



Multiple wildfires keep Linn emergency teams busy

Emergency Operations Center, Fair & Expo called into action

By Alex Paul

Linn County Reporter

On Labor Day weekend 2020, Linn, Marion, Jefferson and Clackamas counties were rocked by a massive disaster cumulatively called the Beachie Creek Fire — the marriage of three fires that originated in the Opal Creek Wilderness area and the P-515 and Lionshead Fires that were driven westward from the



Madras area in central Oregon by 60 mile-per-hour winds. The fire claimed five lives, ravaged more than 400,000 acres of timber and 1,500 struc-

tures. Families in the Santiam Canyon are still rebuilding. Linn County has assisted them in many ways, including waiving building permit fees totaling \$126,000.

Fortunately, numerous fires in Linn and Lane counties in August did not reach the devastating level of the Beachie Creek Fire, but they kept public and private fire teams on high-alert, including the opening of an emergency shelter for humans and animals at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center.

After months without any measurable rainfall, the mid-valley found itself ripe for wildland fires, Linn County Sheriff Michelle Duncan called for the activation of an Emergency Operations Center at the Sheriff's Office under the direction of County Emergency Manager Ric Lentz, aided by Emerson Marsh, fellow Sheriff's Office staff and many volunteers.



Photo courtesy Gary Betts

Above: A plane drops fire retardant on the Wiley Creek Fire east of Sweet Home. **Left:** Helicopters made many water drops on the Wiley Creek Fire, which is in steep terrain on U.S. Forest Service property.

All coordinated with the Public Health Department emergency manager Erik Anderson.

Also instrumental in the entire process was GIS Manager Steve Barnett, who developed daily fire boundary and evacuation maps for county staff and the Board of Commissioners.

"This type of disaster brings out the

best in our partnerships," Lentz said. "Our county departments such as the Health Department, GIS and Fair & Expo, plus our other local and state partnerships, such as the Fire Defense Board and Search and Rescue. There are so many, who all do their jobs to make things happen. So many people

come together, I can't just wave a magic wand."

Commissioner Will Tucker was in daily contact with fire officials and took doughnuts to fire crews several times.

"We appreciate the quick initial response by the Oregon Department of Forestry to are area fires, especially Wiley Creek and Priceboro fires in our own backyard," Commissioner Tucker said.

"Having contracts in place for the air tankers and helicopters was critical in keeping fires as small as possible."

Tucker said the mid-valley is actually entering the worst part of fire season and it is not the time to "let our guard down."

"We must continue to keep fires out, to not start new fires and to let officials know if you see anything unusual such as warming fires or people out target shooting," Tucker said. "I urge Linn County residents to sign up for emergency alerts through the Linn County Sheriff's Office and to make sure they listen for emergency information on local radio stations."

Tucker added that several fires in semi-urban areas this summer are proof that fires can happen anywhere and that all Linn County residents should be prepared, not just those who live in the urban-forest interface.

The first of several fires was called the Priceboro Fire, near Harrisburg, just over the county line in Lane County. The cause of the fire isn't known, but it started August 5 and grew to more than 200 acres. The fire was of considerable concern due to its proximity to a large housing subdivision on Mt. Tom, which was placed under a Level 3 evacuation order.

Anderson, working with the American Red Cross, set up an emergency shelter at the Fair & Expo Center. Thankfully, the only "guests" were three goats, who were treated royally.

But just three days after the Priceboro Fire started, on August 7, the Wiley Creek Fire ignited in steep Forest Service ground about six miles east of Sweet Home, near Cascadia.

Due to its 60 percent slope, fire officials quickly called in air tankers and helicopters. Green Peter Reservoir was closed to the public for a couple days, so air tankers could scoop up water and quickly deposit it on the fire. Helicopters used the reservoir and private ponds owned by

FIRES ... See Page 2

County parks battling invasive plant species

By Alex Paul

Linn County Reporter

ALBANY — Linn County has owned Freeway Lakes recreation site southeast of Albany since 1965.

The trio of man-made lakes — seven-, nine- and 21-acres each — were created when aggregate was mined during the construction of Interstate 5 in the mid-1950s.

Providing easy access for Albany-area families, the site is a popular fishing hole or picnic area, but in recent years, an invasive plant called Ludwigia (aka Water Primrose) has flourished in the shallow lakes to the point of choking out access.

Linn County Parks Director Stacey Whaley was recently asked by local blogger and former Democrat-Herald editor Hasso Hering about what the county is doing to mitigate this infestation and here is her response:

This question is very timely. We actually have the spray company coming to the park on Wednesday (Aug. 23) and either Thursday or Friday this week for the annual application of the spray that controls the Ludwigia, or more commonly known as "Water Primrose". I have been doing some



Ludwigia (Water Primrose) has nearly covered one of the Freeway Lakes, part of the Linn County Parks & Recreation Department. The county is implementing a five-year plan to eradicate the highly invasive species.

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You can listen to the meetings by calling 541-704-3003 PIN 8442.

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BATTLING WILDFIRES ... From Page 1

the reservoir and private ponds owned by Hill Timber.

The attack included public and private partnerships, with neighbors such as Cascade Timber Consulting crews and equipment, the Oregon Department of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, Sweet Home Fire District and a dozen other fire districts and hot shot crews from around the state.

They staged at Sweet Home High School.

The Wiley Creek Fire was held to about 250 acres, but was particularly

stubborn due to its location and terrain, as well as old growth timber. There also was fear that forecast high east winds

QUOTABLE

"Having contracts in place for the air tankers and helicopters was critical in keeping fires as small as possible."

— Commissioner Will Tucker

could sent the fire toward Sweet Home, much like the Labor Day fires of 2020 that blew into the Santiam Canyon and the communities of Gates, Lyons

and Mill City.

Fortunately, firefighters held the line and the winds did not arrive.

The fire was contained by Aug. 28.

Much of the mid-valley was covered with smoke for days at a time, much of

it blowing in from the Lookout Fire and Bedrock Fires in eastern Lane County.

The 22,000-acre fire caused Level 2 and Level III evacuation orders that were near, but did not include Clear Lake in Linn County. Linn County Parks & Recreation closely monitored the situation around the clock, in case the popular resort had to be evacuated for public safety. By Aug. 28, it was only 16% contained.

The Bedrock Fire encompasses 34,000 acres and by Aug. 28 was 71% contained.

Adding to already high fire dangers was lightning that led to an estimated 50 fire starts from 1,500 strikes from Northern California to southern Washington Aug. 24-25 according to the Oregon Department of Forestry.

One of those strikes caused a small fire about 10 miles west of Corvallis, called the Rock Creek Fire near Mary's Peak.

As of Monday afternoon, it was about 12 acres and in big timber. More than 60 firefighters were battling the fire believed to have started Aug. 25.

Linn County Parks & Recreation Director Stacey Whaley said that although there was heavy smoke intrusion at the parks at times, camping continued in full swing, although the county did approve cancellations and providing re-booking for people affected by the smoke.

Whaley said Clear Lake seemed to get socked in with smoke at times, but on other days it was perfectly clear.

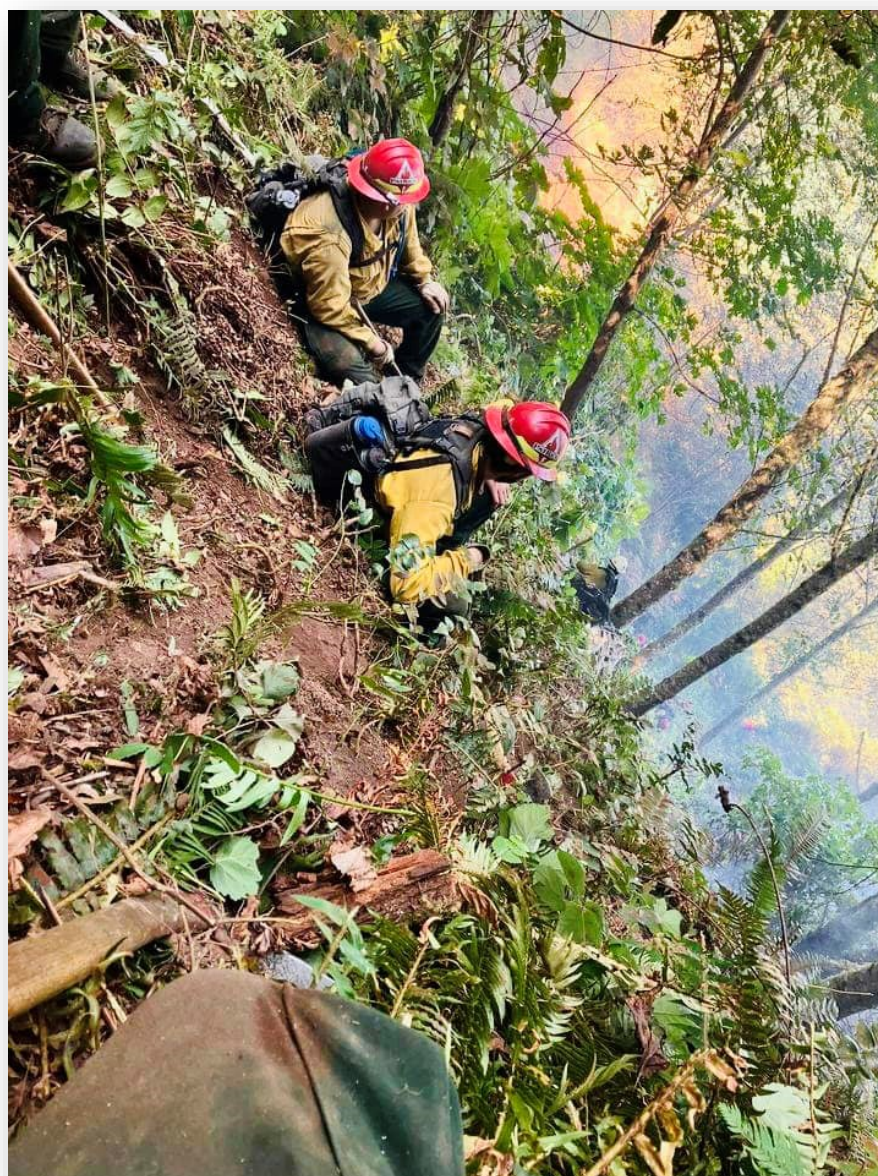
"We banned campfires at all of our parks," Whaley said.

River Bend and Cascadia parks are closest to the Wiley Creek Fire and activity at both campgrounds remained brisk.

The county also closed off the Thistle Creek boat ramp on Green Peter Reservoir for a couple days because planes and helicopters were scooping up water there.

On Aug. 30, spot fires crossed Highway 126 south of Clear Lake and the highway was closed to the general public. Highway 20 access was available and county staff was meeting incoming guests at Clear Lake at the junction and escorting them four miles to the resort.

By late afternoon, the highway was reopened.



The Wiley Creek Fire is on steep ground managed by the U.S. Forest Service about six miles east of Sweet Home. It is nearly completely contained.



Kevin Groom, senior engineer at the Road Department, had a great time scuba diving with his wife Cath in Roatan, Honduras.



Lily Daudert (IT Department) and her husband Rick didn't get to watch her Cubbies play, but had a pretty good night attending a Bruce Springsteen concert at Wrigley Field during their summer vacation to Chicago in early August.

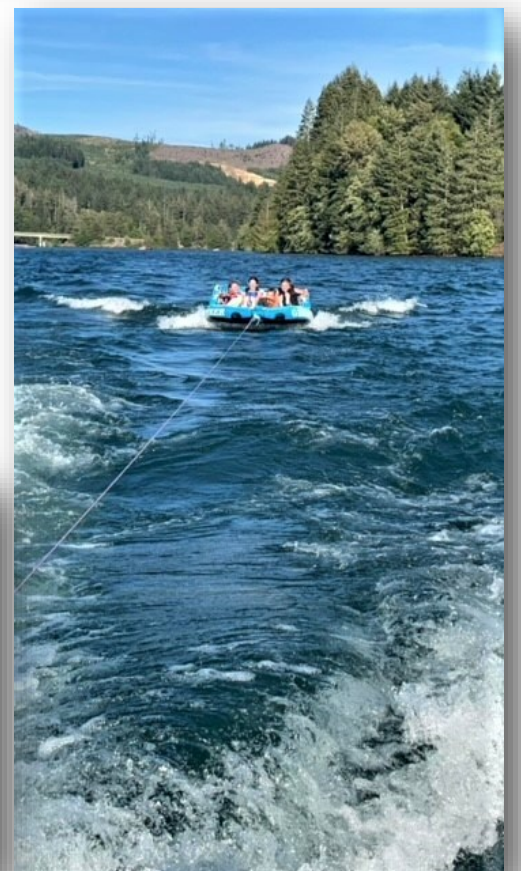
Summer fun in the sun, sun, sun . . .



Anne Wright, senior section clerk in the Assessment & Taxation Office, sent us these photos of her son, LaDamian (purple swim trunks) with his friends enjoying a "beautiful summer day" at the family cabin on the Little North Fork.



Planning & Building Director Steve Wills provided these photos of his family — look at all of those cute kids — having fun on Foster Reservoir while camping at the county's Sunnyside Campground.



County's mental health efforts to be KEZI feature

By Alex Paul
Linn County Reporter

ALBANY — Linn County Mental Health staff want to meet people “where ever they are”, Health Administrator/Mental Health Director Todd Noble told KEZI TV reporter Ariel Iacobazci Aug. 16.

That means providing services 24 hours a day through the Mobile Crisis van, in-person at offices throughout the county and in all Linn County public schools.

“We don’t think the issue of mental health should be uncomfortable,” Noble said. “We want it to be an open discussion.”

Iacobazci interviewed Noble for a feature story she is preparing about mental health education efforts throughout the mid-valley. She said Linn County has a reputation of being pro-active with numerous outreach programs.

Noble said individuals and families struggled over the last three years due to pressures created by the isolation created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“There are more people struggling with depression and anxiety than at any other time in our lifetime,” Noble said. “We want people to know help is available.”

Noble said that for many years, the state did not financially support mental health programs significantly, but that is changing.

“Salem (the legislature) has made big changes because the need is so great,” Noble said.

That extra funding is an important tool in boosting salaries to attract qualified mental health specialists, Noble said. He said Linn County is down 31 staff members.

Noble said Linn County has provided mental health specialists in area schools for about 15 years and provide services to students from kindergarten through high school with parental consent.



Todd Noble, Linn County Health Administrator and Mental Health Director talks with KEZI TV reporter Ariel Iacobazci about the county's pro-active approach to mental health care.



the stigma and showing kids that seeing a counselor is just like seeing one's primary care doctors

when they can use some help and support,” Noble said. “We want them to consider it normal to talk about mental health.”

Noble said his staff also offer several Mental Health First Aid training sessions throughout the

year and will talk to “any public group out there.”

“We show up for numerous community events,” Noble said. “I emphasize to my staff that everyone of us is an ambassador for mental health aid. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it’s a sign of strength. Mental health is no longer on the back burner.” Noble said 40 to 50% of the U.S. population has had suicidal thoughts at some time.

He said the majority of people who commit suicide have had a relationship with a medical doctor, but not a mental health specialist.

“We want to intervene, to give people options,” Noble said. Noble was scheduled to meet with students at WesternU Comp Northwest after the KEZI interview to talk about the issue of suicide and providing help.

Noble said Linn County is reaching out to rural communities by offering more services at health clinics in places like Lebanon and Sweet Home and taking the Mobile Crisis van anywhere it is needed.

“Anytime, anywhere,” Noble said. “We will show up.”

Noble concluded by noting that “we are social beasts. We have been very isolated the last three years. We are not meant to be alone. It’s good to talk with friends and family members, but sometimes you need to talk to professionals. Linn County will help you.”

Noble said he reminds his staff, “We are honored to do this work. If not us, then who?”

The Mental Health Crisis Services can be contacted by calling 541-967-3866 or 800-304-7468.

“All of us have challenges at times and it’s OK to reach out for support and guidance,” Noble said.

QUOTABLE

“I emphasize to my staff that everyone of us is an ambassador for mental health aid. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness, it’s a sign of strength. Mental health is no longer on the back burner.”

— Todd Noble

“We have taken this approach to meet kids where they are with limited disruption to their school day by seeing them at schools to reduce

Green Peter drawdown

The water level at Green Peter Reservoir is already getting low as Corps of Engineers officials prepared to drop it more than 200 feet over the winter for fish passage trials.

Linn County's Thistle Creek boat ramp was still accessible recently.



Dr. Sandy Minta rejoins Mental Health team

By Alex Paul
Linn County Reporter

ALBANY — Sandy Minta says her new job co-managing Linn County’s mental health programs with Tanya Thompson is “like coming home.”

Minta completed her internship and residency for her doctorate in psychology at Linn County Mental Health starting in 2003-04. She comes back to Linn County from Samaritan Health Services.

“We are incredibly fortunate to bring back a highly-skilled and experienced manager who is respected and esteemed in our community,” said Health Administrator/Mental Health Director Todd Noble. “Dr. Minta holds a doctorate degree in clinical psychology and returns to Linn County Mental Health where she started as an intern, originally working with children and families and the crisis team.”

Minta was born in California, but her family moved to Joplin, Missouri where she graduated high school in 1995 and earned her bachelor’s degree from Missouri Southern State University in Joplin in 1999. She completed her master’s and doctoral programs at the Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Springfield, Missouri in 2004.

Minta said she enjoyed moving to Oregon in 2003 and felt welcomed by the Linn County Mental Health staff. She said Tanya Thompson was working in community support services at that time, so they have known each other for 20 years.

“After completing my residency, I was hired full-time as the Quality Manager for Linn County Mental Health,” Minta said. “In addition to my role as Quality Manager, I was on the afterhours crisis team, and provided counseling services to children and adults.”

Minta also focused on quality management to ensure the county was providing quality services and improving access to clients across the county.



Dr. Sandy Minta

It was during that time she first worked with Samaritan Health Services staff piloting improvement projects such as focusing on improving health outcomes of individuals with both schizophrenia and diabetes.

Minta said her goal is to help Linn County Mental Health partner with community groups to “find creative and innovative solutions” to community issues.

In 2010 Minta took a job with the Accountable Behavioral Health Alliance the lead-in to Oregon’s managed health care programs. She served as the Quality Manager for ABHA who managed the mental health Medicaid benefit for five counties and then went to the local IHN-CCO as the Director of Population Health, which included managing the behavioral health benefit

for the health plan.

She moved back into work as a health psychologist with Samaritan Athletic Medicine and an Urgent Care walk-in clinic as a primary care psychologist.

In Linn County she wants to improve client services, find solutions to the behavioral health crisis situations that exist statewide, utilize the skill sets of county staff and create a work environment that makes people want to work locally. She said finding staff is a key problem statewide.

Minta said it’s important that people understand the work mental health staff members accomplish each day is not easy and is in fact, traumatic at times.

“We need to emphasize Trauma Informed Care with our community partners and staff and to make sure everyone feels safe,” Minta said. “All of our community partners need to share a common language.”

Minta has a daughter, Janessa, a 2022 Corvallis High School graduate who is studying musical theater at Carnegie Mellon University. It was Janessa’s involvement with theater that drew her

mother into volunteering with local theater productions.

She also enjoys anything to do with water including kayaking, paddle boarding and surfing and being with her six-year-old Maltese-chihuahua named Bean and being around horses.

Todd Noble said hiring Minta was a major step in recognizing that Linn County Mental Health has added multiple new programs and it was time to address “ever increasing demands.”

“Our mental health program is the largest in the region — Linn, Lincoln Benton,” Noble said. “Linn County has

more than 60% of IHN members, which translates to more than 50,000 people we are responsible to serve. When fully staffed we have more than 118 employees. The Health Department is the largest department in the county and Mental Health is the largest program in the department.”

Noble said the program expansions come with heavy administrative responsibilities and that is why a second program manager was brought on board to partner with Tanya Thompson.

“I have a passion to help in my community, to help those in my backyard,” Minta said of return to Linn County. “I want to help our vulnerable population. To provide prevention work, especially for children.”

QUOTABLE
“I have a passion to help in my community, to help those in my backyard. “I want to help our vulnerable population. To provide prevention work, especially for children.”
— Sandy Minta

Planning Department adds Portland State graduate

By Alex Paul
Linn County Reporter

ALBANY — Linn County’s newest land use planner, Shawn Fowler, 29, says he enjoys the variety the job brings with it.

Fowler joined the Planning & Building Department three months ago, after working with the Benton County District Attorney’s Office in the discovery and evidence handling area. He was later promoted to a paralegal position.

“Working in the DA’s office and in land use planning aren’t as different as it seems,” Fowler said. “Both involve doing a lot of research and applying statutes or rules to the situation. You have to pay attention to details.”

Fowler, 29, grew up in Arizona, but finished his senior year of high school at Stayton in 2012.

He earned a degree in criminal justice from Portland State University, with a goal of working in the field of parole and probation.

“I volunteered with parole and probation in Marion County for six months and then the pandemic hit,” Fowler said.

Fowler said he finds the uniqueness of every property in the county interesting.

“It may be a single lot, or 100 acres



Shawn Fowler

that has a stream and wildlife areas,” Fowler said. “I love that every property is unique in size, location. It’s fun to see what can be done with each piece.”

As though getting a new job wasn’t a big enough life change, Fowler and his fiancé, Lindsey, plan to be married on September 2.

“We like to travel, especially to Mexico,” Fowler said.

He also enjoys hiking, playing the guitar and playing videogames.

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

Job Fair & Testing Event

<p>WHEN: Saturday, September 30th, 2023 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM</p>	<p>LOCATION: Central Electrical Training Center 33309 Hwy 99E Tangent, OR 97389</p>
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The Linn County Sheriff's Office is hosting a hiring event on September 30th, 2023 for the following positions:

PATROL | CORRECTIONS | 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

Nursing Applicants
(Minimum age 20)
Oral Interview

Lateral Applicants
Oral Interview

Please create an online account at <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/linnsheiff>

And register on Eventbrite at <https://bit.ly/3DYxh8h>

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:	Nursing and Laterals Oral Boards and Testing
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 Kori Goff by emailing kgoff@linnsheiff.org

Linn County participates in World Breastfeeding Week

The annual World Breastfeeding Week celebration was held in Albany on August 5 at the Linn County Public Health parking lot. The focus was on enabling breastfeeding for working parents. Information tables included breastfeeding education, infant CPR, face painting, shaved ice and a visit by Caesar the Llama.

Back row, left to right; Nadir Pinto, WIC lactation consultant; Serena Stearns- Garland, WIC dietitian; Leah Brunson, WIC supervisor; Shelby Sayer-Cameron, WIC breastfeeding peer counselor.

Middle row, left to right: Brandy Tarr, WIC Nutrition Educator; Laura Jimenez, community support worker, Maternal Child Health.

Bottom row, left to right: Farah Westberg, Maternal Child Health nurse; Liza Walker, Maternal Child Health Nurse; Chelsea Campbell, Maternal Child Health nurse; Rebecca Torres, bi-lingual health aid lead; Juana, Lopez- Gonzalez, WIC nutrition educator.

10 reasons to breastfeed your baby

Courtesy government of Canada

Breastfeeding is important for you and your baby. Here are 10 great reasons to breastfeed your baby:

1. Perfect nutrition

Breast milk is the best food to help your baby grow and develop. It is custom-made by each mother for her own baby. Breast milk has the perfect amount of protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins and minerals, and is easy to digest.

2. Protection

Breast milk helps your baby fight off sickness and disease.

After birth, the first milk your breasts make is called colostrum. It helps to stop harmful germs that can make your baby sick. Colostrum does this by coating your baby's digestive system so that germs have no place to grow. This protection is even more important if your baby is born early (premature).

Breastfeeding helps reduce the chance your baby will:

- have diarrhea, ear infections or lung infections
- die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- be overweight or obese when they are older

3. Brain power

Research shows that children who were breastfed score higher on intelligence (IQ) tests. They may even stay in school longer and earn more money as adults.

4. Ready and portable

Breast milk is always fresh and exactly the right temperature. It is ready for your baby whenever they are ready to eat. You do not have to heat it, boil water or sterilize bottles. This makes feedings so much easier!

Since breast milk is always with you, travelling or shopping with your baby is easier.

5. Size does not matter

The size of your breasts does not matter. Big or small, your breasts will make enough milk for your baby. Breasts start to get ready for baby very early in pregnancy. Your breasts can make colostrum once you are in your second trimester.

As soon as your baby is born, hormones tell your breasts to start making more milk. Your breasts will make as much milk as your baby needs. The more your baby breastfeeds – the more milk you will make!

6. Good for mothers too

Research shows that breastfeeding can protect mothers from many diseases such as:

- breast and ovarian cancer
 - diabetes
 - heart disease

Your body uses energy to make milk, so breastfeeding can help you to lose weight that you gained during pregnancy.

Exclusive breastfeeding (feeding your baby only your breast milk) may also delay the return of your periods for at least a little while. It is important to know that you can still get pregnant even if your periods do not start.

7. Builds a special bond

The closeness and comfort of breastfeeding helps you bond with your baby. It is one of the many things you can do to build a secure and loving relationship. Cuddling your baby can help your baby be more trusting and confident as they grow older.

8. Advantages continue as baby grows

Breast milk is so complete, it is the only food or drink your baby needs for the first 6 months. As your baby grows, your breast milk will change to keep up with your baby's needs.

From about 6 months of age, your baby will need a variety of healthy foods as well as breast milk. But breast milk continues to be an important source of nutrition and protection for your baby. Breastfeeding is recommended for up to two years or more, or for as long as you and your baby want to. Any amount of breast milk that you can give your baby is good!

9. Good for the planet

Breastfeeding is good for your baby, for you and for the environment. Breast milk is made and delivered right to your baby - without any processing, chemical preservatives, packaging or waste.

10. Easy on the budget

Breastfeeding saves you money. Having a baby can be expensive, so it is nice to know that breastfeeding is not! Breastfeeding could save you hundreds – or even thousands – of dollars.



OSU Extension Service

Building Resilience through Community Wildfire Protection Plans

By Kayla Bordelon
OSU Extension Fire Program
Regional Specialist

In the face of escalating wildfire activity, Linn County is taking proactive steps to safeguard our communities and natural resources, supported by the OSU Extension Fire Program and a coalition of additional wildfire resilience partners. At the forefront of this effort is the update of our Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), a collaborative plan to reduce the risks of wildfires and enhance our collective preparedness.

CWPPs: A Blueprint for Safety

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) serves as a roadmap for protecting lives, properties, and ecosystems against the negative impacts of wildfires. Developed by local and state government representatives, federal agencies, and community stakeholders, CWPPs are tailored to address the unique challenges and priorities that a particular county faces. These plans outline a suite of strategies to reduce hazardous fuels, fortify community resilience, and ensure efficient emergency response coordination.

CWPPs are not mere documents; they embody our collective commitment to wildfire resilience. By fostering open dialogues among residents, fire departments, land managers, and other experts, CWPPs enable us to explore innovative strategies, enhance our preparedness, and create defensible landscapes.

A Collaborative Approach to Resilience

A critical part of the Linn County's CWPP update process is to engage with community stakeholders to understand their priorities, build on their successes, and address their wildfire-related needs. OSU Extension's Fire Program is supporting this effort by co-organizing three opportunities for community engagement during the plan update process. In the first session, we invited city administrators from all the jurisdictions in Linn County to offer their input on



Susan Millhauser, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, shares an overview of progress made to date on the 2022-23 update of the Linn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

priority concerns and what projects they wanted to see in the updated plan. In the second session, representatives from a wide range of community organizations which included interests in natural resources, public health, emergency response, wildfire recovery, and community services came together to express their input. We are now integrating these community priorities into the updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Join Us in Building Resilience

In the late fall, we will be offering the opportunity for interested Linn County residents to attend the third community engagement session to hear more about the CWPP and offer input prior to the plan's approval. By participating, you can be part of our community's proactive response to wildfires. Every voice matters, and every insight contributes to a safer, more resilient future. Stay tuned for details, which we will share in the Linn County Reporter and elsewhere.



Some 23 representatives of community organizations attended the input session, including partners from natural resources, conservation, public health, wildfire recovery, and community services.



City managers and local officials share community priorities to include in the plan.

Draft goals of the Linn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

- **Enhancing Wildfire Response and Recovery:** Ensuring swift, effective response capabilities to protect life, property, and natural systems.
- **Empowering Stakeholders:** Equipping residents and stakeholders with knowledge and tools to understand, mitigate, and prepare for wildfire risks.
- **Reducing Structural Ignitability:** Implementing non-regulatory incentives to decrease the likelihood of structures igniting during wildfires.
- **Prioritizing Fuels Treatment Projects:** Collaboratively implementing fuels treatment projects on private and public lands to reduce risks and foster defensible landscapes.
- **Fostering Collaboration:** Enhancing opportunities for collaboration, coordination, and capacity building in the implementation of wildfire projects.

Working to close the cancer screening gap caused by COVID-19

Courtesy: National Cancer Institute

As the coronavirus pandemic raged in 2020, the number of people getting screened for cancer in the United States dropped dramatically. Many screening facilities closed temporarily, while others faced severe staffing shortages. On top of that, people were afraid to go to hospitals and other medical facilities for nonemergency procedures for fear of catching COVID-19.

An estimated 9.4 million screening tests that normally would have taken place in the United States in 2020 didn't happen. These missed screenings, many experts worry, could potentially lead to cancers being diagnosed at a more advanced stage and, ultimately, to more people dying from cancer.

A new effort led by the American College of Surgeons in collaboration with the American Cancer Society aims to close the COVID-induced screening gap by helping cancer facilities implement a broad range of strategies to bring their screening rates back up to their pre-pandemic levels. This initiative, called the Return-to-Screening study, is one of the largest such efforts in the United States.

Details of the study appeared March 21 in *Cancer*, with outcomes anticipated to be published later this year.

All of the participating cancer facilities "figured out what their screening [gaps were] and where they needed to put their efforts" to close them, said Heidi Nelson, M.D., medical director of cancer pro-



grams at the American College of Surgeons, who is leading the study. Similar efforts by individual institutions have also been launched around the country, including some at community health centers that are focused on screening for specific cancers or in specific population groups. What remains to be seen is the extent to which such initiatives will address meaningful gaps in screening, such as for cancer types in which screening continues to lag and underserved populations that have low screening rates, said Jennifer Crosswell, M.D., M.P.H., of the Healthcare Delivery Research Program in NCI's Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences. "Many of these organizations have bounced back to their pre-pandemic levels of screening. That doesn't neces-

sarily mean everything's great," Dr. Crosswell said. "There are pockets where people in underserved areas are doing a lot worse than others." A big question that Dr. Crosswell is hoping some of these efforts can answer is, "How do we provide help for those underserved places to catch up with the rest of the country in terms of screening?"

Getting people back to screening

In the Return-to-Screening study, 748 accredited cancer facilities—from small community-based programs to large academic cancer centers—implemented strategies from June through November 2021 to increase the rate of breast, lung, colorectal, and cervical cancer screening at their facility. The participating groups aimed to add a total of 70,000 additional screen-

ing tests per month by the end of the 6-month period.

Dr. Nelson noted that the study encouraged cancer facilities to use evidence-based interventions that are known to be effective in raising screening rates. Some of these strategies, outlined in a toolkit by the American Cancer Society, focused on increasing public awareness of screening, including through social media campaigns and patient education. Others focused on health care providers, using various means of reminding doctors to order screening tests for their patients and bolstering their knowledge of screening guidelines. A third strategy sought to increase access to screening, for example, by extending the hours when screening is available or providing financial support to those who do not have health insurance.

"We did not prescribe what interventions centers should use," Dr. Nelson said. However, she added, "we did encourage them to select more than one kind of intervention. If you only reached out to your community but didn't increase awareness [among] health care professionals, then you're still going to have a screening gap."

Each cancer facility determined their pre-pandemic screening levels, then implemented a combination of interventions aimed at getting their monthly screening volumes back up to these levels. Programs whose monthly screening volumes dipped by less than 10% during the pandemic were tasked with exceeding their pre-pandemic screening levels by at least 10%.

Fair & Expo Center calendar filling up; county fair was a hit

ALBANY — Activity at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center has been brisk over the past year, including the recent 4-H/FFA and county fairs that were "fantastic", director Kris Barnes told the Board of Commissioners.

Barnes said the Fair & Expo Center is booked nearly every weekend, resulting in a FY 2022-23 income of \$1,068,251, up more than \$230,000 from the approved budget. And, he added, personnel costs were almost \$300,000 under budget.

Barnes said some events planned or already held in August included the 4-H horse fair, a Guinness World Record fire patch attempt (successful), the Oregon Cowboy Dressage Horse Show, Yokia Market, Mid-Valley Bicycle Tour, Northwest Reptile & Exotic Animal Show, Oregon Charter Academy, Albany Art & Air Show and a National Specialty Dog Show.

The facility has also been used as an emergency shelter for animals and people affected by wildfires near Harrisburg and east of Sweet Home. Linn County Public Health and the Linn County Sheriff's Office worked with the American Red Cross to set up cots and food operations.

Barnes said that although this year's county fair was held during record heat — two days in the 97-degree range — response from the public was outstand-



Kris Barnes

Fair & Expo Director

ing. He said staff added 350 seats behind reserved seating for the Main Stage acts Clint Black, Smash Mouth and Granger Smith, and all were sold out.

He said that although paid admissions were down 7% due to the heat (27,327 compared to last year's 29,408) gate income was up 10% (\$83,445 compared to \$73,047) because of a price hike from \$7 to \$9 on-line or \$10 at the gate.

Barnes said vendors experienced rec-

ord revenue at both the food court and beer garden. Scott Schuler was contracted by the Fair Board to solicit sponsors and he brought \$148,000, far above last year's tally.

Barnes said the 4-H and FFA fair had outstanding participation — more than 1,000 total animals — and the annual auction brought in more than \$1.4 million.

Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger said

this was her third fair as a commissioner and she never had a single complaint forwarded to her this year.

Board Chairman Roger Nyquist, who also sits on the Fair Board, said the fair continues to grow and it may be time to take a hard look at added permanent structures, for example, a wood and metal sponsors' pavilion, rather than pay to rent a large tent every year.



Spiffing up the IT Department

Greg Hart and Vernon Mills of General Services install the frameworks for new cubicles in the IT Department as part of a complete remodeling project that includes new carpeting and paint.



Up, up and away at annual Art & Air Festival

Former Mid-Valley Media Photo Editor Mark Ylen captured these shots of the annual night-glow at the Northwest Art & Air Festival in Albany the weekend of August 25-27.



Taking early morning flight

Weather grounded the balloons at times, but they had opportunities to take to the early morning sky as well.

Photo by Alex Paul





Sprucing up Sweet Home!

Linn County government employees who live in Sweet Home are seeing their town's business district get brightened up thanks to Miller Paint, Fitzpatrick Painting, the City of Sweet Home and dozens of volunteers.

Dozens of buildings have gotten a fresh coat of paint in recent months.

Here are photos just a few of the dynamic transformations.



What you need to know about Oregon's new self-service gasoline laws

Courtesy State Fire Marshal's Office

What do the laws allow?

House Bill 2426 created provisions that allow for the following:

In 20 counties, self-serve gas is allowed at all hours. These counties include Baker, Clatsop, Crook, Curry, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Wheeler.

In 16 counties, gas stations can have no more than 50% of fuel pumps available for self-serve gas. These counties include Benton, Clackamas, Columbia, Coos, Deschutes, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Washington, and Yamhill. Self-serve is an option for these stations, not a requirement. Some stations may elect not to offer self-serve. For those that do, the following requirements must be met:

- Stations must have attended service at the other 50% of their gas pumps.
- Signs must be posted that identify the self-serve and attended service gas pumps.
- Self-serve can only be allowed during the hours an attendant is available.
- The price is the same for both self-serve and attended service.
- House Bill 3260 allows for self-serve gas at retail stations in Detroit, Oregon. This provision will end on January 1, 2029.



January 1, 2029.

Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

All gas stations are subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Oregon law, which require equal access to fuel for people with disabilities. Any gas station with an attendant or other employee on duty must provide refueling assistance to customers with disabilities.

Exemptions:

- Pilots may fuel their own

aircraft at airports permitted by the Oregon Department of Aviation.

- Motorcyclists operating their motorcycles may fuel their own motorcycles in all counties.
- Operators of diesel vehicles still may fuel their vehicles in all counties.

To learn more, please visit Choice at the Pump, hosted by the fueling industry partners.

To find out what is allowed in

your county, visit OSFM's self-serve map.

GAPS issues warning

ALBANY — As the fall sports season approaches, Greater Albany Public Schools would like to warn the public about supporting non-affiliated marketing material for our high schools.

Over the summer, the district received information from a concerned business owner about a company called "Spartan Sports" that promised to print a business logo on a RedHawks' T-shirt in exchange for \$350.

A shirt was sent to the business owner and 100 shirts with many Albany business logos were sent to the high school. Neither the school district nor South Albany High School have formal agreements in place with Spartan Sports or other third-party vendors for clothing sponsorships.

The school did not receive direct financial compensation from Spartan Sports.

We encourage businesses to reach out to SAHS Athletics Director Jay Minyard at 541-967-4522 if they would like to donate directly to the South Albany High School Athletics program.

Invasive species ... From Page 1

Primrose". I have been doing some research about this invasive plant and have learned the following:

- It is affecting many waterways in Linn County this year.
- It is extremely hard to get rid of.
- If we consistently apply the spray annually, it can take 5 years or more for the plant to be controlled, and this is only if it isn't continually washing in again from upstream.



Linn County Parks is interested in partnering with other groups (water conservation groups, etc.) to develop a plan to control the spread of this plant across the entire drainage, so we can more effectively fight this together. This might involve developing a time table for spraying each location, coordinating efforts to reduce downstream spread, and securing grants to help

offset the cost, among other things. We are just starting these conversations now.

In the meantime, you should notice a die back of the plants in coming weeks as this week's spray takes effect.

Whaley said later that the waterways near John Neal Park have already been treated this year in partnership with the North Santiam Watershed Council.

Ludwigia is native to Uruguay and southern Brazil. There are 82 species.

According to the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the plant infects sloughs, ponds and populations are expanding rapidly.

Ludwigia forms dense floating mats up to three-feet tall and it crowds out native species. Reproduction occurs via seed or vegetatively through fragmentation.

Dense patches can reduce oxygen levels in water, thereby affecting fish habitat.

- Do not purchase, transplant or use water primrose as an ornamental. Remove any existing ornamental plantings and control escaped populations.
- Prevent the spread by thoroughly cleaning boots, pets, boats or equipment of mud and debris that may carry seeds.

The public is asked to report areas with Ludwigia growth by calling the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Invasive Noxious Weed Control Program at 503-986-4621.



Too cool ...

Who do you think looks "cooler" in sunglasses provided to area veterans by our Veterans Services Department, Zeek, above, or our very own Dee Baley-Hyder and Eric Rice?



National Night Out

Undersheriff Micah Smith dropped by Ebenger Street southwest of Albany during National Night Out, Aug. 1.

LCSD staff visited numerous events in Albany, Lebanon, Scio, Gates, Crabtree, Harrisburg, Lyons, Millersburg, Tangent and Mill City.



Commissioner voices concerns about proposed solar park

The public was invited to comment about a proposed solar energy park that would be built on 1,500 acres about eight miles south of Brownsville. Here is Linn County Commissioner Roger Nyquist's comments.



LINN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Commissioner

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ROGER NYQUIST
Commissioner

Linn County Courthouse
P.O. Box 100, Albany, Oregon 97321
(541) 967-3825 FAX: (541) 925-8228

DARRIN L. LANE
Administrative Officer

August 11, 2023

Oregon Department of Energy
ATTN: Chase McVeigh-Walker, Senior Siting Analyst
550 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
Via email: chase.mcveigh-walker@energy.oregon.gov

RE: Muddy Creek Energy Park Project – Response to Notice of Intent

Dear Mr. McVeigh-Walker:

I write to you today in opposition to the Muddy Creek Energy Park Project. The application itself, on the high value farm land that it's proposed to be located on, if approved, will make a mockery of Oregon's Statewide Land Use System.

The property in question is zoned Exclusive Farm Use. A "solar farm" is not listed as farming activity by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Linn County is the "Grass Seed Capital of the World". We estimate agriculture to be about a 12% contribution to our total local economy. If you set the precedent of approving this application on high value farm land, it would seem you would be obligated to approve all solar farm applications with disregard to the positive impact of agriculture to Linn County.

Lastly, I suspect there are a whole bunch of property owners who have signed solar farm leases who have no idea how bad the property tax implications could be for them. At the very least, as a State Agency, you owe it to the taxpayers involved to make sure they are fully informed of the consequences. For example, I doubt people know that for property tax purposes the EFU Zoning will be rescinded on their property and that they could owe 10 years in back taxes.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Roger Nyquist, Chair

c. Steve Willis, Planning and Building Department Director



#dignityhonestycompassion

Linn County Jail adds personal growth programs for inmates

The Linn County Jail is making large strides to restart and incorporate inmate programming into the daily activities inside the jail to help the inmates prepare for life after incarceration.

In cooperation with LBCC, the GED program has been reintroduced into the jail and we recently had our first graduate from the program. Eligible inmates are interviewed by the instructor and each course of learning is tailored in an attempt to offer a map to success for each student.

With the help of Linn County Mental Health, a class titled Seeking Safety has begun in the jail. This program is tailored for female inmates and addresses PTSD and substance abuse issues. A similar class for male inmates is planned. Additionally, the full-time mental health counselor in the Linn County Jail works closely with C.H.A.N.C.E. (Communities Helping Addicts Negotiate Change Effectively) to offer peer support specialists to inmates for release plan assistance prior to their release date from our jail.

Another tool available to inmates is a learning platform called Edovo.

This platform is accessible through computer tablets, which are available throughout the housing unit in the jail. Edovo offers content in both English and Spanish with over 2,000 content items. Examples of some course titles include Job Search Strategies, Preparing for a Successful Interview, Starting a Resume, Learning Better Parenting and many others. Religious services have restarted as well. Eligible inmates can attend these services, staffed by qualified volunteers.

Sheriff Michelle Duncan is a strong believer in these programs being offered to our inmates. Although she believes those who commit crimes should go to jail, she also wants to take these opportunities to help those housed within the Linn County Jail by offering them tools to succeed and prepare for life after incarceration. "The more we can do for them while they are in our jail, the more likely they will return to the community as a positive, contributing citizen; thereby reducing the likelihood to commit crimes again. It is a win for the individual and our community," Sheriff Duncan said. "Offering these programs helps us stick to our motto of keeping the peace with dignity, honesty, and compassion."

Detroit Mayor Jim Trett honored

By James Day
Canyon Weekly

DETROIT — Detroit Mayor Jim Trett has been named the 2023 Small City Leadership Award winner by the Oregon Mayors Association. Trett received the honor at the association's summer conference Aug. 10-12 at Hood River.

Also honored were Tamie Kaufman of Gold Beach (medium city) and Dave Drotzmann of Hermiston (large city). Trett was honored for his work in leading Detroit's recovery from the deadly 2020 Labor Day weekend wildfires. Trett's efforts were considered by an Oregon Mayors Association selection committee, which was looking at nomi-

nations of mayors who have demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities which have contributed to lasting benefits in his/her city and the community as a whole. Special consideration was given to mayors who have:

- Shown considerable involvement in community affairs and intergovernmental relations;
 - Shown exceptional skill in helping to facilitate productive relationships between the governing body and city employees; and
 - Helped other Oregon mayors reach their full potential as community leaders.
- Trett, a retired Keizer firefighter who served for 34 years, also volunteers as the board president of Capitol City Medical Teams.

Open to all Lebanon community members!

COLONIA PAZ HEALTH FAIR

September 9th, 11am-3pm | 500 Weldwood Drive
Lebanon, Oregon 97355

FREE ENTRY

FREE FOOD

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN