a living with difficulty
- 41. Expression of sympathy
- 42. Former U.S. president
- 44. Passover feast and ceremony
- 46. Wild sheep of northern Africa
- 47. Pouch
- 49. Public buildings
- 52. Type of cuisine
- 56. "Hotel California" rockers
- 58. Universal
- 60. Eloquently
- 62. Scantily
- 63. Japanese alcoholic drink

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Kilogram force (abbr.)
- 2. Lake \_\_, one of the Great
- 3. Seahawks safety Thomas
- 4. Take a \_\_
- 5. Gazelles
- 6. One's mother
- 7. Iridium
- 8. Comics writer Stan
- 9. Within
- 10. Excite
- 12. Long-legged gazelle
- 13. Leaves
- 16. African nation
- 17. System of handcraft-based education
- 20. Formerly (archaic)
- 22. Argon
- 25. Equally
- 26. Standardized test
- 27. Not part of
- 29. Midway between east and southeast
- 31. Native American tribe
- 34. Marlins infielder Gordon
- 36. Places to relax
- 37. Phonology units
- 38. Bastard wing
- 40. South Dakota
- 43. Lake in Uganda
- 45. Spanish be
- 48. Town in Galilee
- 50. Mediation counsel
- 51. Hair-like structure
- 53. Domesticated animals
- 54. Region
- 55. He cured polio
- 57. Title of respect
- 58. Carpet design
- 59. Strongly alkaline solution
- 61. Cerium

**SUDOKU**



Level: Beginner

**ROUNDUP**

From page 14

**Eagles at top of district softball**

East Linn's softball team took off in the month of April and came into this week with an 8-1 record overall, enough to put it in the top 10 of the 2A/1A rankings.

The Eagles have won seven straight, five of those ending early via the mercy rule, coming into this week and sit at the top of Special District 3, just above Regis, which is undefeated in league play as well but is one win behind East Linn.

The Eagles typically play a three-game series with league opponents each week, and downed Gervais three times in the first week of league play, 24-3, 18-5 and 16-6.

After a non-league 12-11 win over Gaston on April 6, they swept Mohawk last week, 21-9, 12-11 and 18-3.

This week is Santiam, followed by Central Linn.

**Huskies 4-3 in softball with league week away**

Sweet Home split a pair of non-league games last week, falling 6-2 to No. 4 Marist before bouncing back with a 7-4 win over No. 19 Harrisburg.

Against Marist, the Huskies came out strong with three straight singles, followed by another base hit by Trinity Victor that brought in two runs, giving them early momentum.

However, that would be the last time they crossed home plate in the game.

Despite finishing with similar hitting numbers to the Spartans, Sweet Home struggled to capitalize on opportunities, leaving runners on base throughout the game.

"Marist had good defense but more than that, we struggled with stringing hits together," said Coach Emily Marchbanks.

"We would get people in

scoring positions but struggle to execute after they were on."

The Huskies left six runners on base throughout the game.

"I think that we need to execute hitting when we have people in scoring position," Marchbanks said.

In the circle, Katriona "Peanut" Harris pitched six innings, facing 29 batters and recording seven strikeouts.

The Huskies' offense found its rhythm against Harrisburg, which will be a league opponent next year.

Sweet Home totaled 10 hits as a team, Aaliyah Brown leading the way with three hits, while Taylee Rosa scored a team-high three runs. Addy Vannice led the team, stealing four bases.

Harris once again went the distance in the circle, pitching six innings with seven strikeouts while allowing just five hits.

Even with the strong showing against Harrisburg, Marchbanks believes the team still has room to grow.

"I almost always feel that there is room for improvement, Harrisburg included," they said. "I am going into league pretty confident. I am excited to see what our team will do this year."

The Huskies continue stay on the road through this week, traveling to No. 22 Marshfield Tuesday, April 14.

They will then travel north Saturday, April 18, to The Dalles tournament to face No. 9 Pendleton, the team that knocked them out of last year's state playoffs, and then will play No. 7 Gladstone.

