

# Linn County



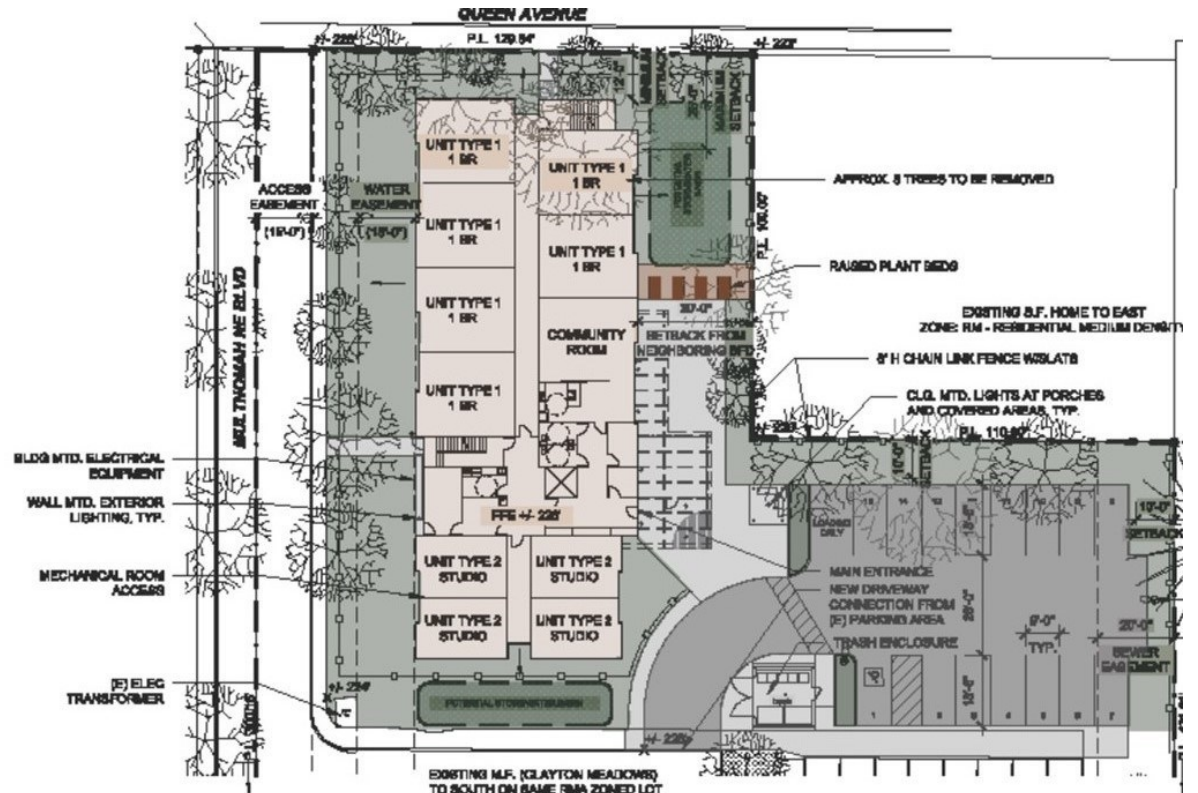
# REPORTER

What's happening in Linn County, Oregon

January 2025



Linn County Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger, far right, helps toss dirt at the ground breaking ceremony for Valor Place on Dec. 11.



## Ground broken for affordable veterans' housing

ALBANY — Linn County will soon have 30 one-bedroom and studio apartments, for behavioral health individuals and low-income veterans. Ground was broken Dec. 11, 2024 for Valor Place, a new community on Queen Avenue.

According to Linn County Health Administrator Todd Noble, Valor Place Apartments is a coordinated community project to support long term, low income housing for our community. Linn County Mental Health, used fund-

ing from Oregon Health Authority to collaborate with Linn Benton Housing Authority to help make this project possible. The population of need will include people with behavioral health experiences who struggle with maintaining housing.”

Linn Benton Housing Authority is leading the construction development portion on this project and has received additional funding to expand to include veteran housing.

Linn County acted as a pass-through for \$2.4 million from the Oregon Health Authority for this project in addition to matching funds from the Linn Benton Housing Authority,

“Linn Benton Housing Authority and Linn County Mental Health have more than 35 years of collaboration with each other in providing supportive services and housing for people with behavioral health experiences,” Noble said.

In addition to Valor Place, Linn County Mental Health has multiple supportive service housing projects throughout the county.

“Supportive services are provided to eligible people with behavioral health experiences,” Noble explained. “The goal is to increase community tenure by providing outreach services to the home including case management, skills training, peer support services, medication management and therapy.”

Linn County Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger joined Albany Mayor Alex Johnson II, Councilor Marilyn Smith and former Albany Mayor Sharon Konopa at the ground-breaking ceremony.

The plan calls for 30 one-bedroom and studio apartments for Behavioral Health Individuals and low-income veterans, housed in a three-story building. Twenty-one of the units will be designated for veterans only.

There will be a community room and shared garden area. Tenants will also have access to numerous health services.



Ho, ho, ho!

Look who showed up to bring some cheer to youngsters participating in an immunization clinic sponsored by Linn County Public Health on Friday, Dec. 20 at the Old Armory Building. Left to right: Elf, Shane Sanderson, Public Health; Santa Claus, Vernon Mills, General Services; and Mrs. Claus, Gayle Woodworth, Public Health. Twenty-four youngsters were immunized.

### Happy New Year to all!

- Don't start your day with the broken pieces of yesterday.
- Every day is a fresh start.
- Each day is a new beginning.
- Every morning we wake up is the first day of our new life.





The Linn County Reporter is digitally published monthly by the Linn County Board of Commissioners.

**Would you like to receive the newsletter?**

Please send your email address to Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, [apaul@co.linn.or.us](mailto:apaul@co.linn.or.us) or call 541-967-3825.

## Linn County Board of Commissioners

**Roger  
Nyquist**



**Sherrie  
Sprenger**



**Will  
Tucker**



The Board of Commissioners meet at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays.

You can listen to the meetings by calling 541-704-3002 PIN 8442.

**Call 541-967-3825**



## Let it snow at Willamette National Forest Sno-Parks

*Elevate your altitude and your attitude by enjoying safe winter travel and adventure in the Cascades*

SPRINGFIELD — 'Tis the season for winter snowfall in the Cascades. From cross-country ski trails to sledding to snow play, you can find your favorite winter snowscapes and even a holiday tree on the Willamette National Forest. A key part of enjoying winter fun with family and friends is being prepared for safe winter travel and recreation.

A safe winter adventure is a successful winter adventure, so it's important to "Know Before You Go" by checking conditions, permit requirements, and packing properly.

To help you prepare for your winter escape, the Willamette National Forest will post a weekly Snow Report every Friday on its Facebook page and website. Once you're ready to grab your skis or snowshoes and head for higher ground, the Willamette has multiple winter recreation areas to choose from, including Santiam Pass (Hwy 20) and Willamette Pass (Hwy 58).

If you're in search of prime sledding and tubing areas, be sure to check out Tombstone Summit, Santiam Pass and Salt Creek Sno-Parks for good opportunities. All Sno-Parks require a Sno-Park permit, so be sure to get yours at an Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office or licensed retail location and display it in your vehicle windshield.

Visitors should prepare for hazardous conditions and overcrowding at popular destinations. Most forest roads are not maintained for snow and ice, and may not be passable. Winter storms can trigger rockslides or downed trees that block roads. Visitors are encouraged to have a full tank of gas, as well as water, food, blankets, and additional warm clothing.

Be sure to visit [TripCheck.com](http://TripCheck.com) for road conditions and webcams. You can also check the alerts and notices page, or contact your local



Ranger District office for current conditions.

*Follow on Facebook and X*

*@WillametteNF for more updates.  
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/willamette/>*

Thanks for reading The Linn County Reporter.

Send story ideas to editor Alex Paul at [apaul@co.linn.or.us](mailto:apaul@co.linn.or.us).





# Town & Country Christmas Bazaar!

By Alex Paul  
Linn County Reporter

ALBANY — More than 8,800 adults (children are admitted free) flocked to the three-day annual Town & Country Christmas Bazaar held at the Linn County Fair & Expo in December, according to organizer Rachel Lytle.

Lytle said there were 209 vendors offering everything from custom jewelry and Christmas decorations to craft rum and more.

“This has been held for many years, but it was my third year getting it set up,” Lytle said.

Admission is just \$2 for adults. Proceeds benefit the Linn County Fair and have also paid for new Christmas lights in buildings.

This year’s event featured a “Pot ‘o’ Gold”. Fair staff developed a flyer that included locations of long-time vendors. When they visited that booth, they could get their flyer stamped. When they filled the flyer with stamps, they could enter a drawing.

“We gave away three nice gift baskets,” Lytle said.

Lytle said she hopes to expand the show into the Santiam Building.

“It’s a lot of work, but it’s also awesome,” Lytle said. “Our staff is willing to make it happen.”





# Healthy Eating Tips '25

Courtesy Centers for Disease Control

Most people in the United States need to increase their intake of dietary fiber, calcium, vitamin D, and potassium. Healthy eating emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, and protein. This page includes a few quick and easy tips on how to make healthy dietary choices.

Good nutrition is about consistently choosing healthy foods and beverages. Healthy eating patterns can include foods and beverages that reflect preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations.

Healthy eating emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, and protein. Dairy recommendations include low-fat or fat-free milk, lactose-free milk, and fortified soy beverages. Other plant-based beverages do not have the same nutritional properties as animal's milk and soy beverages. Protein recommendations include seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans, peas, and lentils), soy products, nuts, and seeds.

Most people in the United States need to eat more foods with dietary fiber, calcium, vitamin D, and potassium, according to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. At the same time, we need to consume less added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium. Here are some ways to get started.

## Bump up fiber

Fiber helps maintain digestive health and helps us feel fuller longer. Fiber also helps control blood sugar and lowers cholesterol levels. Fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds are good sources of fiber.

To bump up fiber, try this:

- Slice raw vegetables for quick snacks.
- Start your day with a whole-grain cereal, like oatmeal.
- Foods made with bulgur or quinoa are also high in fiber.
- Top your cereal with berries, pumpkin seeds, or almonds.
- A half-cup of beans or lentils on a salad can add texture and flavor.
- Enjoy fresh fruit with a meal or as dessert.

## Increase calcium and vitamin D

Calcium and vitamin D work together to promote optimal bone health. Our bodies can make vitamin D from sunshine. However, some people may have a hard time producing enough vitamin D. And too much sun exposure can increase the risk of skin cancer.

Foods and beverages are often fortified with this essential nutrient. See food sources of calcium and vitamin D.

### To increase calcium and vitamin D intake, try this:

- Drink a fortified dairy beverage with your meals.
- Add sardines to your lunch once a week.
- Canned salmon is another great option.
- Sardines and salmon with bones have more calcium than these products without bones.
- Cook with spinach, collard greens, bok choy, mushrooms, and taro root.
- Look for foods that are fortified with calcium and vitamin D.
- Fortified foods may include soy beverages, soy yogurt, orange juice, and some whole-grain cereals.
- Just be sure they don't include added sugars!

## Add more potassium

Potassium helps the kidneys, heart, muscles and, nerves function properly. Not getting enough potassium can increase blood pressure, deplete calcium in bones, and increase the risk of kidney stones.

People with chronic kidney disease and people taking certain medications may have too much potassium in their blood. But most people in the United States need to consume more potassium. See food sources of potassium.

### To add more potassium, try this:

- Try new recipes that use beets, lima beans, or Swiss chard.
- Try a variety of drinks high in potassium.
- 100% prune, pomegranate, or orange juice.
- Fat-free milk and low-fat kefir.
- Have a banana as a snack.

## Limit added sugars

Too much added sugar in your diet can contribute to weight gain, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods and drinks when they are processed or prepared.

Added sugars have many names, including cane juice, corn syrup, dextrose, and fructose. Table sugar, maple syrup, and honey are also considered added sugars. Sugary drinks are a common source of added sugars.

### To limit added sugars, try this:

- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Add berries or slices of lime, lemon, or cucumber for more flavor.
- Add fruit to your cereal or yogurt for sweetness.
- Don't stock up on sugary drinks and snacks.
- Instead, drink water and snack on fruit and vegetable slices.
- At coffee shops, skip the flavored syrups and whipped cream.



- Add a low-fat or unsweetened, fortified soy beverage instead.
- Or get back to basics with black coffee.
- Read nutrition labels.
- Choose foods with no or lower amounts of added sugars.
- a picture of a pitcher of water with lemon slices being poured into a glass.
- Add slices of lime or lemon to you water for more flavor.
- Replace saturated fats
- Replacing saturated fat with healthier unsaturated fats can help protect your heart. Common sources of saturated fat include fatty meats, full-fat milk and cheese, butter, and cream cheese.

We need some dietary fat to give us energy, develop healthy cells, and help absorb some vitamins and minerals. But unsaturated fat is better for us than saturated fat.

### To replace saturated fats with unsaturated fats, try this:

- Replace whole milk in a smoothie with low-fat yogurt and an avocado.
- Sprinkle nuts or seeds on salads instead of cheese.
- Use beans or seafood instead of processed or high-fat meats as a source of protein.
- Cook with oil instead of butter or margarine.
- Try canola, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, or sunflower oil.
- Replace full-fat milk and cheese with low-fat or fat-free versions.
- A photo of a smoothie bowl accompanied with sliced avocado and banana.
- Fruits like avocado can provide healthy unsaturated fat in your diet.

## Cut back on sodium

Eating too much sodium can raise your risk of high blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke. More than 70% of the sodium Americans consume comes from packaged and prepared foods. While sodium has many forms, 90% of the sodium we consume is from salt. See the top sources of sodium.

### To cut back on sodium, try this:

- Find alternatives to salt to add flavor to your meals.
- A squeeze of lemon juice.
- A dash of no-salt spice blends.
- Fresh herbs.
- Eat high-sodium processed and prepackaged food less frequently.
- Common foods with high sodium include breads, pizza, and deli meats.
- Read the Nutrition Facts label to find foods low in sodium.
- Buy unprocessed food to prepare at home without salt.
- Good options include fresh or frozen vegetables.

## Aim for a variety of colors

A A good practice is to aim for a variety of colors on your plate. Fruits and vegetables like oranges, tomatoes, and dark, leafy greens—and even fresh herbs—are loaded with vitamins, fiber, and minerals.

### To get a variety of healthy foods, try this:

- Sprinkle fresh herbs over a salad or whole-wheat pasta.
- Make a red sauce with fresh tomatoes, fresh herbs, and spices.
- Or start with canned tomatoes with no salt added.
- Add diced vegetables to stews and omelets to boost color and nutrients.
- Peppers, broccoli, and onions are great options.
- Top low-fat, unsweetened yogurt with your favorite fruit.
- A picture of rice bowls that include a colorful array of veggies and herbs.
- Adding diced peppers and herbs to a dish boosts color and nutrients.





Ginger bread man Rick Goff.



# Ugly Sweaters 2024

Addiction specialist Michelle Shannon and Lisa Vanderwood and Mindy Cummings of the Assessor's Office will receive gift certificates to the Mad Platter Café for their Ugly Sweater entries. Folks in the Planning & Building Department and OSU Extension-Linn County will receive doughnuts for their handiwork. Thank you to all who participated and Merry Christmas.

**Above right: Planning and Building folks** spotlighting their very own Rick Goff. Row one, left to right: Alyssa Boles, Lexi Mitchell, Jaci Cumpiano, Jenna Hoyt. Row two: Megan Sharp, Suzanne Hunt, Carol Gordon and Julia Fox.

**Below right: OSU Extension-Linn County:** Left to right: Michele Webster, Laurie Gibson, Tina Dodge and Jody Hill.



Michelle Shannon



Right: OSU Extension-Linn County.

Left: Lisa Vanderwood and Mindy Cummings.







## Salvation Army Angel Tree was a big success!

The annual Salvation Army Angel Tree program was another success. Hundreds of families will benefit from the generosity of Linn County employees and others. **Above:** Courtney Leland with some of the many toys and clothing items donated this year. **Above right:** Leland with Daniel Garibay and Bodi Sybert of the Salvation Army.

*Right: Daniel Garibay and Bodi Sybert.*

## Samaritan CEO Doug Boysen resigns

CORVALLIS — Samaritan Health Services President and CEO Doug Boysen, announced he is planning to step down from the role in 2025.



*Doug Boysen*

Boysen has been working with the Samaritan Health Services board to develop a transition plan, which

will begin with the recruitment of a new CEO for the system.

System Board Chair Nancy Seifert, PhD, said, “It has been a distinct pleasure working so closely with Doug during the past seven years. He is an authentic, smart, mission-driven leader who has guided Samaritan through unforeseen challenges. We’re sorry to see him go, but glad to have the opportunity to partner with him to orchestrate a smooth transition for the system.”

“The board has been incredibly supportive of me and the organization. I am grateful that they have given me the honor of being CEO of Samaritan,” Boysen said. “Together, we have built two new hospitals, navigated a world-wide pandemic, and developed many new clinical programs to enhance the health of the communities we serve. I have given it my all as a leader and feel it is the right time for new leadership at Samaritan.”

# “LET’S STAY CONNECTED.”

**Sign up to be in the know of our upcoming events and more.**

Text messages will include information regarding facility events and other exciting Linn County Expo news.

To sign up, text **GOEXPO** to **833-412-1021** if you opt in, you will incur the costs of using SMS messaging (normal rates apply).

**OR SCAN HERE!**

[www.lcfairexpo.com](http://www.lcfairexpo.com)





# OSU Extension Service



## Become a Master Gardener

Applications are open to become a Linn County Master Gardener Volunteer. Master Gardeners volunteer in the community through plant clinics, community garden classes, school garden classes, demonstration gardens, and other volunteer projects.

For more information: [extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/linn-benton/how-join](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/linn-benton/how-join)

The Master Food Preserver course is now accepting applications. Master Food Preservers are trained volunteers with the OSU Extension Service that support their communities with timely and relevant information about food safety, food access, and food preservation.

Visit <https://beav.es/GxT> for more information and how to apply.

Thank you for all the families and friends of Extension that participated in the Family Tree Relief Nursery "Season of Giving". Our lobby box was overflowing with love and support for this wonderful organization.



We are collecting lightly used or new blankets for Furniture Share which are currently in high demand. We are accepting blankets through the end of February. Please drop them off at the OSU Extension, 33630 McFarland Rd, Tangent.



### Linn And Benton Master Gardener Graduation and Awards Ceremony

It was wonderful to gather and celebrate the tremendous accomplishments of the Master Gardeners at the 2024 Graduation and Awards Ceremony on November 16.

Special thanks for the support of Linn County Master Gardener Association and Benton County Master Gardener Association in supporting graduation and the Master Gardener program throughout the year.

The 17 Linn County trainees and 19 Benton County trainees who completed the 2024 program were honored.

OSU EXTENSION SERVICE MASTER GARDENER™ PROGRAM

## BECOME A LINN OR BENTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

Oregon State University Extension Master Gardener volunteers are neighbors, friends and family who you can go to for garden advice that is grounded in science and locally relevant. Master Gardeners volunteer in the community through plant clinics, community garden classes, school garden classes, demonstration gardens, and other volunteer projects. We are garden educators and on-the-ground community scientists.

Interested?  
 Contact : Otilia Schreuder (541) 730-3471  
 otillia.schreuder@oregonstate.edu

Apply at Master Gardener™ Programs of Linn and Benton Counties  
[extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/linn-benton/how-join](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/linn-benton/how-join)



LINN COUNTY 4-H IN COOPERATION WITH

## Furniture Share BLANKET DRIVE

FOR THOSE IN NEED

Drop off your clean, new or gently used, blankets to the OSU Extension Office - Linn County  
**December - February**

33630 McFarland Road  
 Tangent, OR 97389

Contact: Michelle Robinson at 541-730-2421 or Jody Hill at [jody.hill@oregonstate.edu](mailto:jody.hill@oregonstate.edu)



## 4-H Youth Goat Milk Soap Workshop

Open to 4-H members  
 12-18 years old

**JANUARY 9**  
 6:30 pm

OSU EXTENSION OFFICE  
 TANGENT

Only 10 spaces available

Register at:  
<https://beav.es/GYe>







# Courthouse Christmas lunch

Ladies of the Courthouse held their annual Christmas lunch complete with lots of good food and good fellowship on Thursday, Dec. 18. As usual, the white elephant gift exchange was a big hit.



## Congratulations, Dan Graybill!

Congratulations to LCSO Deputy Dan Graybill on receiving the Service Excellence Award from the Oregon State Marine Board during a recent conference held in Bend.

Dan serves as our Marine Deputy during the summer months, patrolling waterways all around Linn County.

The awards are presented to individuals who continue to exceed all expectations and have made a lasting positive impact within their communities, within the agency, training program and have gone above and beyond in all facets of marine patrol!

**Linn County Sheriff's Office**  
*Keeping the peace, with dignity, honesty, and compassion.*

### Job Fair & Testing Event

**WHEN:**  
Saturday, February 1st, 2025  
9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

**LOCATION:**  
Central Electrical Training Center  
33309 Hwy 99E  
Tangent, OR 97389

The Linn County Sheriff's Office is hosting a hiring event on February 1st, 2025 for the following positions:

**PATROL | CORRECTIONS | DISPATCH | NURSING**

Come meet us, all testing will be at no charge, yes FREE!  
This is your opportunity to enter our accelerated hiring process.

**Patrol and Corrections Applicants**  
*(Minimum age 20)*  
Testing will include ORPAT, Written Test, and Oral Interviews  
*Please bring athletic clothing and shoes if taking ORPAT*

**Dispatch Applicants**  
*(Minimum age 18)*  
Oral Interview

**Nursing Applicants**  
*(Minimum age 20)*  
Oral Interview

**Lateral Applicants**  
Oral Interview

Please visit our Attract page to learn more about LCSO and to register for this event.  
<https://linnsheff.attract.neogov.com>

Please bring at least one form of government issued identification with you.

**Schedule**

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM:	All Applicants Check-In
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM:	Introductions and Meet-n-Greet with Sheriff Duncan
10:00 AM - 12:45 PM:	Dispatch, Nursing and Laterals Oral Boards
10:00 AM - 3:30 PM:	Entry Level Patrol and Corrections ORPAT, Oral Boards and Testing

**LUNCH PROVIDED FOR ALL ATTENDEES.**  
Please direct any questions to our HR/Training team at [recruitment@linnsheff.org](mailto:recruitment@linnsheff.org)

Call the Linn County Board of Commissioners at 541-967-3825.



# Do you want to drink less in 2025?

Getting Started With Drinking Less  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Key points**

Drinking less alcohol can improve your overall health and well-being. Find tips to help you on your journey of drinking less.

**If you're ready to drink less, here's how to start**

- Find what works for you
- A small change can make a big difference. Whatever strategies you choose, give them a chance. If one approach doesn't work, try something else.

**If you drink alcohol and want to cut back on your drinking, these four tips can help:**

- Set limits.
- Know how much alcohol you drink now and whether it is considered excessive and harmful for your health.
- Decide how many days a week you plan to drink and how many drinks you plan to have. For instance, you might decide to only drink on one evening and have one drink.
- Schedule alcohol-free days every week.
- Count your drinks.
- Understanding how much alcohol counts as a "standard" drink may also help.

**Manage your "triggers."**

- If certain people, places, or activities tempt you to drink more than you plan, you can limit your time with those people, in those places, or doing those activities. For example, instead of a happy hour event with co-workers, suggest catching up at lunch instead.
- You may also want to remove alcohol from your home or places where you spend a lot of time.
- Find support. Ask for support from a friend, family member, health care provider, or someone else who will support your choice to drink less.
- Check Your Drinking. Make a Plan to Drink Less.

**Use this tool to check your alcohol use.**

- Get started
- Remember your "why" and how you'll plan to drink less



- Change can be hard, so it helps to have strong reminders of why the change is important to you and how you've decided to do it.

**Make a plan to help you drink less.**

- The plan you build should consider:
- What is motivating you to drink less.
- Your goals for drinking less.
- How you can work through barriers that might prevent you from reaching those goals.

**Print or save the plan.**

- Keep it somewhere you can see as a reminder of your strategies for overcoming challenges that may prevent you from drinking less.
- Set up alerts on your devices for certain times of the day when you need to remind yourself of your goals.
- Set your phone background to an image that reminds you why you want to drink less.
- Post sticky notes around your home with motivational messages.
- Let people that you trust know about your plan to drink less and ask for their support.



## LCSO raises money for the Salvation Army

The Linn County Sheriff's Office held its 4th annual silent auction to raise money to fulfill gift tags for the local Salvation Army!

Sgt. Dusty Frenzel led this effort and different teams and divisions throughout the office donated auction baskets to be put up for bid. Auction baskets included things like rounds of golf, gift certificates, baby accessories, dog baskets and much more.

With all the great auctions that were made available, we were able to raise nearly \$3,000 to put towards gifts for the Salvation Army.

In addition to all the great baskets donated by various groups from around the office, we would also like to thank the following local business for their generous donations: Chiefs Brew House in Coburg, Mallard Golf Course, Tsunami Woodcrafters, Dark Bloom Coffee Co., Hazella Bake Shop, Lola's Coffee, Scentsy and Prestige Detailing.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this auction another great success and especially to Sgt. Frenzel for spearheading the whole thing once again.



### Plaid is the new black

Tuesday, Dec. 10, must have been wear plaid day at the Linn County Courthouse. Left to right: Custodian Josh Leahy, Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger and Tax Collector Matt Pitcher.

Do you have a story idea for the Linn County Reporter?

Give Editor Alex Paul a call at 541-967-3825 or email apaul@co.linn.or.us.





# Christmas Storybook Land and Pastega Lights were amazing!



© Julie-Marie Knisson

The annual Christmas Storybook Land new Pastega Christmas Lights displays held at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center attracted 50,607 visitors.

They donated more than 33,419 food items for FISH of Albany.

“It conservatively took at least 1,000 volunteers to set up, take down and run this free event this season,” said Michelle Morford. “We were also supported by 166 private and businesses who either sponsored with money or in-kind services.”





## LCSO staffers earn awards at state sheriff's banquet

Several LCSO staff members received awards at the Oregon State Sheriff's Association annual awards banquet.

Deputy Dan Graybill received the Distinguished Action Award for his brave actions.

On July 14, Deputy Graybill was instructing for the Oregon State Marine Board on the Rogue River when he and another marine deputy were flagged down by recreators. It was reported that a male had slipped under the river's surface while swimming and had not resurfaced.

Deputy Graybill and the other deputy began the search of the river. They located the man under the water's surface and Deputy Graybill did not hesitate to jump in to rescue the male. Deputy Graybill pulled the male to the surface and he and other deputies immediately began CPR, trying to save the male's life. Unfortunately, the male did not survive, but Deputy Graybill's heroic efforts should still be recognized.

Deputy Jackson Soto, Deputy Preston Mayer and Lieutenant Ryan Keys received the Award of Valor for their bravery in their response to capture suspects wanted in a shooting.

Deputies Soto, Mayer and Lieutenant Keys engaged in a pursuit of armed suspects that were thought to be involved in multiple shootings. A high-speed chase with the suspects ensued down I-5. Spike strips were deployed, and the vehicle crashed into a culvert.

As our deputies and lieutenant, along with troopers from Oregon State Police, surrounded the vehicle, giving repeated commands for the suspects to show their hands, a gunshot was fired from inside the vehicle. Law enforcement on scene, including Deputies Soto, Mayer and Lieutenant Keys returned fire to neutralize the threat.

Deputy Andrew Peterson also re-



ceived the Award of Valor, and Deputy Mykal Dekanu and Sergeant Jordan Kirksey received the award for Distinguished Action Award for their quick response during an event earlier this year.

Deputies Peterson, Dekanu and Sergeant Kirksey responded to a domestic violence call where there was reported shots fired. The victim, who was the spouse of the suspect, reported her husband had put a gun to her head.

When Deputy Dekanu arrived, he quickly moved the victim, who had

fled from the house to a safer location farther up the road. Deputy Dekanu ran back to where Deputy Peterson and Sergeant Kirksey were trying to de-escalate the situation with the male suspect.

Despite their efforts, the male began charging Deputy Peterson with a rifle. Deputy Peterson tried to order the male suspect to drop the weapon, but the male continued to advance, until Deputy Peterson was forced to fire multiple rounds at the male to stop

the imminent threat to his own life.

Deputy Peterson, Deputy Dekanu and Sergeant Kirksey immediately began life-saving efforts, but the male died at the scene.

Sheriff Michelle Duncan said all of the LCSO personnel showed their bravery and courage in dangerous situations.

"They are willing to put themselves in harm's way to protect their community. We are proud to have all of you on our team," Sheriff Duncan said.



### Sweet Home Christmas Parade participants

Linn County Public Health participated in the annual Sweet Home Christmas Parade on Saturday, Dec. 14. The county's float included the new mobile crisis van. Linn County Mental Health staff plan to increase outreach throughout the county in 2025.

**Call the Linn County Board of Commissioners at 541-967-3825.**





## Thank you, Robin Beechert!

Staff from the Linn County District Attorney's Office celebrated the retirement of Robin Beechert on Wednesday, Dec. 18, at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center. Robin worked for Linn County for 22 years, starting as a Legal Assistant. She became Operations Supervisor in 2013.

In addition to her work with the county, she dedicated her off-duty hours coaching local swim teams.

She has been a dynamic leader and has changed many processes within the office for the better, said District Attorney Doug Marteeny.

She plans to spend retirement with her daughters and grandchildren in Arizona and Texas.



# 10 ways to beat the winter "blues"

### Courtesy Everyday Health

Winter doesn't need to be a "down" time of year.

Dark mornings, darker evenings, and chilly gray days in between mean winter is here — and with the coldest season come the winter blues. There's no clinical diagnosis for the "winter blues," but experts at the National Institutes of Health say the so-called winter blues are fairly common and are usually marked by feeling more down than usual, sad, less energized, or less interested in activities one usually enjoys.

Because the winter blues is not a discrete medical condition, an accurate measure of how many people it affects is difficult to know for sure. Estimates suggest anywhere from 10 to 20 percent of American adults experience such seasonal mood changes at some level.

#### 1. Lace Up Your Running Shoes and Get Moving

Getting at least 20 minutes of vigorous activity four times a week has been shown to reduce depressive mood.

#### 2. Set Your Alarm Clock and Stick to a Sleep Routine

Tempting as it might be to sleep in on dark mornings, it's best to stick with a regular sleep schedule — which means waking up at the same times on weekdays and weekends.

#### 3. Queue Up a Stream of Laugh-Out-Loud Films

Experts believe that laughter actually stimulates processes in your brain that counter depressive symptoms. And since chuckling is

downright contagious, you can invite a few pals over to share the popcorn.

#### 4. Warm Yourself Up With a Mug of Real Hot Cocoa

It's a good idea to make a few tweaks to your diet during the winter, says Susan Kleiner, PhD, RD, author of *The Good Mood Diet*. First, get cozy with some homemade hot chocolate, using non-dutched, natural cocoa powder (which is high in heart-healthy and mood-boosting flavonoids).

Kleiner also recommends eating fish — especially fatty fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, lake trout, or sardines — three to five times a week, as this can help boost mood; plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables; and at least one egg with the yolk (a good source of choline, which helps regulate nerve function and metabolism among other functions, and therefore is important to keep energy levels stable) each day, preferably for breakfast.

#### 5. Host a Festive Party — But Don't Stress

'Tis the season to deck the halls and host a small seasonal party. And if it's already after the holidays, any excuse to host a gathering of friends will do — try a dinner party, cheese tasting, or board game night. Planning an event will give you something to look forward to — and it could also put you on other people's invite lists (more fun for you!).

#### 6. Give Yourself a Manageable Task to Accomplish

It's important to build activities into your day — even chores, like cleaning the floor — that will give you a sense of competence and accomplishment. According to one psychological theory, we all have an innate need to feel competent in order to also grow emotionally, have a sense of integrity, and maintain well-being.

Balance the hard work with little things that bring you pleasure, like treating yourself with fresh flowers or, yes, that homemade cup of hot cocoa. Doing fun and meaningful things is also the basis for behavioral activation, which Gollan says is an important strategy. It's also one of the best-tested and most effective ways to alleviate depression, according to research.

#### 7. But Don't Let Your To-Do List Get Too Out of Hand

Don't overwhelm yourself with lists of projects and chores just because you can't do other activities you might spend time doing in other seasons. If you love to garden in spring and summer as a stress-relieving activity, that doesn't mean spending those same hours in the winter cleaning your closets is going to do you the same amount of good — nor be as enjoyable.

Complete the business you need to take care of, and do it on time.

#### 8. Book a Staycation — Even if It's a Mini One

Most people get a lift when they have something to look forward to. If your

coworker's upcoming Bermuda vacation has you dreaming of traveling, Gollan says you can save money and still get a boost by planning mini-getaways closer to home. You may not have the budget or time off of work to take an exotic trip, but it's much easier to make time for and plan a local staycation treat, such as an afternoon ice skating with friends, trying out a new restaurant in a nearby town, or going to a concert.

#### 9. Consider Light Therapy if You Can't Get the Sunshine You Need

It's dark when you leave for work and dark when you get home, so how are you going to get your daily dose of natural sunshine? And if you don't think less sunlight during winter months can affect you, your mood, or your energy levels, think again.

A decrease in sunlight can disrupt your body's circadian rhythms, and cause a drop in serotonin levels and vitamin D levels, which can lead to depressive symptoms.

If you have the flexibility and the weather allows for it, schedule in an early-morning walk or lunchtime stroll.

#### 10. Don't Hesitate to See Your Healthcare Professional

"Blues can be part of some other system," says Gollan. Chronic pain, headaches, sleep disorders, and even heart disease are all linked to depression symptoms, so check in with your healthcare provider to make sure your winter blues aren't something more serious.





2281 Paddington Dr NW



# AVA Christmas lights contest winners

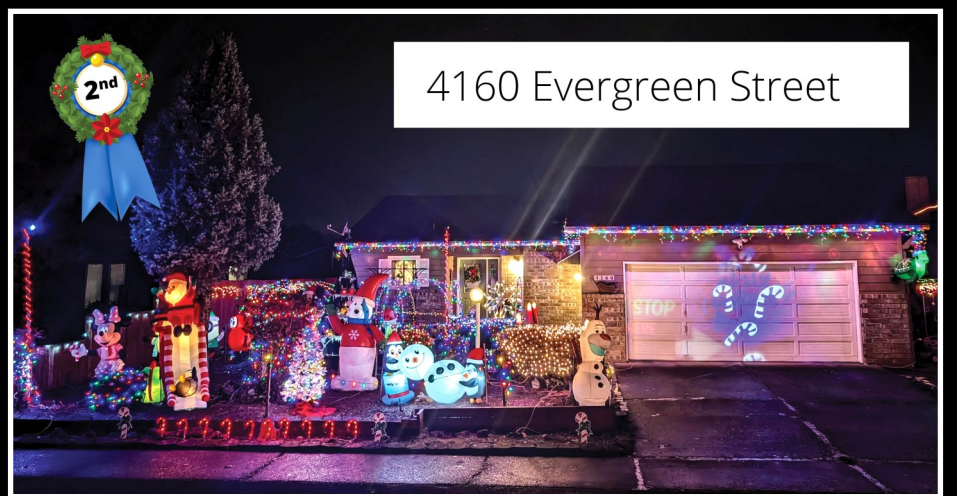
The 37th Annual Nighttime Magic Holiday Light Contest sponsored by the Albany Visitors Association drew many colorful entries.

The winners are: 1st Place: \$200 gift card to Parr Lumber - The Sutherland Family-2281 Paddington Dr NW 2nd Place: \$150 gift card to Parr Lumber -The Baugher Family - 4160 Evergreen St SE 3rd Place: \$75 gift card to Parr Lumber - The Rowton Family - 2632 NW Raymond Ct Staff Choice: \$50 gift card to Parr Lumber -The Harvey Family - 624 Montgomery St SE

The AVA extends congratulations to the winners and a heartfelt thank you to this year's creative participants, our generous sponsors — Burcham's Metals and HospitalityVision — and everyone who helped select the winners and make Albany a brighter, more festive place to live!



4160 Evergreen Street



624 Montgomery St SE



2632 NW Raymond Court



# Linn County elected officials sworn in on Jan. 2

By Alex Paul

Linn County Reporter

ALBANY — Newly elected Linn County Assessor and Tax Collector Matt Pitcher and Treasurer Michelle Hawkins who has served more than 29 years were among Linn County elected officials who took their oath of office Thursday morning in the Linn County Circuit Court.

Presiding Linn County Circuit Court Judge the Honorable Thomas McHill presided over the proceedings.

“The new year is a time of new beginnings and today is also a day of joy,” Judge McHill said. “It’s a day when our public officials appear before the public and confirm their commitment to them.”

Pitcher succeeds Andy Stevens who retired and Hawkins said this will be her last term in office.

Hawkins thanked her husband, family, friends and staff for making her time in office possible. This is her seventh term. She used a wheelchair after fracturing her right foot in a farming accident.

She also noted that she has worked with four assessors, two clerks, three surveyors, two District Attorneys, five sheriffs and nine commissioners.

She said that Linn County is not only a special place to live, but also a special place to work.

“That is why people come to work for the county and don’t leave for a long time,” Hawkins said.

Also taking the oath of office were Commissioner Roger Nyquist, his seventh term; Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger, her second term; Surveyor Tom Casey, his second full term in office after completing the term of Chuck Gibbs, who retired; District Attorney Doug Marteeny, his fourth term in office and Clerk Marcie Richey, her first full term in office, after being appointed to fill the term of former Clerk Steve Druckenmiller, who died while in office.

Matt Pitcher said the opportunity to work with a “great bunch of people” made his decision to run for office as Linn County Assessor and Tax Collector much easier.

The almost 44-year-old Monroe native has plenty of background experience for the position, joining the team as an appraiser in 2010. He spent three years before that doing the same work in Lane County.

Pitcher said his path to running for office began a couple years ago when Andy Stevens announced his retirement plans. Pitcher has served as Chief Appraiser and Deputy Assessor since 2018.

Pitcher grew up on a mint farm near Monroe and says he could imagine a life as a farmer, but his father suggested he go to college. A 1999 Monroe High School graduate, Pitcher studied at Lane Community College and earned a degree in Business Administration from the University of Oregon in 2006.

“I was always interested in real estate and I went to work as an appraiser in Lane County in 2007,” he said.

He said he doesn’t regret the move to

Linn County.

“We were living in Monroe,” Pitcher said. The family moved to Jefferson and now lives in Albany. “It has been a great place to work. Everyone has been so supportive, from our staff to the Board of Commissioners.”

Pitcher said he enjoys the great daily variety of his job.

“Every day there are new challenges,” he said. There is a lot to our tax system. I really like helping people and I especially enjoy helping them understand sometimes complicated issues.”

Pitcher said property taxes are among the oldest type of taxes in the world. He said they started in ancient Egypt and helped fund the construc-

tion of the great pyramids.

“You can see where your property taxes go,” Pitcher said.

Pitcher and his wife, Valarie, have two sons, Cody, 18, and Mason, 14.

He enjoys being outdoors, everything from hunting and fishing to golfing. He is an avid Oregon Ducks football fan.

Pitcher said he has a staff of 19 people.

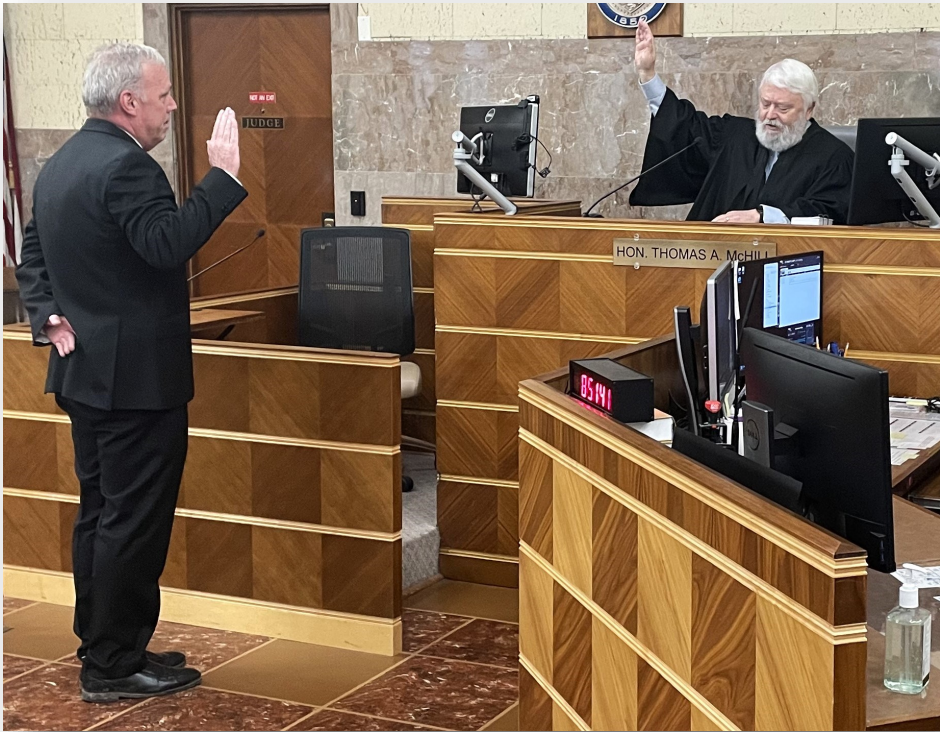


Cody Pitcher administers the oath of office for his father, new Assessor/Tax Collector Matt Pitcher



The Honorable Thomas McHill administers the oath of office for Treasurer Michelle Hawkins. This is her seventh and last term in office. Hawkins recently fractured her right foot in a farming accident.





The Honorable Thomas McHill administers the oath of office for Commissioner Roger Nyquist, his seventh term in office.



Austin Sprenger administers the oath of office for his mother, Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger.



The Honorable Keith Stein administers the oath of office for District Attorney Doug Marteeny.



Katie Howard administers the oath of office for her mother, Clerk Marcie Richey.



Katie Howard hugs her mother, Clerk Marcie Richey.



Commissioner Roger Nyquist said 2025 will a year of great change, as security measures are taken at the Courthouse and staff moves into new buildings including the Wheelhouse and the 7th Street Medical Building.



The Honorable Thomas McHill administers the oath of office for Surveyor Tom Casey.