



What's happening in Linn County, Oregon December 2021

A December  
to remember

Could anyone of us have predicted last year that we'd be dealing with the challenges of COVID, the supply chain and inflation?

It's easy to get caught up in the worries of the day when you are living smack dab in the middle of it. Sometimes it can be helpful to take a moment to put life's challenges into perspective.



**Darrin  
Lane**

Administrative Officer

For example, if you're reading this then you're still alive and wed all know that's a plus.

You're likely still working and helping care for others, which is another plus.

I could go on and on about how — in spite of the difficulties we face — we have so much to be grateful for, but you probably don't need to hear that from me.

Instead, I'd rather tell you how much we all appreciate you, how much we value your friendship, your kindness and your commitment to helping others.

You make this a better place for the rest of us and for that we thank you.

The holidays are a source of joy for most, but can be painful for those who have experienced loss.

Please reach out to others around you and let them know they aren't alone.

The kindness you show will be returned to you tenfold.

December is a good time to reflect on the past year, but it's also a great time to look ahead to the coming year.

## Colorful courthouse Christmas tree is up; aids local children



Treasurer Michelle Hawkins puts the last of more than 1,000 ornaments on the 9-foot Douglas fir Christmas tree on the second floor of the Linn County Courthouse.

By Alex Paul  
Communications Officer

**A**LBANY — Many mid-valley families spend the weekend after Thanksgiving watching football or taking advantage of sales at local stores.

But not Treasurer Michelle Hawkins and her husband Jeff.

The duo are up bright and early the Friday after Thanksgiving headed to the Vollstedt Christmas Tree Farm to pick out the perfect tree that will grace the second-floor lobby of the Linn County Courthouse.

For many years the task fell on staff at General Services, but Hawkins took it over about 10 years ago because the person who had handled the job, retired.

Hawkins also enjoys decorating things — especially the Christmas tree — even though it takes her about three days to trim its branches, flock it in white to help hold in moisture and carefully place more than 1,000 decorations from top to bottom.

"It's my thing," Hawkins said. "It has just sort of evolved over the years."

Hawkins said when she first took over the project, she relied on Tom's Garden Center to provide a flocked 8- to 9-foot tree, but now, she and Jeff find one and cut it themselves. She knows how to handle a chainsaw. Although her personal favorite is a Noble fir, they have selected a variety of species. This year's tree is a Douglas fir.

Courthouse Tree ... See Page 8



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.



## Sharing our holiday traditions

Karen and Kevin Guilford's holiday tradition takes a lot of work, but is enjoyed by an entire community, not just their family members. Karen with Information Technology Services and Kevin, retired from the Linn County Sheriff's Office, put a lot of work into turning their home at the corner of Moraga Avenue and Madrona Place in Albany, into a musical lighted wonderland. It's called Santa's Beat Shop and is showing nightly now through New Year's Eve. Thanks to the Guilfords and all of the other Linn County employees who shared their favorite holiday traditions with us. You can learn about several more traditions on pages 2-4 of this issue of The Linn County Reporter. You can also see a video at <http://www.fb.com/santasbeatshop>.

# What are your holiday traditions?



Triston, Brooks and Weston Garton on their annual skiing adventure the day after Christmas.



Homemade goodies including apricot turnovers and garlic potato sticks and fresh fruit are the key ingredients in the Italian "Christmas Tree" center piece that is a focal point of our family holiday traditions

## Linn County Board of Commissioners

Roger Nyquist



Sherrie Sprenger



Will Tucker



Call 541-967-3825

### Gartons enjoy special recipes and day in snow

**M**y wife is from upstate New York, and she makes what she refers to as an Egg Dish for Christmas morning (similar to a quiche, but with bread), lasagna on Christmas Eve (sometimes calzones).

We have prime rib on Christmas night. I take my boys snowboarding on Christmas Eve and we all go sledding on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Josh Garton  
Property Appraiser

### We want your Linn County event photos

ALBANY — Do you have photographs of everyday life in Linn County?

Baseball games, golfing, boating, skiing, fishing, or from community events like the Northwest Art & Air Festival, Sweet Home Sportsman's Holiday or Oregon Jamboree, the Lebanon Strawberry Festival, or the Harrisburg 4th of July parade?

Please send high-resolution photos, with information about location/event and the name of the photographer to apaul@co.linn.or.us, or call 541-967-3825.

## Homemade goodies are the focal point of our Italian holiday tradition

**M**y brother Tony and I were reared by our Dad and our Grandmother, who came to the United States in 1906 when she was eight years old from a small village in southern Italy.