"We are excited to get the opportunity to play Pendleton again this year. Pendleton will be a tough game (along with all of our games at the tournament) but our team is completely capable of competing with them. It will depend on how we show up Friday," Marchbanks said.

**'Walk the Halls' to help highlight Lebanon school facility needs**

Despite a less than favorable polling response to a potential \$169 million bond measure, the school board will continue to iron out possible wrinkles that could help build community engagement and encourage more support for a future ask.

During a work session held by the Lebanon Community School District Board of Directors on Jan. 8, consultant Kyle Laier, of Assist Education Services LLC, reported they polled 400 people to find out how they might respond to a \$169 million bond for facility repairs in this May's election. Though respondents indicated they were aware of the need for critical repairs at various school buildings, only 40% agreed they would vote for the measure.

Laier returned to a follow-up work session on April 9 to provide a "map of what could be done to move your community towards understanding the facilities' challenges that you currently have and are continuing to grow."

"We know that, right now from the polling, you're not in a position to go out for a bond and more than likely be successful with one," he said.

**HWY. 34 CRASH**

From page 1

Estelle Fonseca, 55, of Sweet Home, was traveling westbound on Hwy. 34 when it hydroplaned and crossed into the eastbound lane.

The Hyundai collided head-on with an eastbound blue BMW 32L operated by Ashley Sue Fraley, 31, of Lebanon.

A passenger in the Hyundai, Kayla Marie Fonseca, 35, of Sweet Home, was pronounced deceased at the scene, as was the operator of the BMW, Fraley.

Still, he added, the district can't stop looking deeply at its facilities, considering maintenance efforts, making improvements or keeping the public informed about its needs.

He provided several actionable recommendations, including a phased approach to renovation and bond renewals, continued education and awareness, and another ask for bond support when the community is ready.

After strategic planning and community engagement is built up, Laier recommended the board conduct another poll in July 2027.

Following the work session, the board held its regularly monthly meeting.

In an effort to help inform the community about priority issues at each of the schools, the board agreed to implement one of Laier's strategies, a monthly "Walk the Halls" tour of each of the schools.

The tours would allow taxpayers to see first-hand the issues the school district faces. It could include fact sheets, staff input, video highlights and social media posts. Anticipated public participation "Walk the Halls" tours are scheduled as

follows:

Sept. 16 - Green Acres  
Oct. 6 - Seven Oak  
Nov. 4 - Hamilton Creek  
Dec. 2 - Riverview  
Jan. 6 - Pioneer  
Feb. 3 - Lebanon High School  
March 3 - Ralston/DO/CLIMB  
March 31 - Cascades  
May 5 - Lacombe

**In other business:**

• The board agreed to hold a work session in June to discuss, edit and formalize an operating agreement between the Board of Directors and the superintendent.

• Following an annual evaluation for Supt. Jennifer Meckley, the board voted to extend her contract for one year.

• Based on budget projections, the board approved a notice for potential reduction in force, which appeases the collective bargaining agreement with union members. The notice states the district expects a reduction of \$2 million from the budget, and layoffs may be necessary.

• William Lewis informed the board that the construction phase for the seismic project at Seven Oak is being moved to summer of 2027.

Rebecca Fonseca, the driver of the Hyundai, was transported to an area hospital with serious injuries, OSP reported.

According to a post issued by GoFundMe, Kayla Fonseca was in the car with her mom, Rebecca, on their way to celebrate Kayla's 35th birthday.

A GoFundMe drive is available at [www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-kayla-rebecca-after-accident](http://www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-kayla-rebecca-after-accident) to help Kayla's sister, Kylie, with funeral and medical expenses.

"Kayla was a bright light in so many lives, always bring-

ing joy and kindness wherever she went," Lacey Vance, who organized the funding drive, wrote on GoFundMe. "Your kindness and generosity will mean so much to those who are grieving and trying to find hope in the midst of tragedy."

Highway traffic was impacted for approximately four hours during the on-scene investigation Saturday.