Gramma never learned to read or write English, so our traditions are very much rooted in the "old country" and of course, involve food.

Since we are Italian/Catholic, we do not eat meat on Christmas Eve day. Instead, our meals revolve around baccala, which is salted cod fish — either fried or baked, or stewed in a tomato sauce and served over spaghetti.

A pizza pan holds a Christmas centerpiece made of goodies.

A large round loaf of bread holds a

stalk of celery in its center. It represents the Christmas tree.

Grapes hang from the celery ribs representing holiday decorations.

Around the base of the bread are spread homemade donuts covered with honey, garlic potato sticks, apricot turnovers, candies of all kinds and apples, oranges and many varieties of nuts.

No skimping here.

The evening meal focuses on spaghetti and several forms of the salted cod fish (it is soaked in water for several days before Christmas) to get rid of the salt.

The center piece remains on the table for several days as family members snack on the goodies.

Later in the evening, gifts are exchanged and then we attend midnight Mass —

Traditions ... See P. 3

# Treats, “perfect trees”, family



Kevin Groom's holiday tradition is making homemade pizzelles.

This holiday treat traveled from Italy to New York to Oregon

My mother's parents were from Monteleone di Puglia, Italy. All my Italian aunts in upstate New York would make these cookies called Pizzelles every Christmas.



They are made similar to waffles, by putting some batter in a Pizzelle iron, and cooking for about 30 seconds. I use the recipe my mother gave me, that she got from her mother, and make these every year. It always reminds me of my aunts, uncles

and cousins that still live in NY, and all the huge family gatherings that took place around Christmas every year.

Kevin M. Groom, P.E.  
Linn County Road Department

## Holiday traditions ... From P. 2

which used to really begin at midnight but now starts about 9 p.m. at our church.

We have maintained this tradition for decades — my brother's family back in Iowa does it too — and one year, when we were visiting our daughter in Austria when she was in college, we used a

pineapple for the centerpiece because we could not find celery at the local market.

It's the thought that counts. Merry Christmas friends.

Alex Paul  
Communications Officer

## Pajamas, breakfast burritos and big Christmas trees for this family

I really had to think about my holiday traditions. With Covid and the events of last year, our traditions were paused in sorts for 2020. However, one tradition that has not changed since the day I was born is spending Christmas with my sister Lori.

As we got older and our families grew and changed we have maintained the tradition of spending the night of Christmas eve together and opening gifts in the morning. We buy matching pajamas, eat way to many cookies and then feast on our mom's breakfast burritos (homemade tortillas, refried beans and bacon) in the morning.

My sister lost her home last year in the fires, so we broke the usual

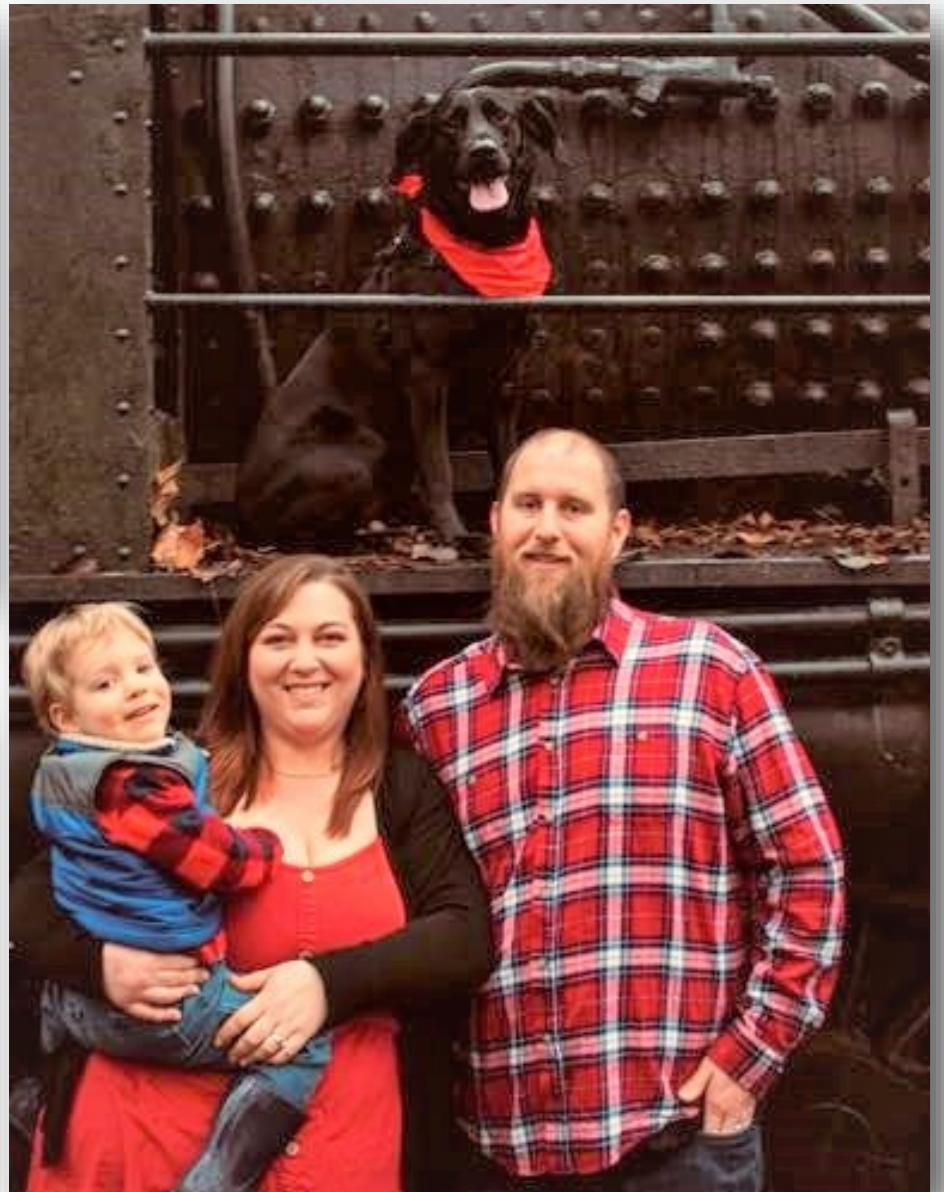
schedule of events and hopped on a plane and spent Christmas morning floating in a pool in Scottsdale, Arizona. It was perfect for the moment, but we look forward to returning to the usual events celebrated around an oversized tree my family picks despite my pleas for a small one. :)

I have attached a few photos "Christmas 1987" is well, Christmas in 1987 with my sister on the left and me on the right

Photo "Christmas 1" was from Christmas of 2019" the last "normal" Christmas oversized tree included in photo.

Photo "Christmas 2" was from Christmas of 2020 after dinner out

Traditions ... See P. 4



Timmy, Gabby, TJ Maine and of course, Jaxon.

## Let the holiday fun begin

I must start off by saying Christmas is my favorite holiday. I love the cold weather, sitting by a fire, decorating a tree and baking.

We have a few family traditions that we have created over the years. We always put too much effort in finding a tree. We spend a minimum of an hour finding the PERFECT tree, then we go home, make hot chocolate, play Christmas music and decorate it.

We always get our pictures taken for our Christmas cards in the month of December and give our family overseas updates about our life over the past year.

We watch Charlie Brown's Christmas and The Christmas Story WAY too many times.

We are also instilling in our son that Christmas is not just about getting gifts, it's about the spirit of Christmas and giving as well. At the beginning of December we always go through his toys/books and donate them to Vina Moses, or post them for free on Facebook. We make sure to remind him of everything he has and to be thankful.

Those are just some of the many things we do at Christmas time. It's the most wonderful time of the year!

Gabby Maine  
Developmental Disabilities Coordinator

Christmas 1987



# What are your holiday traditions?



At the Daudert home, family members will try to find a coin baked in a round loaf of bread to have good luck for the coming year.

## Eastern Orthodox tradition includes roasted suckling pig

**M**y family is Serbian. As Eastern Orthodox Christians, the Holy days follow the Julian calendar.

Christmas, or Bozic, is celebrated on January 7.

Traditionally, the center of the day's feast is a spit-roasted suckling pig or lamb called pecenica.

A round loaf of bread, called cesnica, has a coin inserted before baking. Then it's carefully broken apart and whoever gets the coin will have exceptionally good luck for the upcoming year.

Vruca rakija, or hot whiskey, is cooked and enjoyed while guests gather and celebrate the great feast.

Hristos se Rodi – Christ is Born!

Lily Daudert

Information Technology Services



Roast suckling pig will be enjoyed on January 7, Christmas (Bozic) for Eastern Orthodox Christians.



Christmas 2019, above, and 2020, right.



## Cummings family traditions ... From P. 3

in Arizona

It will be so fun to read what others do for the Holidays.

Mindy Cummings

Farm/Forest Appraiser  
Linn County Assessor's Office

## Jerry Williams shares family recipes

My family's favorite recipes during the holidays:

### Pumpkin Cookies

(a soft moist cookie) this is a triple batch

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

Mix until creamy 4 ½ cups sugar, 3 eggs, 3 cups pumpkin, 1 ½ cups shortening, 3 tsp cinnamon, ½ tsp nutmeg, 3 tsp baking powder, 3 tsp vanilla

Add together to above mixture 1 ½tsp. salt, 7 ½ cups of flour

You can fold in raisins

Bake for 8 -10 minutes

**My Grandmother Harlacher's Current & Tea Bread Ring**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees

**Step 1:** Add 2 packages of yeast to the following (after cooled to lukewarm) 1 cup milk scalded, 1 cup lukewarm water, 1 T sugar

**Step 2:** 6 tablespoons shortening, ½ cup sugar, 7 cups bread flour, 3 eggs, 1 tsp salt

Mix 1 and 2 together

Fold in currents (mixed dried fruits) or not.

Roll out into long roll, then form an oblong circle with the small end under large to form a circle.

Place on a cookie sheet and bake for 25 to 30 minutes.

Jerry Williams  
Linn County Parks

## “Christmas Vacation” a holiday must see

**O**h boy, this one is a doozy! We watch ‘Christmas Vacation’ the movie with Chevy Chase every year.

Then we fight over who in our family is most like Uncle Eddie.

Unfortunately, there is someone in that movie that each member of my family can identify with.

Can you say DYSFUNCTIONAL?

Jan Wutzke

Linn County Printing & Supplies

## Ho, ho, ho at the WIC office

**I** just wanted to let you know a recent tradition that we are doing in the WIC office for the week of December 20 to 23.

We have created a spirit week for the staff down in the Annex. All staff are encouraged to participate if they desire.

**Monday, Dec 20:** Flannel Day

**Tuesday, Dec 21:** Pajama Day

**Wednesday, Dec 22:** Ugly Sweater/ Best Holiday dress day and a hot chocolate bar

**Thursday, Dec 23:** Ho Ho Hat day (any winter hat, reindeers, elves, and Santa hats are some suggestions).

Serena Stearns-Garland, RD  
Registered Dietitian

# Michelle Duncan appointed Linn County Sheriff

ALBANY — Undersheriff Michelle Duncan will have a new job come January 1.

Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker agreed Tuesday morning that Duncan should succeed Sheriff Jim Yon, who recently announced his retirement as of the end of the year.

Yon has spent his entire 28-year law enforcement career with the LCSO.

Duncan, 47, will become the first female sheriff in Linn County law enforcement history, as she completes the final year of Yon's four-year term of office.

The commissioners indicated strong support for Duncan, who has held numerous leadership posts within the Sheriff's Office, starting as a resident deputy in Mill City for seven years.

She has also been a detective, worked narcotics, was patrol sergeant and worked with mountain patrols, was a lieutenant dealing with contract cities and was a Field Training Coordinator. In 2019, Duncan was promoted to Patrol Captain and earlier this year, she was promoted to Undersheriff.

Duncan has said previously that she and Sheriff Yon share the same command philosophy and that teamwork is vital to success of any organization. She also believes strongly in the value of training and valuing the work of all departments within the LCSO equally.

Duncan grew up in Linn County and in California. She has a degree in criminal justice from San Jose Community College.

She is married and has a son and a daughter. She enjoys hiking, fishing, yard and garden work and football.

The LCSO employs 190 people when at full strength and has an annual budget of about \$36 million.

Commissioner Tucker said he has always been impressed with Duncan's professionalism and dedication to the job.



Michelle Duncan

He added she has succeeded at every level of command leading up to the top job.

Commissioner Sprenger agreed and said she first met Duncan at a

meeting in Crabtree at which people were angry. Sprenger said Duncan truly listened to the people and cared about their issues.

Yon told the commissioners, "You will not be disappointed."

Duncan will stand for election in 2022.

LCSO Deputy John Raymond has also filed to run for sheriff as well.

If there are only two candidates, their names will appear on the November 2022 ballot. If more than two candidates file, their names will appear on the May 2022 primary ballot.

The names of the two candidates who receive the highest number of votes will be on the November ballot. If one of the candidates receives 50% of the primary vote tally — plus one vote — that candidate would be the lone name on the November ballot.



## Beautiful Linn County

*Nate Tisdell with Environmental Health snapped this photo of the beautiful fall tree colors along the South Santiam River near Cascadia State Park. He submitted it for the new county website. We are still gathering photos that depict life in Linn County from scenery to outdoor adventures, to farming to community events such as the Art & Air Festival, Sportsman's Holiday and the annual 4th of July parade in Harrisburg. Send photos to apaul@co.linn.or.us.*

## County inks

### First Millersburg property deal

ALBANY — November 9 was a varsity letter day for Linn County.

Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker unanimously approved a lease with Minnesota-based National Carbon Technologies-Oregon for 33 acres near the intermodal facility being constructed in Millersburg.

The company turns sustainably-sourced biomass into carbon products used for bioenergy, water purification, agricultural soil amendments and in metallurgical processes.

It is the first lease-business venture the county has entered in conjunction with the intermodal project underway by the Linn Economic Development Group.

Nyquist said the lease will be for 16 years and generate about \$8.6 million in total income plus an estimated \$7.5 million in property taxes.

The property is adjacent to the intermodal site, east of Old Salem Road.

"This is a good day for our county and the community," Nyquist said.

Nyquist said the company will invest \$80-\$100 million, employ at least 55 people and pay at least 150% of the county's median wage. Employees will also receive benefit packages.

Nyquist said National Carbon Technologies-Oregon has six months to acquire building permits, or determine if permitting is viable. If not, the company has the option of pulling out of the project.

"This company has a great environmental record and creates clean carbon products," Nyquist said.

Commissioner Tucker said this project "is a huge step forward with a strong partner. It's a great first contract."

Linn County purchased the 190-acre site from International Paper and sold 63 acres to AMEDC (the Albany-Millersburg Economic Development Corporation) which oversees the Linn Economic Development Group (LEDG) that will manage the intermodal project. After the lease, the county will still have 100 acres available for future development.

Revenues from the property are to be targeted for economic development projects.

#### QUOTABLE

*"This is a good day for our county and the community..."*

**Roger Nyquist**

## Riding on the dunes

*John, Marcy and Paul Hermens (Printing and Supply) have a new holiday tradition of riding ATVs at the dunes on the Oregon coast. Paul says it was a balmy 55 degrees and sunny on Thanksgiving Day.*



# Clear Lake Resort gear makes terrific gifts



You won't have to worry about supply chain issues if you give Clear Lake Resort clothing this holiday season.

Contact the Linn County Parks Department for a full line of T-shirts and hoodies.

Call 541-967-3917 or email [parks@co.linn.or.us](mailto:parks@co.linn.or.us)

Thanks to our models: Olivia, Amelia and Andrew.



Cozy yurts are available to rent all winter at both Clear Lake Resort and River Bend County Campground.



## Holiday camping rates in effect at Linn County's winter parks

**W**ant to get away for a weekend, but not have to travel far from home?

Linn County Parks Director Brian Carroll reminds everyone that Clear Lake, River Bend and Waterloo County Parks are open for camping all year long.

"Winter cabin and yurt rental rates are

now in effect and are discounted at least one-third off summer rates," Carroll said.

Although River Bend and Waterloo campgrounds are easily accessible in winter months, campers should check weather conditions — especially snow levels — if they want to camp at Clear Lake Resort, which has a steep entryway.

The current winter/spring rates are:

### Clear Lake:

Single rustic cabins, sleep 2: \$46.

Double rustic cabins, sleep 4: \$53.

Modern indoor with running water and oven, sleeps 4: \$83.

Modern indoor with running water, no oven, sleeps 4: \$76.

Large modern barrier-free, 3 double beds: sleeps 6: \$90.

Yurt: 16-foot: \$35.

### River Bend yurt rates:

Yurt: 16-foot: \$35/night; or with RV \$50/night; 20-foot: \$43/night; or with RV, \$56/night.

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

# Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping

*Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression.*

## By the Mayo Clinic Staff

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression.

And it's no wonder.

The holidays often present a dizzying array of demands — cooking meals, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few. And if coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is spreading in your community, you may be feeling additional stress, or you may be worrying about you and your loved ones' health. You may also feel stressed, sad or anxious because your holiday plans may look different during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But with some practical tips, you can

minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

## Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

- **When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup.** Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.
- **Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones for other reasons, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
- **Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events or communities. Many may have websites, online support groups,

social media sites or virtual events. They can offer support and companionship.

- **If you're feeling stress** during the holidays, it also may help to talk to a friend or family member about your concerns. Try reaching out with a text, a call or a video chat.
- **Volunteering your time** or doing something to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. For example, consider dropping off a meal and dessert at a friend's home during the holidays.
- **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children or other relatives can't come to your home, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos. Or meet virtually on a video call. Even

though your holiday plans may look different this year, you can find ways to celebrate.

- **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion. And be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression too.
- **Stick to a budget.** Before you do your gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

## Try these alternatives:

Donate to a charity in someone's name.

Give homemade gifts.

Start a family gift exchange.

## Linn County appreciates veterans



Staff from Linn County Veterans Services, above, and the Linn County Sheriff's Office, right, took part in the reverse parade in Albany on Veterans Day. We thank our veterans that day and every day of the year.



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

Contact editor Alex Paul at 541-967-3825 or email [apaul@co.linn.or.us](mailto:apaul@co.linn.or.us).



## Linn County Juvenile Dept.

### 2nd annual quilt raffle

92" by 94" handmade quilt

**Tickets just \$5 by 11:30 a.m. Dec. 15**

**Tickets: [trieker@co.linn.or.us](mailto:trieker@co.linn.or.us)**

Sponsors: Rhonda Nicholas & Finally Together Quilt Shop

Proceeds used to purchase food baskets for families in need.

## Courthouse Christmas Tree ... From P. 1

"I saw this one and even though its limbs were scraggly, I knew it was the one," Hawkins said. She wielded a chain saw to trim the branches into a pleasant upside down "V" shape and then felled it.

"It was so big we had to carry it from the same end," Hawkins said laughing.

This year's theme features red and green decorations, some new and others chosen from her huge supply generated over the years. They are stored in a cell in the old jail on the fourth floor of the courthouse.

"I have all of the decorations separated by colors," Hawkins said.

"We've had silver, gold, green, red, blue, even pink," Hawkins said. "I change it every year and I try to get a sense of what the favorite color will be each year early on. If I don't get new decorations by November 1, it's hard to find them."

Hawkins said it took seven cans of flocking to coat this year's tree. It's not only pretty, but it acts as a sealant that helps keep the tree fresh longer.

"I water it twice a day," Hawkins said. "Some years, they only last

until Christmas, other years we make it all the way to New Year's Day."

Hawkins said she does all of the decorating — lights go on first after flocking — and Jeff is her official "Santa's Helper" or "gopher" bringing in breakfast and lunch or going after needed items.

This is the first year the theme is both red and green.

"I just love it," Hawkins said. "I've always loved decorating homes. My dad was in construction and I learned how to paint and wallpaper at 15."

Hawkins said staff from General Services do a great job taking down the tree and disposing of it.

"They are super, very helpful," Hawkins said.

Although she enjoys crafting the courthouse tree, her tree at home is artificial. She is allergic to trees and deals with the issue year-round because her husband is a woodworker.

"We put a lot into putting up lights instead," Hawkins said grinning.



Hawkins used a chainsaw to shape up some "scraggly" limbs on the tree.



Treasurer Michelle Hawkins spends three days after Thanksgiving decorating the Courthouse Christmas Tree.



## Angel Tree helps kids

The Courthouse Christmas Tree is more than just a beautiful holiday decoration.

For several years, Linn County has partnered with the Salvation Army Christmas Angel Program to provide gifts for children.

Administrative Assistant Heather Gravelle is in charge of the program from Linn County's side.

The Salvation Army provides tags with information about each child such as age, sex, what type of gifts they would like.

Gravelle notifies county employees when the tags arrive and then places them on the Christmas tree.

"This year, we're asking people to bring back the unwrapped toys to the Commissioners' Office (Room 201) by December 13," Gravelle said. "We ask they attach the tag to the gifts so we can make sure they match up."

Gravelle said the tags represent gifts for children who range in age from babies on up to teenagers.



Administrative Assistant Heather Gravelle holds one of the 32 Salvation Army tags that provide information about gift needs for area children that will be placed on the Courthouse Christmas Tree.





**Left:** Retired LCSO Deputy Dave Lawler and Sheriff Tim Mueller have opened Hideaway Distillery in Lebanon. **Right:** Mueller and Lawler draw off a glass of whiskey that is being aged.

## LCSO retirees making “unapologetic” whiskey

By Alex Paul  
Communications Officer

**L**EBANON – Many people who retire from long careers with Linn County government spend their newfound free time fishing, hunting or seeing the world.

Not former Sheriff Tim Mueller and Sergeant Dave Lawler.

Their “golden years” are being spent distilling whiskey. It has been a steep learning curve both men agree, but well worth it.

Their “Blue Line” and “Hideaway” brands are flying off liquor store shelves and gaining nationwide attention.

They have had inquiries from folks in every state except Hawaii so far, and they didn’t even start making sales until August.

The retired law enforcement officers have turned a former tractor and implement facility turned bait shop at 4120 South Santiam Highway in Lebanon into a tasteful and modern production center and tasting room and they still have plenty of room to grow.

Both men served in the Army. Mueller joined the Linn County Sheriff’s Office in 1984 and was appointed sheriff in 2005. He retired in 2014. Lawler started his law enforcement career in Colorado and joined the LCSO in 1997. He retired in 2017.

For Mueller, making whiskey is a long family tradition. His Grandfather Paul Mueller was making it in the 1920s and 1930s. Family photos of his grandfather making moonshine piqued Mueller’s interest when he was about 14. He asked his cousin Bill Muller about the family tradition and also talked him into teaching him how to make moonshine. His first still was made from an old fashioned stainless steel milk can.

The rest is history.

Launching a distillery is not for the faint of heart, Mueller admits. He’s gone through a few partners until Lawler signed on and it’s been speedy growth ever since.

“We’ve spent many, many hours in



Former Linn County Sheriff turned distiller Tim Mueller talks about Hideaway Distillery’s two stills.



Sales of Hideaway Distillery’s two whiskeys the Blue Line and Hideaway are brisk, according to company owners Tim Mueller and Dave Lawler.

research,” Mueller said.

That work ranged from how to make whiskey on a craft scale, to sourcing ingredients, bottles and labels from near and far.

Right now, it’s difficult for the duo to find bottles and labels, because they are in short supply nationwide.

Equipment has come from California to Missouri, with local support from Advance Mechanical in Brownsville and Star Electric.

“We’re still figuring it out,” Lawler

said of making whiskey by the barrel.

For example, they experimented with a variety of yeasts, some of which were very expensive, and found that off-the-shelf bread yeast works just fine.

The company buys about 1,000 pounds of cracked corn at a time from a mid-valley farm. It has been cracked open, but not rolled into flakes.

The process of turning water, yeast and corn into alcohol takes about a dozen weeks from start to finish, with a good chunk of that time, allowing the

whiskey to condition in vats along with charred oak planks and then age in charred barrels.

“We use oak pieces from a tree we got on my dad’s property in Tangent,” Mueller said.

Each of the whiskeys has its own flavor profile due to differences in ingredients.

In addition to corn mash, the Blue Line label includes 21% rye and the Hideaway brand features 13% soft white wheat. Finding the right taste balance has been through trial and error, Mueller and Lawler said. Blue Line seems to appeal more to male buyers and Hideaway to female buyers.

Both whiskeys — which are technically bourbon — can be found in 38 Oregon liquor stores. Sales have been brisk, the men say and distribution will likely grow nationwide, especially among law enforcement personnel.

“Our firefighter friends want us to make a red line brand and we are working on that,” Mueller said. “Our graphic artist is working on a new label for that.”

Mueller and Lawler hope to expand their market into 36 states over the next 18 months. They think Texas could be a giant market, especially for the Blue Line brand.

“We know people like this whiskey,” Lawler said. “And that’s all that matters. We have a niche, now we just have to expand our market.”

How popular is Hideaway whiskey?

The first bottle sold was sold to a representative of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

In addition to state liquor stores and some restaurants including the Growler Cafe in Lebanon and The Point in Sweet Home, the distillery is open to the public from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. It is closed on Sunday and Monday.

You can keep up with the Hideaway Distillery adventure on its Facebook page. You can learn about the language of making whiskey at <https://hiconsumption.com/glossary-bourbon-whiskey-terms/>.

After 42 years with Linn County

# Tony Howell looking forward to gardening, whitewater rafting

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

ALBANY — Tony Howell’s plans for his upcoming retirement after 42 years with Linn County’s Alcohol & Drug program is a version of a popular restaurant menu item — surf and turf — although in his case, it means time spent whitewater rafting and working in his garden, not prawns and prime rib.

Howell’s new adventure will start January 1.

Howell, 69, says the best part of his more than four decades with the county has been the “people.”



Justin Thomas

“And by the people, I mean our clients and our staff,” Howell said. “I’ve seen individuals and even second generations of families get better and learn to use tools to overcome their

addictions. And our staff, which is so respectful and engaging with our clients, providing them with motivation to keep them coming back for help.”

A Culver City, California, native, Howell enrolled at the UCLA in 1971 after graduating from Loyola High School.

He was considering a future in the medical field, but soon found himself drawn to education and majored in psychology.

A friend’s sister lived in Salem at the time and Howell said he wanted to “get out of the big city” so he ventured north to the mid-valley.

His first jobs were with the Plaid Pantry market chain with stores in Salem and Albany.

“But I also volunteered at the Sunflower House (which helped young people with drug issues) and that got me interested in counseling,” Howell said.

His first position with Linn County was part-time at the detoxification program in the old hospital building at 7<sup>th</sup> and Ellsworth. The job soon grew into full-time work on mostly overnight shifts.

In the late 1970s the county closed the detox and residential program and moved the outpatient program into the Old Armory Building, where it remains on the second floor.

After a few years, Howell took time away from Linn County to earn a Master’s Degree in Social Work at the University of Michigan.

“Portland State was just starting a Master’s program and Michigan’s program was well established,” Howell said, admitting he enjoyed the university and community, but didn’t enjoy the brutal winter weather.

“It was nice that a friend from grade school was there, so we shared a house,” Howell said. “I enjoyed a lot of the cultural activities of the area and I have relatives in Minnesota, so I got to see them when I was coming and going.”

In the summer, Howell worked at a camp for emotionally disturbed children and was offered a full-time position, but when there was an opening in Linn County’s outpatient treatment program, he returned to the mid-valley.



Whitewater rafting is important to retiring Alcohol & Drug program director Tony Howell. He met his future wife Patricia Benner on a rafting adventure and they were married at the Rogue River. They are in the raft shown in a Grand

He was named director of the county’s Alcohol & Addiction program in 2001.

“Linn County is such a good place to work and our program is so good,” Howell said. “Both the Board of Commissioners and the Health Department have been great to work for. We have been able to do a lot of innovative work.”

He said the A & D program works wells with Mental Health, the social services outreach and Linn County Sheriff’s Office.

Howell said A & D works with about 700 individuals per year, of which about 120 are youth, on issues from alcohol and drug addictions to problem gambling.

Howell is especially proud of our prevention services, including an effective curriculum for students in the fourth and sixth grades within all seven school districts in Linn County.

“It’s a research-based prevention program,” Howell said. “Statistics show that addiction is lower the longer we can delay someone’s first use.”

Howell said that alcohol abuse was a major issue when he first started with the county, but for many years, methamphetamines have been a major issue.

“Opiates are up there,” Howell said.

Howell and his wife, Patricia Benner — a retired river ecologist — live in Corvallis. They met on a whitewater rafting adventure. He hopes to reclaim a larger party of their garden space for vegetables. Flowers have taken up more and more of the area, he says with a smile.

The couple also have a long-term project, restoring the historical home of Hannah and Eliza Gorman, black pioneers, at 641 NW Fourth St. in Corvallis.

The home is the oldest in Oregon built by black pioneers that remains standing. It was going to be demolished in 2004 and the couple stepped up to save it.

Howell said Hannah

Gorman took in laundry and her daughter had a reputation as a fine seamstress. The family had traveled to Polk County in 1844 with the Thorpe family, but by 1856 had moved independently to Corvallis and established their new lives.

Both were highly respected in the community.

Howell and Benner met on a

whitewater rafting trip on the Rogue River, organized by the prior Program Manager, Betty Griffiths, and were later married on the Rogue. They’ve especially enjoyed rafting trips on the Salmon and Snake Rivers — and the Grand Canyon.

Howell said he is leaving the staff of 30 in good hands with Justin Thomas as the new director. He has been the Mental Health Crisis Team supervisor.

“The staff is strong and Justin will be an asset in making it even stronger,” Howell said. “He will have a positive impact.”

Howell said budget issues have been the most difficult part of his job, but adds that the Health Department has been quite effective in securing grant funds.

“The commissioners have always given us good support,” Howell said. “Addiction treatment is an important service in our communities.”

“Tony has been the serving the citizens of Linn County for an amazing 39 years, leading the A&D program. He is a humble public servant who has a huge heart who leadership embodies kindness, accountability and advocacy for those struggling with substance abuse,” Public Health Director Todd Noble said.

Noble added, “Under his stewardship Linn County’s A&D program has been able to restore hope and recovery for countless Linn County citizens. Tony is the longest serving program manager in Linn County’s history. He has touched so many lives and has been a steadfast supporter of his employees and the clients served by his program. We are so grateful for his outstanding public service. His dedication and legacy will live on for decades to come.”

**QUOTABLE**

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**Tony Howell**