OSP was assisted by the Linn County Sheriff's Office, Lebanon Fire Department, and the Oregon Department of Transportation.



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# SH's Selah Wright signs to compete for Corban in track

Sweet Home's Selah Wright signed a letter of intent Wednesday, April 8, to compete in track and field for Corban University.

Wright, a senior who is one of the school's top-10 performers in the shot (33-9) and the discus (101-6) and is moving up the ranks in the javelin (101-8), said she felt that Corban was a good fit for her after visiting the school.

She said Sweet Home assistant Josie Macklin helped her connect with the Warriors coaching staff and she was able to have a face-to-face meeting with Head Coach Todd Bos.

"I had personal alone time and talked to him," she said. "And then I got to have lunch with the faculty - that was a huge thing."

"I love the college," she said. "It's a great facility."

Wright said she plans to double-major in kinesiology and agricultural science, probably pursuing the former as an occupation but likely being involved in farming, having grown up on her family's farm. She has been a leader in 4-H and

Future Farmers of America and has helped her mother, Heather, with the farm and with farmer's markets since she was young.

"It's just kind of to have underneath my belt," she said of the agricultural major. "So after I'm done as an athletic trainer, I can easily go into ag."

Sweet Home Coach Nathan Whitfield said he's "super proud" of the senior.

"I'm proud of all the progress she's made," he said. "She's turned herself into a pretty good thrower, a great athlete and an even better person."

"I know whatever she sets her mind to, she's going to be good at."

Wright said she also visited Central Oregon Community College, but "Corban definitely had a different feel, like, spiritually and just the atmosphere."

"I'm glad to go to build my connection and faith better with God, with a lot of other people, and the athletic facility is a great place."

She said she is able to compete in "all three" - the shot, discus and javelin, so



Selah Wright, center, is accompanied by her parents, Garrett and Heather Wright, left, and Corban Head Coach Todd Bos as she signs to compete with the Warriors. **-SHHS photo**

"I can kind of float." She said she most likely will compete in the javelin and hammer.

She said the college training at Corban, which will include indoor track, should

pay off. "For the past few years, I do track in the offseasons too, so, like, I've been training up."

"So now it's kind of cool

that it's not like I'm just training and practicing. I'm actually competing in the fall and competing in the winter - getting those marks earlier."

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# Warriors score wins over Woodburn

Lebanon's girls and boys both defeated Woodburn in tennis on Thursday, April 9, the boys winning 5-3 at home and the girls by the same score on the road.

The Warrior boys got a 6-2, 6-2 from No. 1 singles player senior Landyn Whitney.

Lebanon swept the doubles matches. The No. 1 doubles team of seniors Hunter Jacobsen and Silas Fitchett won 6-1, 6-2; the No. 2 team of sophomores Benjamin Klinger and Joshua Allydice won 6-0, 6-1; the No. 3 team of sophomore Nick McLoed and junior Daniel Doerzpf won 6-1, 6-1; and the No. 4 team of senior Grant Basting and sophomore Alvin Villa-Madrid won by default.

Meanwhile, the Lebanon girls won three singles and two doubles matches to leave with a 5-3 win.

No. 1 singles player Junior Alison Frey delivered a 6-1, 6-1, while senior Hailey Destowet won the No. 2 singles match by the same score, 6-1, 6-1. Senior Anne Workman won the No. 4 singles match 6-1, 6-0.

The doubles teams had to go harder for their wins. Seniors Greta Abbott and Daniela Sanchez-Guzman came away with a 6-0, 3-6, 6-0 victory in the No. 1 doubles match and the No. 3 team of sophomores Ken-



Lebanon's Colton Parrish returns a ball against McKay. See more photos from the match at lebanonlocalnews.com.

- Cole Harnar photo

dall Sowa and Elizabeth Goodwin won 6-2, 6-4, 6-1.

On April 7 the Warriors had a stiffer challenge against McKay

The girls fell 5-3, all three of their wins coming in singles.

Frey won the No. 1 singles

match 6-2, 6-2; Destowet won 6-1, 6-4 and sophomore Brooklyn Davis won 6-3, 6-0.

The boys had a tougher day in a 7-1 loss. Their only win came from No. 4 singles freshman Colton Parrish (6-2, 6-2).



## Tennis returns to Sweet Home's courts

Sweet Home's Brytnee Hart-Campbell, above, returns a shot against Creswell last week. Below, Devon Sharp, left, and Ben Perry, right, play in a doubles match. Sweet Home's fledgling tennis team combined with Creswell's girls in a mixed-doubles "exhibition match" because Creswell's boys were scheduled to play elsewhere. Coach Brian Brands said scores were not recorded: "It was just a fun exhibition match with, mostly, our boys playing mixed doubles with the Creswell girls." However, in a scored match on Tuesday, April 7, at Philomath, Ben Perry won 2-0 in No. 1 singles and Devon Sharp won 2-0 in No. 3 singles for Sweet Home. The Creswell match was the first high school competition in the sport in over 30 years at Sweet Home, Brands noted. See more photos at sweethomenews.com.

Photos by Scott Swanson



### MARCH

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program manager for Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA) of Linn County.

It ended with a hot dog lunch.

Morgan noted that the purpose of National Child Abuse Prevention Month



Jaxxon Overson, right, plants a blue pinwheel with help from his grandmother, Kandyce Stirman, during the event. See more photos at sweethomenews.com. - Photo by Scott Swanson

is "shining a light on hope," adding that when children who are harmed "lose their voice inside their own homes. They have nowhere to turn."

That is why the community needs to be alert to signs that may indicate child abuse: unexplained injuries, withdrawal, fearfulness, sudden changes in school performance, he said.

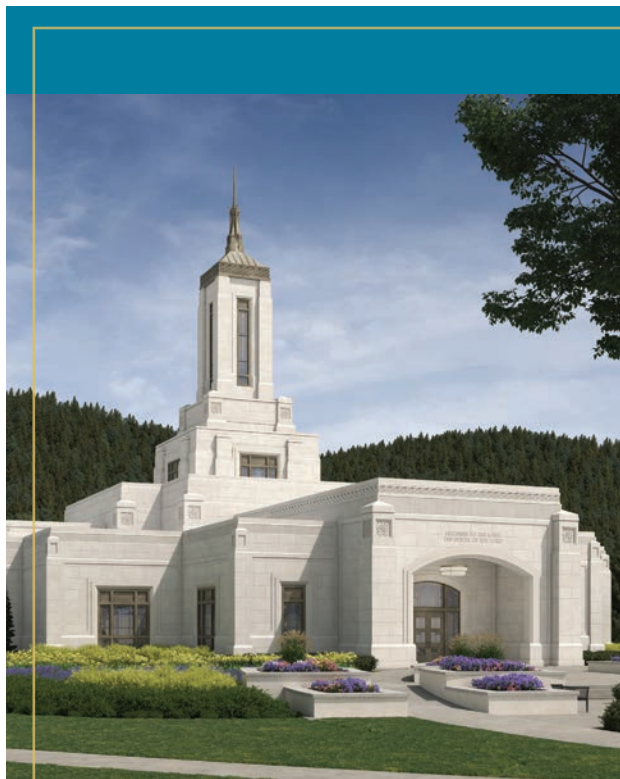
"If you suspect child abuse, contact law enforcement or children's services," Morgan said. "Your call could be the turning point in a child's life."

Sometimes, he added,

prevention can be as simple as speaking up when someone crosses the line with a child, as well as providing other support for families in difficulties.

Cabral-Ireland, who is a CASA advocate herself, said that the local branch has 42 volunteers serving 88 children, with more waiting for advocacy help.

"Each of us has a role to play," Morgan said. "Volunteer your time. Connect with other parents. Support vulnerable children and the families who are trying their best under difficult circumstances."



## Willamette Valley Temple

### PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

April 23-May 9, 2026 (excluding Sundays)

9:00 am to 8:00 pm

300 International Way, Springfield, Oregon 97477

### All Are Welcome

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints