



Budget hearings underway May 2-5

ALBANY — The 2022-2023 Linn County Budget Committee will meet daily from May 2-5 at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Road East.

Department heads and elected officials will present their proposed budgets to the committee composed of Jennifer Stanaway, Kerry Johnson and Mellissa Barnard and Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker.

The budget is scheduled to be adopted at 11:05 a.m. on June 23. The 4-H Extension Service District budget is scheduled to be adopted at 11:10 a.m. on the same day.

The Budget Hearings schedule will be:

Monday, May 2

9:30 a.m., Assessor & Tax collector; 9:40 a.m., Surveyor; 9:50 a.m., Fair & Expo; 10:05 a.m., Print Shop; 10:15 a.m., Information Technology; 10:30 a.m., G.I.S.; 10:40 a.m., public input; 10:45 a.m., Treasurer/non-departmental; 10:50 a.m., County Attorney; 10:55 a.m., General Administration; 11 a.m., Law Library; 11:15 a.m., Board of Commissioners; 11:30, Veterans Services.

There are no morning meetings scheduled for Tuesday, May 3, or Wednesday, May 4.

Tuesday, May 3

1:30 p.m., Public Input; 1:35 p.m., Planning and Building; 2 p.m., Health Department ; 2:30 p.m., General Services; 2:45 p.m., Road Department; 3:15, Juvenile Department; 3:30 p.m., Juvenile Detention.

Wednesday, May 4

1:30 p.m., Public Input; 1:35 p.m., Parks and Recreation; 2 p.m., Sheriff's Office; 2:30 p.m., District Attorney's Office; 3 p.m., Clerk's Office.

Thursday, May 5

9:30 a.m., 4-H District Budget Meeting; 10:30 a.m., Reconvene Linn County Budget Hearings; 10:40 a.m., Justice of the Peace Court; 10:45 a.m., Budget Hearings decision making.



Staff from the Linn County Health Department. Foreground: Director Todd Noble and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Neva Anderson. Background, left to right: Nate Tisdell, Erik Anderson, Edgar Zarazua, Mayra Vega, Sarah Daniels, Diana Denham, Terri McQueen, Danielle Salazar, Cassie Barrera, Tyra Jansson, Shane Sanderson and Audrey Caro.

Tackling COVID-19 was a team effort for Linn County Public Health Dept.

By Alex Paul
Communications Officer

ALBANY — Although it's never "business as usual" for anyone who works in the field of public health, the past two years have been especially challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic that claimed 6.2 million lives worldwide.



Todd Noble

"The last two years have been an unprecedented challenge for every American, but fortunately because of the amazing efforts to vaccinate our community, we are getting closer to ending this pandemic and closing the door on this chapter of our collective history," Health Director Todd Noble noted in a report to the Board of Commissioners.

Linn County's Public Health staff was spurred into full-scale attack mode in March 2020 with the first reported COVID-19 cases at the Edward C. Allworth Veterans Home in Lebanon.

"I was in Portland the day it happened and it took four hours to get home because I started getting multiple phone calls from the press," Noble

said. "I called Ralph (former County Administrative Officer Ralph Wyatt) and the commissioners. We began scrambling to secure PPE."

That scramble lasted for several weeks as Public Health staff, Samaritan Health Services and Linn County commissioners scoured the region to find PPE. Ultimately, Linn County secured more than two million pieces of PPE.

The combined full-court press worked.

Noble said three key issues allowed Linn County to jump on the issue quickly.

- Linn County has what Noble said is the best Public Health Emergency Manager in Oregon in Neva Anderson, who working with her husband Eric made a formidable team. "There's no one better than Neva Anderson," Noble said. Team Anderson along with Sarah Daniels were amazing and worked seamlessly with the Sheriff department's Joe Larsen, Ric Lentz and Sheriff Michelle Duncan
- The commissioners were "very supportive of our efforts."
- "Emergency management is my

personal passion," Noble said. "I supervised the county's crisis team for a decade so I am comfortable operating in crisis mode".

Linn County commissioners earmarked funds for testing of congregate sites and then holding vaccination clinics at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center. A new mobile unit was used extensively to hold clinics in rural communities and provide at-home services as well.

In all, Noble said, working in partnership with the Medical Reserve Corps, Linn County vaccinated more than 130,000 people. There were 175 mass vaccination events and 650 mobile clinics.

The 985 Medical Reserve Corps volunteers donated more than 32,000 hours valued at nearly \$1.3 million.

"I cannot say enough how grateful I am for the incredible support and public service the Linn County Medical Reserve Corps provided to the Linn County community," Noble said in a report to the commissioners. "We could not have done this important and incredible work without this key relationship."

Noble said the Health Department's efforts were two-fold, one being the incredible Emergency Management team Neva An-

COVID-19 response ... See P. 4



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 or call 541-967-3825.

New tobacco prevention coordinator targets vaping

By Alex Paul
Communications Officer

ALBANY — In her new position as Linn County Public Health’s tobacco prevention coordinator, Dani Crabtree will be able to combine two of her key interests — wellness and helping young people.

Crabtree, 41, started her new job the first week of April and comes to Linn County after several years with Samaritan Health Services, where she provided “My Chart” support for the group’s many clinics.

Begore she launched a career in health services, Crabtree was in the newspaper business and worked at the Albany Democrat-Herald, where she was a news clerk and wrote for the Entertainer. At the Arizona Daily Sun, she was a design editor and desk editor and said she loved living in Flagstaff where she was close to seven national parks.

She also has a freelance editing business and has written two books of a planned four-book series.

Crabtree graduated from the University of



Dani Crabtree

Tobacco Prevention Coordinator

Oregon with a degree in journalism in 2004 and recently earned a Masters Degree in Public Health from Oregon State — graduating Summa Cum Laude.

“There were 300 applicants and 20 were selected,” Crabtree said. “Most of us had full-time jobs, plus it was during the COVID period. Although it was on-line, I met frequently with our instructors.”

Crabtree said she is focusing on “getting my feet under me” and in the initial phase of building her program focused on reducing second-hand smoke and developing an outreach education program.

“I would like to see all public spaces go smoke-free,” Crabtree said. “I will also be collaborating with the Greater Albany Public Schools and working jointly with Alcohol & Drug.”

She also wants to educate young people about the health dangers associated with vaping. She said too many people believe vaping is safer than smoking cigarettes, but it isn’t.

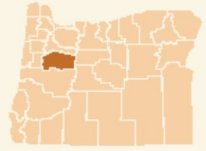
Linn County Tobacco Fact Sheet, 2019

Tobacco's toll in one year¹⁻⁵



17,100 Adults who regularly smoke cigarettes

8,700 People with a serious illness caused by tobacco



Population

Youths 28,062
Adults 97,513
Total residents 125,575



290
Tobacco-related deaths



\$45.1 Million
spent on tobacco-related medical care

\$40.1 Million
in productivity losses due to premature tobacco-related deaths

Among tobacco retailers assessed in Linn County⁶



1 in 2 advertised tobacco or e-cigarettes outside the store



91% sold flavored products (menthol, candy, etc.)



20% sold products within 12" of toys, candy, gum, slushy/soda or ice cream



1 in 2 offered price promotions/discounts



96% advertised cigarettos for less than \$1

Components of a comprehensive tobacco prevention program



Oregon's Tobacco Prevention and Education Program (TPEP) supports local public health authorities to serve all 36 counties and nine federally recognized tribes. TPEP works to:

- Engage communities in reducing the tobacco industry's influence in retail stores
- Increase the price of tobacco
- Promote smoke-free environments
- Provide support and resources to Oregon smokers who want to quit
- Engage diverse populations of people in Oregon

Crabtree said she believes it is also important that the state get its marijuana laws in line with tobacco rules.

“Marijuana smoke is extremely carcinogenic,” she said.

Linn County tobacco cessation goals are:

- Create Tobacco-Free Environments
- Prevent Tobacco Initiation among Youth and Young Adults
- Promote Cessation Services among Adults and Youth
- Identify and Eliminate Disparities

in Tobacco Use

- Enforce Tobacco-Related Laws

Crabtree said her heart is with improving the lives of children, women and minorities, whether that is helping them work their way out of poverty or gaining access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

When she isn’t working, Crabtree can be found hiking, especially what she calls “urban hiking” exploring trails and neighborhoods in Albany. Her Australian Shepherd, Patrick, often accompanies her on the outings.

She is also remodeling her house and yard and is eyeing a third book. She also enjoys writing poetry.

Linn County Board of Commissioners

Roger Nyquist



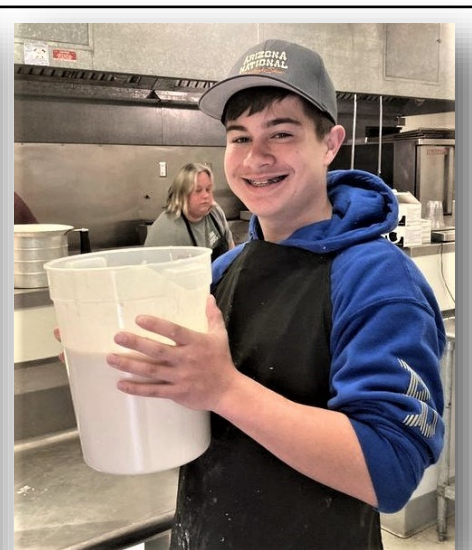
Sherrie Sprenger



Will Tucker



Call 541-967-3825



Linn County 4-H club members served breakfast at 35th annual Oregon Ag Fest April 23-24 at the State Fairgrounds in Salem.

There was something for everyone from critters to gardening. The goal is to bridge the urban-rural divide and promote Oregon’s ag bounty.

Blue it is; website project is picking up steam

By Alex Paul
Communications Officer

ALBANY — Using completely unscientific methodology, elected officials, department heads and several of my friends voted that they preferred a two-tone blue color scheme for the new Linn County website.

Interestingly, the blue color scheme was favored about 66% compared to about 33% for a two-tone green color scheme by both the elected officials/department heads and my social media friends.

No taxpayer money was spent on this survey and a big “thank you” to everyone who took the time to respond. The truth is, both of the color schemes looked great.

The website committee provided that new information to our Municode project manager and the team ironed out a few details in a Zoom meeting April 12.

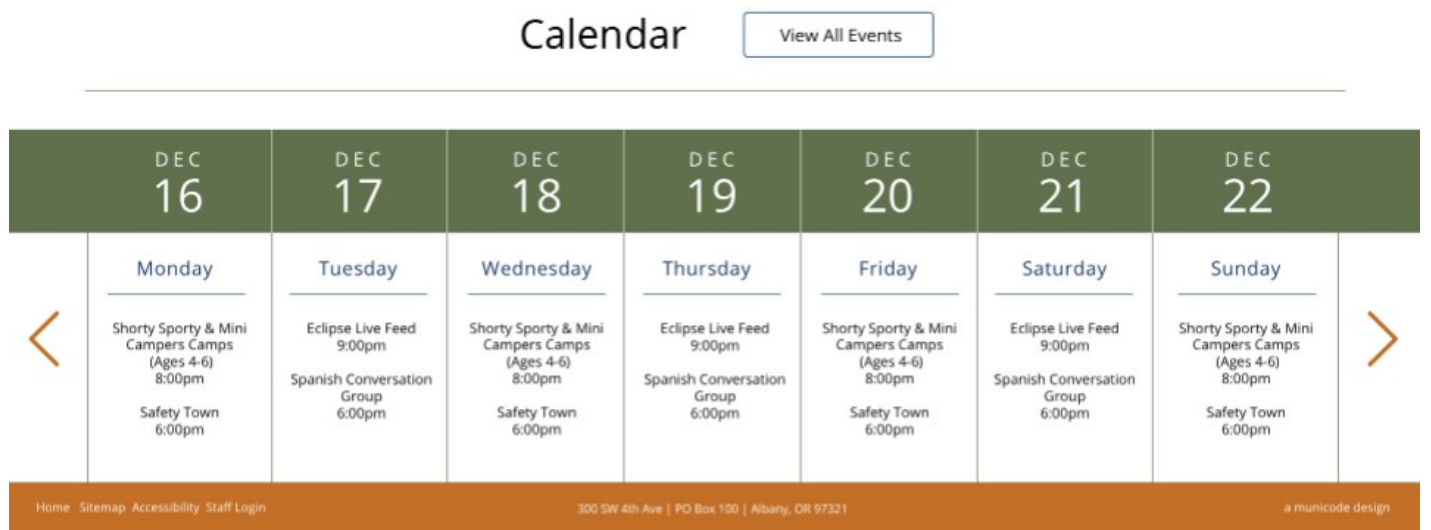
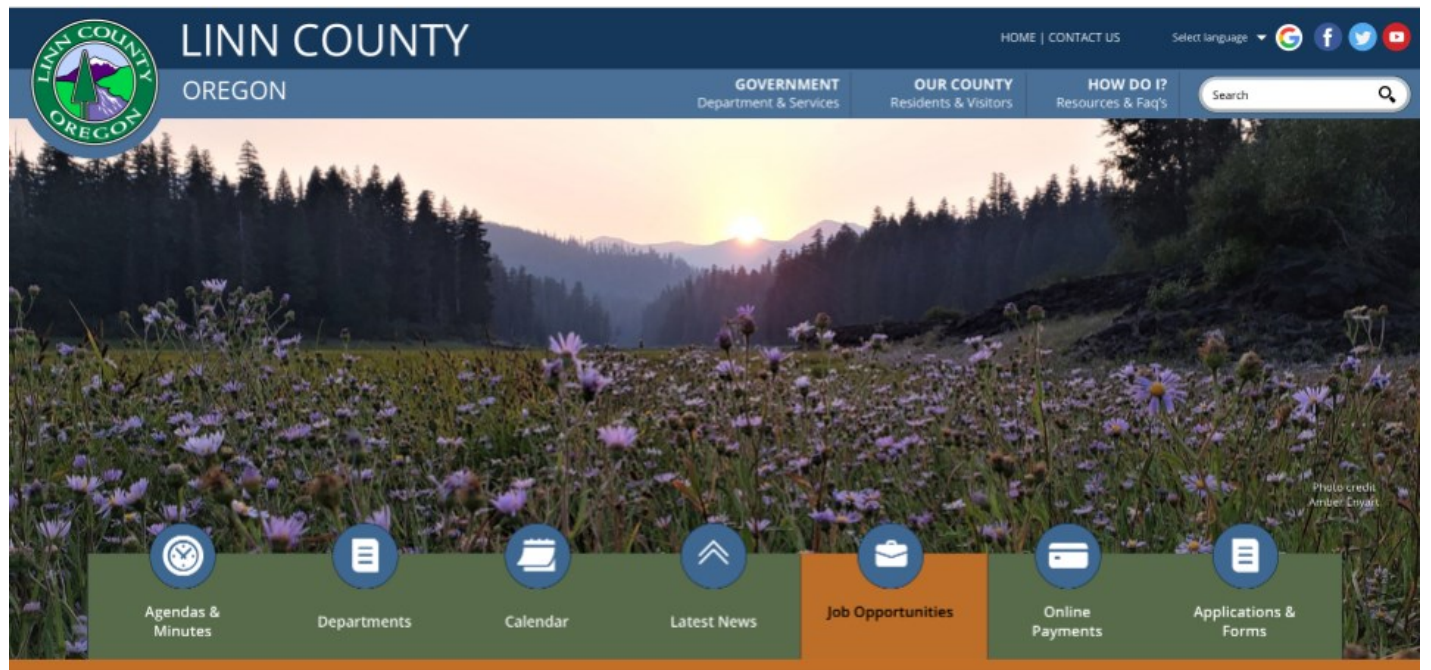
What does this mean?

The plan is to have a design that can be tested by early May. That doesn’t mean it will be useable by staff or the public, but it will be “clickable”. We can see how the new website will function when someone “clicks” on an icon or department logo.

It will be a big step forward from the static images we have been looking at and working with.

Then, the fun begins. Municode staff will begin the process of “migrating” information from each department site. That is also the time when we may need to edit, write or rewrite information to bring it up to date and to “fit” the pages accordingly.

That’s where my job comes in. Municode will communicate their needs to me and I will work with the department folks to make sure what they want to say



is conveyed appropriately and within website capabilities. Along that line, we will schedule content input training sessions with department staff members. We would suggest two staff members from each department participate in the live training sessions. Having two people able to input content will allow departments to make any changes needed if someone

is sick or on vacation. Also, we will have staff available to make changes in the event key staff people are both out of office at the same time. The goal is for departments to be able to maintain their portion of the website on their own. They can make changes hourly if they wish.

We hope to have Phase I of our new website up and running by late June. As always, we welcome your comments. **Note:** By the time this story is published the website team should have a live version of the new website to work on. (We hope anyway.)

Linn County dispatchers handle 171,000 calls

April 10-16 was National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. The Linn County 9-1-1 Center is the primary Public Safety Answering Point for Linn County and North Albany. All 9-1-1 calls placed within Linn County, or within the city limits of North Albany, come to the 9-1-1 center.

Dispatchers work tirelessly taking calls and dispatching, EMS, Linn County Parole and Probation, eight Fire Departments, and of course, your Linn County deputies.

In 2021, the 9-1-1 center answered nearly 65,000 calls. They also took over 106,000 non-emergency calls for a total of more than 171,000 calls.

Dispatchers take all sorts of calls, from dog complaints, to people not breathing, to shots fired and everything in between.

Dispatchers help callers through stressful times, helping them remain calm and getting the information needed in order to take the best course of action.

Whether it’s helping a family safely deliver their baby or taking a “dumpster fire” call that turns into the South Albany High School fire, 9-1-1 dispatchers are here for you.

Dispatchers are here to serve the community and help people in need. They serve an important role in public safety and live our mission statement every day of “Keeping the peace with dignity, honesty and compassion”.

We appreciate all the hard work the men and women do for us at your Linn County Sheriff’s Office 9-1-1 Dispatch Center.

Interested in a career as a 9-1-1 dispatcher? We are hiring! For more information visit: <https://www.linnsheriff.org/community-resources/career-opportunities/>.





Linn County Health Department staff and many volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corps made it possible to vaccinate more than 130,000 people at 175 mass vaccination clinics and 650 mobile clinics.



Linn County's COVID-19 response ... From Page 1

Emergency Management team Neva Anderson build along with the Covid response team which consisted of Shane Sanderson Public Health Program Manager, Rachel Peterson and Tyra Jansson who built and managed the county's contact tracing and disease investigation team.

Noble was quick to acknowledge other Health Department staff who volunteered to assist the efforts along with search and rescue staff and fair expo leadership which provided the venue for the mass vaccination clinics.

"No other county in Oregon did what we did, running and operating mass vaccination clinics with the assistance of the medical volunteers" Noble said. "We provided the testing services early on and our vaccination clinics were arguably the most efficient in the entire state. Most mass vaccination clinics were operated primarily by hospital systems".

Noble said he is "grateful" at how his staff stepped up. "Our people served our community gallantly," Noble said. "It's a great team to work with and the collaboration was done with an attitude of all-hands-on-deck."

Noble said there was only one day when

the lines at a vaccination clinic at the fairgrounds were long. Noble added that Commissioner Nyquist challenged the department to get this right with the best possible customer service in mind. "We had to go above and beyond. The community was counting on us. For many people this might be the only time they ever step foot in a county facility so we had to deliver".

"Following the one day with long lines, we adjusted and solved that problem and ended up building an amazing

operation. The average wait time was six minutes from the moment a person registered upon entering the building until they had a shot in the arm," Noble said. "Our philosophy was 'get it right' and that meant focusing on outstanding customer service."

Noble said the county is preparing for future emergencies by searching for a place to store a large amount of PPE and other emergency supplies.

"Most emergencies are short-lived," Noble said. "We were in uncharted territory with this. Unless you were around for the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918, no one had experienced something like this."

QUOTABLE

"No other county in Oregon did what we did, running and operating mass vaccination clinics with the assistance of the medical volunteers..."

Todd Noble

Noble said that although many people did not like restrictions and mask mandates issued by the Oregon Health Authority, Oregon had the seventh lowest number of deaths per 100,000 population in entire country, doing better than 43 other states.

"We should be very proud of that," Noble said.

He added, "If the last two years have taught us anything, it has become apparent that local government is in the best position to take the lead during a major crisis," Noble said. "The state can make policy, the Community Care Organizations can be a support and assist in funding, but it is the county — particularly the Health Department — that has taken the lead to serve and manage this pandemic along with volunteers from the Linn County Medical Reserve Corps

and our hospital partners at Samaritan who have been treating those who are ill."

Linn County is very fortunate to have a competent and capable Health Services Department led by Todd Noble and supported by a team of dedicated public health professionals, said Linn County Administrative Officer Darrin Lane.

The Health Services Department was supported numerous times by other department heads and elected officials who allocated personnel to assist with testing and vaccination clinics.

"It really was an 'all hands on deck' effort as described by Mr. Noble," Lane said. "Ultimately, getting through a public health crisis depends on the support of the citizenry as well. Linn County was successful, in part, because the citizens have continuously supported Linn County in various ways."

New officers for SEIU

Following a recent election, Service Employees International Union has the following employees serving in leadership and representation roles:

Nate Tisdell-President

Vern Mills- Vice President

Thom Hussong-Christian Secretary/Treasurer

Holly Borba-member at large

Obie Perue-member at large

Erin Nye-member at large

Lisa Walker-Previous Past President/Chief Steward

Remembering those who gave all for our country



Robert Beaver, Jace Cook, Melissa Allison are new ADAs

By Alex Paul
Communications Officer

ALBANY — Robert Beaver, Jace Cook and Melissa Allison have joined the Linn County District Attorney’s Office as deputy district attorneys.

Beaver, 29, is a North Carolina native and North Carolina State University graduate, with a degree in zoology.

He earned his law degree in 2020 from Lewis and Clark Law School.

“I originally wanted to be a veterinarian,” Beaver said. He has a focus on environmental law.

Beaver comes to Linn County after about 18 months at the Coos County District Attorney’s Office, where he worked on domestic violence cases and had an interest in wildlife and animal abuse issues.

“I had visited the Albany area several times and it’s beautiful here,” Beaver said of his move to the mid-valley. “I have met some great, hard-working people, much like those in North Carolina.”

Beaver said he and his girlfriend enjoy traveling. She would like to visit Iceland and he tends to like warmer climates, such as Mediterranean.

Beaver enjoys reading, music and being outdoors hiking or kayaking.

“I’m excited to be here,” Beaver said. “It’s a great office and everyone has been very welcoming.”

Jace Cook

Jace Cook took a winding route to law school and his new job in Linn County.

A Grants Pass native, Cook spent one year at Gonzaga University in Spokane before transferring to the University of



Robert Beaver



Jace Cook



Melissa Allison

Oregon, where he earned a degree in Kinesiology in 1999.

“I had thought about going to medical school,” Cook said of his degree choice. “I had always enjoyed science, health and exercise, but I wanted to explore my options and gain real-world experience before making any final decisions.”

Cook had several jobs in ensuing years, from being a financial adviser to EMT at a rural fire station near Grants Pass.

Cook spent nearly two months training with Morgan Stanley at the World Trade Center in New York City, and left the city only days before the twin towers were attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001.

Cook spent two years in Weimar,

Germany, where he taught English as a Second Language and met a German man who was in law school there.

That led him to auditing law classes taught in English by an American and sparked his decision to attend law school.

“I have always been interested in the concept of justice and standing up for what is right,” he said. “That has always been important to me, plus I enjoy serving my community.”

Cook earned his law degree in 2015 and worked with several attorneys in the Portland area before opening his own law firm in Lake Oswego. He gained broad experience in personal injury law, criminal law, family law and contracts.

In December 2020, Cook met another long-term goal when he earned a direct commission in the Oregon Army National Guard as a JAG lawyer. He completed basic training at Ft. Benning, Georgia, then completed the Judge Advocate Officer Basic Course in Charlottesville, Virginia.

He was commissioned as a First Lieutenant.

When he isn’t working, Cook is learning to ride a horse with his daughter Alice, has completed an ultra-marathon, hunts chuckers in eastern Oregon and said he would like to get back into fly fishing.

“I’m really grateful to be a part of the District Attorney’s Office,” Cook said. “I have always been interested in prosecution. There is a strong sense of purpose and teamwork here. We are on a mission, which is what I enjoy so much about being in the military.”

Melissa Allison

Melissa Allison was in the seventh grade when she realized she wanted to become an attorney.

“I was standing up for another student and a teacher asked if I thought I was her lawyer,” Allison said. “I knew

then that I wanted to stand up for people.”

Allison recently joined the Linn County Attorney’s Office specializing in juvenile cases. She will work 19 hours per week.

Allison grew up in Estacada and Gresham, graduating from Sam Barlow High School and then Portland State University with a degree in business and a minor in communications.

She traveled to Western New England College in Springfield where she earned her law degree in 2005.

“I worked my way through college, I usually had at least one job,” Allison said.

In the summers, Allison would return to Oregon where she had internships in district attorney offices.

Her first job as an attorney was with the Marion County District Attorney’s Office in 2006. She had been a volunteer victim’s advocate in the office for about a year.

“I prosecuted all type of criminal cases, from disorderly conduct to murder, DUI and domestic violence,” she said.

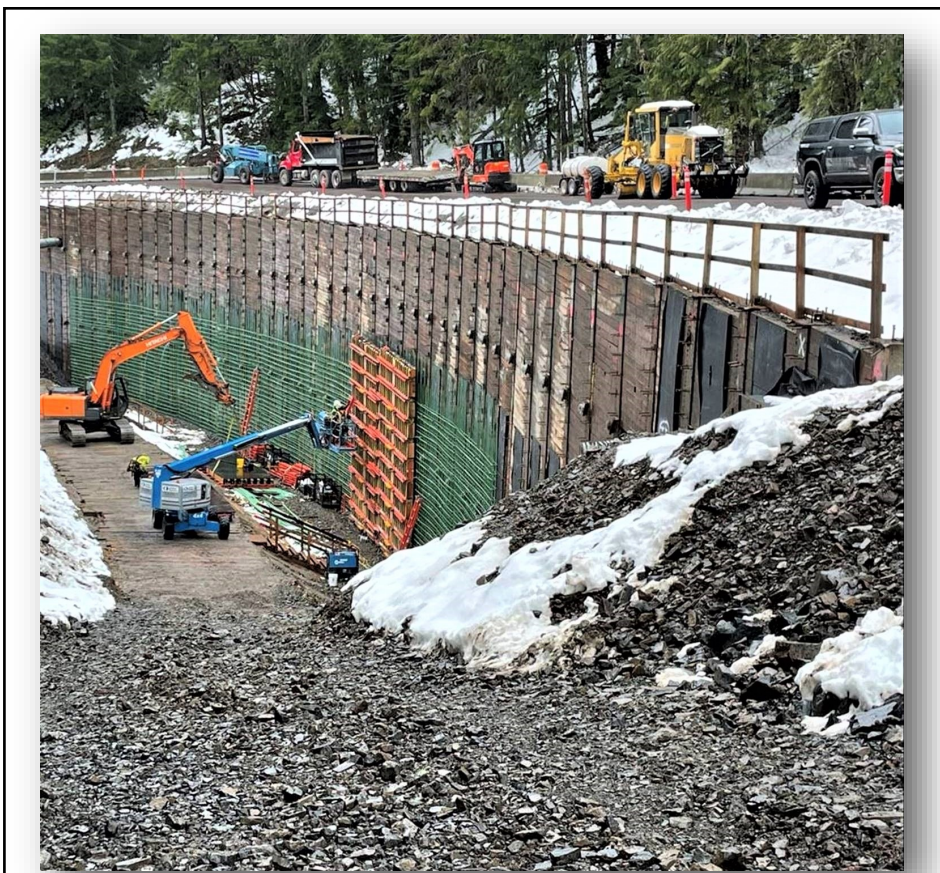
Allison also focused on aid and assist for the mentally ill population.

Allison spent 13 years in that office, then took time off to raise her daughter, 6, and son, 4. Her husband is an elementary school counselor.

Since 2019 she has taught criminal law and trial classes at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training in Salem.

“That’s how I got to know Linn County prosecutors,” Allison said. “I want to stand up for victims. I also want to help kids stay out of the legal system by addressing their issues early and helping them have a meaningful life.”

Allison and her family enjoy the outdoors; water sports, hiking, backpacking, hunting and fishing.



Temporary Highway 20 closure delayed

From the Oregon Department of Transportation

Due to inclement weather this month and slower progress on the construction of the retaining wall for the landslide repairs than anticipated over the winter, ODOT needs to delay the full closure of the highway between MP 54-57 which was planned for May 9-22nd. This will likely be moved to September, after Labor Day. More information will be shared by early August. Please let others in your networks know about this delay as well. We will continue to update our project webpage as more information is available. <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/projects/pages/project-details.aspx?project=20807> On the webpage, there is a link to sign up for the newsletter and project alerts.

OSU Extension “Through the Garden Gate” tour

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 18 ... \$15 for six gardens

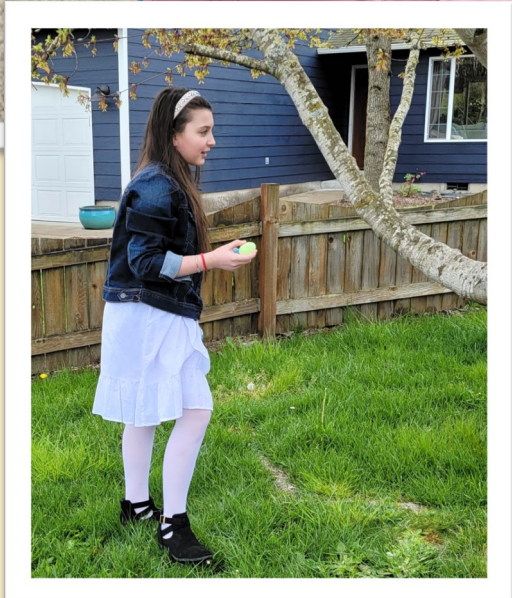
Purchase tickets beginning June 1 on the Linn Master Gardener website - or in person on the day of the tour at the Albany Visitors Association, 110 3rd Ave. SE, downtown Albany.

Your ticket purchase supports gardening and pollinator education.

Linn County's "eggs-pert" Easter egg hunters



Above: Vidi, 2, Maysel, 16 months, Fritz, 16 months and Hudson, 2. Right: Hudson and Vidi. Grandchildren of Dina Dysiner, payroll department.



Sisters Kaylee, 2, and Kenzee, 11. Daughters of Breanna Oxford, Planning and Building Department.



Athaiak, 3, granddaughter of Tammy Thompson, Assessment & Taxation Department. (She carried her basket and kept yelling, 'Egg, where are you? There it is.' her grandmother reports.

Linn County's "egg-sperit" Easter egg hunters



Guessing the Goff kids didn't have much trouble finding these colorful giant Easter eggs. Left to right: Brady, 8, Hadley, 6 months, Wesley, 11, and Cassidy, 4. Above: The kids did pretty well at egg hunt after Mass at St. Helen Catholic Church. Children of Rick Goff, Building Inspector.



Above: Zander Tandy, 5, Easter bunny (between 400 and 500 years old, teacher Lindsey (age unknown - boys favorite teacher), Hendrix Tandy, 4 outside the Presbyterian Church across from the courthouse.



Below: Hendrix and Zander at home. Their mom is Heidi Tandy, Assessment & Taxation Department.



Ashton, 4, gets busy seeing what's inside some of his Easter eggs. He is the grandson of Commissioner Sherrie Spenger.



Barrett, 3, was more interested in "fishing" for coy with his new rod and reel in Grampa Randy Porter's (Fair & Expo Center director) coy pond than hunting for Easter eggs.

OSU Extension—Linn County News



OSU Extension Seed Crop specialist Christy Tanner launches a high-tech drone on a farm near Tangent. She is using cameras mounted to the drone to monitor plant health and vole damage.

OSU's Tanner using drone, high-tech cameras to hunt for voles

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

TANGENT — Like any good pilot, Christy Tanner does a complete check of her aircraft — in this case, a drone — as well as checking wind speed and for possible other aircraft in the area, before taking flight.

The drone, not Tanner.

For the past year, the OSU Assistant Professor of Practice has been using a high-tech drone to monitor grass seed fields in Linn, Benton and Polk counties.

Using two cameras including a multi-spectral unit, Tanner is monitoring vole damage with an eye toward understanding which eradication methods work best.

(Voles are small rodents that can cause damage in mid-valley farm fields.)

Tanner has worked out of the OSU Extension office in Tangent for about 18 months after spending a couple years in Malheur County.

It's a homecoming of sorts for her, since she grew up in Lebanon and helped her grandparents on their tree farm. She graduated from Linfield College and earned her doctorate in horticulture and agronomy from the University of California-Davis.

"Voles are definitely a big problem," Tanner said. "They have been a huge problem for several years."

Tanner said the use of drones is a "great way to see a whole field."

She is currently monitoring four fields, three in Linn County and one in Lane County.

"The property owners have agreed to not use vole bait on a five acre check plot in each field," Tanner said. "I've flown them four or five times in the last year."

Tanner said she has three key goals for the project:

- Show that the system can be used to detect and monitor voles.
- Measure how well treatments work
- Document the seasonal patterns in vole activity and crop damage

Property owners are also experimenting with organic treatments and fumigation.

"We don't have any data yet on how that is working," Tanner said. "We do know there has been quite a bit of damage, but it varies from field to field."

Tanner said she plans to continue the project through harvest season.

She is also interested in trying to

determine how infestation timing affects yield. For example, does a heavy vole infestation in the fall, differ in yield damage than one that occurs in the spring.

In addition to the four key fields in the project, she has flown eight fields, some three to five times each.

In four of the fields the land owner agreed to leave an unbaited 5 acre check plot. The check plot lets her measure how well the bait treatments work.

Tanner said learning to fly the drone wasn't difficult because she already had experience with hobby-type units at home.

"What took time was getting all of the technology to talk to each other," Tanner said.

The drone is guided by GPS and the camera takes a photo per second with

computer technology marking where and when each photo was taken.

The multi-spectral camera recognizes five colors, "looking at different wave lengths", Tanner said.

"Plants absorb light to photosynthesize and they use some colors of light

more than others," Tanner said. "By comparing pictures of different colors of light I can measure how healthy the plants are"

Tanner said she considered adding a trapping aspect to the project, but quickly realized that would take a considerable amount of additional time.



Monitoring weed speed before launching her drone.



True story ... LCSO Detective Sgt. Rick Burch has retired

But he's soon headed to polygraph school

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

ALBANY — In 2012, LCSO Deputy Rick Burch was off-duty shopping at Fred Meyer when he helped provide CPR to a man who was unconscious and laying on the floor.

When EMTs arrived and the man was revived, Burch left the store and had to be tracked down by a store staff member to thank him.

That's just one example showing how much Burch, 51, dislikes being in the spotlight, Sheriff Michelle Duncan said during a retirement party for Burch on April 18. He has devoted 23 years of service to Linn County plus two years with the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training in Salem.

Although Burch prefers just doing his job without fanfare, he was the Patrol Division Employee of the Year in 2010, earned a Life Saving Award for his efforts at Fred Meyer in 2012, was the Detectives Division Employee of the Year in 2019 and was named Supervisor of the Year in 2021.

"We have several letters in his file all talking about how compassionate he is during death investigations," Duncan said. "He also once helped an elderly couple who had no heat in their home to find a hotel and move their belongings."

Duncan said Burch has played an important role in teaching defensive tactics to LCSO staff as a lead instructor.

"He believes in doing things in the right way," Duncan said.

Burch was born into a logging family and lived in east Linn County while growing up. He graduated from Sweet Home High School in 1988, where he played on the state champion football team, wrestled and threw the shotput for the Huskies track and field team.

His father Fred worked for Harley Logging and Rick joined him while studying chemical engineering at Oregon State. He left school after three years because he couldn't afford tuition.

Burch enlisted in the Marine Corps and was stationed in Okinawa and El Toro, California with the Tactical Air Command Center. "We gathered data and basically, created war maps," Burch said.

After his discharge, Burch was hired as an LCSO summer marine deputy along with fellow new hire Detective



Above: Linn County Sheriff Michelle Duncan presents retiring Detective Sgt. Rick Burch with a book of photos during a party in his honor on April. **Below:** Burch and his wife, Katrina, look through some of the many photo pages.



Burch talks with Lt. Bruce Davis during his retirement party. The two men attended Sweet Home High School together and Burch wrestled under Davis' dad, Norm.



Lt. Randy Voight.

"It's the best job in the entire Sheriff's Office," Burch said of patrolling Foster and Green Peter reservoirs.

Sheriff's Office," Burch said of patrolling Foster and Green Peter reservoirs.

In September 1997, Burch was hired full-time and worked patrol in the Sweet Home area until 2003, when he joined the

Detectives Division working child abuse cases.

In 2006 he joined DPSST as a class coordinator until returning to the LCSO in 2009, again an east county patrol deputy.

In 2014, he returned to the Detec-

tives Division and in 2020 was promoted to Sergeant.

Burch said the most enjoyable part of his career has been working with outstanding people.

"They give so much of themselves and 90% of the time, we never meet those we help," Burch said. "They do their jobs and help people get on with their lives."

Burch said he is grateful that much of his career involved working in the Sweet Home area where he grew up.

Burch said one of his most memorable cases involved interrogating a homicide suspect on Christmas night.

"We were just about to eat when I got the call," Burch said. "We were interrogating the sus-

pect, who was coming down after being on drugs for four days and I asked him what we could do to get him to talk to us. He said he was hungry and really needed to eat."

Burch wondered where he could get food late on Christmas day when he saw a deputy with a bag of food from a local restaurant.

"I just grabbed it out of his hands," Burch said.

The suspect confessed everything.

Burch and his wife, Katrina, have been married 19 years and have a 16-year-old daughter, Natalie, who attends West Albany High School.

Although he didn't get to finish school at Oregon State, Burch went back to college and earned a degree in business from Northwest Christian College in Eugene.

His hobbies include playing the stock market and woodworking.

Burch and his family plan to spend two weeks in Hawaii where Katrina's parents live and then he's off to train for a new career as a polygraph operator. He will spend three months in southern California.

Burch said the new career will allow him to set his schedule and work as many or as few hours as he wants.

"I really just want to spend quality time with my family," Burch said. "We have good people here and they are ready to take over without me."

QUOTABLE

"I really just want to spend quality time with my family. We have good people here and they are ready to take over without me."

Rick Burch

Roaring River County Park

Kids Fishing Derby



FREE

More info coming soon
Stay tuned!



Photo by Perry Carmichael

Shimanek Covered

Bridge work underway

Traffic is closed on the Shimanek Covered Bridge near Scio until the end of October, as renovation has begun.

At 225 feet, it is the longest covered bridge in Linn County. The original bridge was built in 1891, was rebuilt in 1904 and washed out by a flood in 1921. Its replacement was heavily damaged in another flood in 1927 and heavily damaged in 1962. The current bridge was constructed in 1966.

It has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1987.

As inflation takes a bite out of our wallets, here's how to save some money

Courtesy Ramsey Solutions

With inflation taking a bite out of everyone's paycheck, Dave Ramsey offers these tips on how to save money and stretch your household budget.

1. Say goodbye to debt.

Monthly debt payments are the biggest money suck when it comes to saving. Debt robs you of your income! So, it's about time you get rid of that debt. The fastest way to pay off debt is with the debt snowball method. This is where you pay off your debts in order from smallest to largest.

2. Cut down on your grocery budget.

Most people—after they do a budget—are shocked to find out how much they're actually spending at the grocery store each month. Yikes! It's so easy to walk through those aisles, grabbing a bag of Oreos here and a few bags of chips there, and then top it off with the fun goodies at the register. Save money on groceries by planning out your meals each week and taking a good look at what you already have in your pantry before you head to the store.

3. Cancel automatic subscriptions and memberships.

Chances are, you're paying for multiple subscriptions like Netflix, Hulu, Spotify, gym memberships, trendy subscription boxes and Amazon Prime. It's time to cancel any subscriptions you don't use on the regular. And for those subscriptions you do want to keep around, think about sharing memberships with some family or friends.

4. Buy generic.

Hands down, one of the easiest ways to save money is to give name brands the boot. In most cases, the only thing that's better about brand-name products is the marketing.

5. Cut ties with cable.

It's no secret that cable prices are rising like crazy. The average monthly price for cable TV is about \$217 a month including all the fees—which adds up to over \$2,600 a year! Subscribe to a streaming service—but make sure it is one you will use.

6. Save money automatically.

Did you know that you can save money without thinking about it? Yup—you can set up your bank account to automatically transfer funds from your checking account into a savings account every month.

7. Spend extra or unexpected income wisely.

When you get a nice work bonus (way to go!), inheritance or tax refund (or random stimulus!), put it to good use. Pay off debt.

8. Reduce energy costs.

Did you know that you can save money on your electric bill just by making a few tweaks to your home? Start with some simple things like taking shorter showers (nope, we didn't say fewer), fixing leaky pipes, washing your clothes in cold tap water, and installing dimmer switches and LED light bulbs.

9. Unsubscribe from emails.

Email marketers are really good at what they do. They know the irresistible temptation of a 24-hour sale or exclusive coupon. And talk about those flashy GIFs!

10. Check your insurance rates.

No, really. Did you know people save an average of \$700 when they have an Endorsed Local Provider (ELP) check their insurance rates for them?

11. Pack lunch (and eat at home).

Get this—the average household spends about \$3,526 on food outside of the home each year. That's \$294 per month! Buying lunch a few times a week may seem harmless in the moment (especially when your favorite restaurant is walking distance from your office), but you can save quite a bit of money just by packing a lunch.

12. Ask about discounts (and pay in cash).

You never know until you ask—and you should always ask. Next time you're getting tickets at a movie theater, museum or sporting event, check to see if they have any special discounts for seniors, students, teachers, military or AAA members. If not, never underestimate the negotiating power of cash!

13. Take advantage of your retirement savings plan.

If your employer offers a 401(k) match and you aren't taking full advantage of it, you're missing out big time! Talk to your HR department to set up an account.

14. Lower your cell phone bill.

If your monthly cell phone bill competes with your monthly grocery budget, it's time to find ways to cut back. Save money on your cell service by getting rid of extras like costly data plans, phone insurance and useless warranties.

15. Try a spending freeze.

Don't buy any nonessential items for a week—or even a month! Think about it as a contentment challenge.

Make your spending freeze work by prepping meals with the food you already have, avoiding stores where you tend to impulse buy (did someone say Target dollar spot?), and saying no to anything that isn't a basic necessity.

16. DIY... everything!

Before you shell out the cash to pay for a new backsplash, fancy light fixture or bench, think about doing it yourself! Usually, the cost of materials and a simple Google or YouTube search will save you a ton of money on your latest home project.

Oh, and when you need to do some DIY work (or any kind of work), borrow what you need from a friend or neighbor instead of going out and buying it.

17. Skip the coffee shop.

Ouch. This one is painful—we get it! But instead of spending \$5 on that daily latte, you can save money by just making your coffee at home.

18. The library is your friend.

Before you click "add to cart" on that brand-new book, check your local library to see if you can borrow it! Most libraries also have audiobooks and digital copies of your favorite books for rent. It's an easy way to get your reading in without breaking the bank.

19. Try a staycation.

When your goal is to save money now, a vacation is the worst thing you could spend your money on. Instead of whisking your family off to the Greek Isles, try being a tourist in your own city.

20. Use cash back apps and coupons.

Nothing beats a good, old-fashioned 20% off coupon when you're buying something. But did you know there are plenty of cash back apps out there to help your savings go even further? Check out Ibotta, Rakuten and Honey (a browser extension).

21. Refinance your mortgage.

With rates so low these days, run the numbers to see if refinancing could help save you money and cut years of interest off your mortgage.

22. Sell everything (that doesn't bring you joy).

Declutter the things in your home that you don't need and are willing to let go of for the sake of your financial future.

First Time Youth Wage grant stipend will be \$5 per hour

ALBANY — Linn County will partner with the Willamette Workforce Partnership to increase the hourly stipend paid to local employers who hire young people for their first jobs, from \$2 per hour to \$5 per hour this coming summer.

Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker approved changes for the Linn County First Time Youth Wage Grant Program's 16th year at their April 19 board meeting.

The program will continue to operate through the Linn County Board of Commissioner's office.

Linn County will be reimbursed by the Willamette Workforce Partnership for 50% of expended funding at the end of

the summer season. The money comes from federal workforce program.

This year's program will be for young people ages 14 to 19 years of age. Employers can hire up to four youth and have a maximum reimbursement of \$10,000.

In 2021, the program temporarily increased the hourly stipend to \$4 per hour and reimbursed \$70,770 to 28 companies that employed 61 young people. The young people logged almost 18,000 hours of work experience.

The young people received a broad range of work experiences, from restaurants to farming.

Building huts for the homeless in Sweet Home

Editor's Note: Linn County donated nearly three acres of land from the former Willamette Industries mill site to the FAC for development of a homeless camp.

By Scott Swanson
The New Era

SWEET HOME — As rain fell steadily outside on a gray April morning, Casey Valloni and Lewis Conn, students in Will Coltrin's advanced construction class at Sweet Home High School, assembled and nailed together some carefully cut 2x4s.

Around them, other students busily worked on similar pieces, busily assembling front facades for what eventually will be Quonset-style huts that will be erected at the new homeless shelter site east of Bi-Mart.

Coltrin said the students were building frames, then putting siding on them and insulating them before attaching them to walls and floors already completed by students, which were sitting outside in the parking lot.

"I have eight huts completely ready to go up," Coltrin told a small group of observers who came to see the operation. They included County Commissioner Will Tucker, Dr. Larry Horton and Jim Gourley of the Sweet Home Health Committee, City Council member Lisa Gourley, Sean Morgan, the homeless liaison for the Sweet Home Police Department, and Brock Byers and Shirley Byrd of the Family Assistance and Resource Center.

The plan is to locate the huts, over the next month, on the roughly 2.6-acre site donated earlier this month by the county to FAC for a community outreach and resource center located behind the city Public Works yard at the north end of 24th Avenue.

Work was under way last week on a new gravel driveway leading from 24th Avenue behind the Public Works headquarters to the shelter site. City staff had cleared brush, leveled the property and were applying a layer of gravel to the site.

The approximately 6- by 14-foot huts, which include a small entry deck, are built of wood sections constructed by the students, who started the project in mid-February, Coltrin said. "We started cutting out the walls and putting those together, and the floors, and did all the modular pieces and then we just started putting insulation in and the siding on."

The huts' roofs, which will be about 7 feet above the floors, will be curved cattle panels covered with two layers of plastic and an inch of insulation. One end wall of each hut has a door, the other a window.

April 20 was the first day the walls actually went up, Coltrin said.

"The kids are really excited. The excitement is ratcheted up now that we actually can start to see what they've been working on. We've been building pieces and parts for so long that they're like, 'How are these things going to go together?'"

Senior Brady Woodard said the project was "pretty cool" to work on the project.

"What we're doing here is making these huts for people around Sweet Home who are homeless, helping them out, stay warm. I hope this project continues, even after I'm gone."

"It's definitely a lot more like real-world issues, stuff like that, instead of just building tiny projects," said classmate Wyatt Aiello, who said he's interested in getting into the construction field after high school.

"I think this is the most advanced thing I've done in a construction class," Woodard said, noting that this is the third he's taken in high



Kobe Pangle, right, and Sweet Home High School instructor Will Coltrin inspect the fit of a rafter on a newly erected Quonset-style hut to be placed at a homeless shelter site east of Bi-Mart. Coltrin's advanced construction class worked to assemble the structures.

school. "This is giving me some good experience for the real world."

Principal Ralph Brown said he "couldn't be happier" with the project.

"We figured it was a wonderful service learning opportunity for our students to actually get them doing some real application of their skills," he said. "It's just a great opportunity for our kids to give back, and we were very thrilled to be part of that."

Horton came up with the idea, the others said. The retired Sweet Home schools superintendent has been heavily involved in finding solutions for the community's

homeless population and with fellow Rotary Club members helped construct platforms at the homeless camp that was set up in the winter of 2020-21 behind the Church of the Nazarene.

Horton was one of a contingent of Sweet Home residents and officials who traveled to Walla Walla, Wash., last summer to view that community's homeless site.

"They were in huts that we thought we could build ourselves," he said. "We contacted the high school and asked if they might be interested in perhaps joining in on

trying to build some of these huts."

Horton said they got plans from Eugene, where similar huts, called Conestoga huts, have been installed at the Good Samaritan Society's Eugene Village at 3500 Hilyard St.

"We bought the plans from them and brought the plans to Will and he looked at them and said, 'Oh yeah, this is something my class can do. This would be perfect.'"

Horton said the plan is to have huts at Sweet Home's 24th Avenue site within a couple of weeks, with more following shortly thereafter. "Eventually, we hope to have 30 of these huts on the site," he said.

Lumber for the project was donated by Weyerhaeuser Corp., Horton said.

Plus, the FAC recently received a \$30,000 grant from the Oregon Community Foundation to help prepare the site.

Tucker, a commissioner who is frequently seen in Sweet Home and who has been an outspoken supporter of the property transfer process, said seeing the huts materialize and the property being prepared for occupation was gratifying after a drawn-out process with the Sweet Home City Council.

"It may have been more difficult than it needed to be, but the end result is that we're getting the project done," he said. "For me to see the first one stood up here is pretty exciting."

Woodard said it will be gratifying to see the huts on the site.

"It will definitely feel good being able to drive by and see stuff I've helped create, help out the community here," he said.

Dealing with RV dumping problems

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

ALBANY — The problem of abandoned Recreation Vehicles is being faced by cities and counties across Oregon and with escalating housing prices, could skyrocket in coming years, members of an ad hoc group convened by Commissioner Sherrie Springer agreed April 26.

Sharing ideas over lunch with Sprenger were businessmen Larry Shuttlesworth and Ron Brockman, Building Official Steve Wills, Code Enforcement Officer Carol Gordon, Sheriff Michelle Duncan, Undersheriff Micah Smith and Patrol Captain Brandon Fountain and Gene Karandy and Phil VanLeuven of the County Attorney's Office.

Sprenger said the issue is a highly visible one throughout the county and resolving it would come with a high price tag.

"I've been told it can cost \$3,000 to \$5,000 to recycle RVs because they have fluids such as antifreeze and engine oil, as well as fiberglass and asbestos," Sprenger said.

Sprenger said the goal of the informal meeting was to "look for answers" because it appears "abandoned vehicles are everywhere. Garbage begets garbage."

Tow companies are reticent to haul off RVs because they often get stuck with them, the group noted.

Undersheriff Smith said the Sheriff's Office has budgeted \$25,000 to deal with abandoned RVs.

He estimated Linn and Benton counties deal with at least 60 RVs per year, likely more.



Linn County Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger makes a point during a meeting to discuss how to deal with an increasing number of abandoned RVs in the county.

Carol Gordion said she has been told that old RVs are often donated by well-meaning families to local groups, such as churches and they eventually donate them to homeless people.

When the vehicles eventually break down, those families do not have the financial resources to fix them and the cycle begins.

The group agreed that the issue could be resolved if private companies can find a way to make a profit from recycling the units, such as salvaging engines and transmissions or using the drivetrains to create useable items such as ATV haulers.

Sheriff Duncan said people who abandon

the vehicles can be cited for doing so, but it is a low-level citation.

"But it does send a message that it is not OK to do this type of thing," Sheriff Duncan said.

Undersheriff Smith said deputies can spend as little as an hour on an RV tow to 20 or 30 hours if the case goes to court.

The group also said it might be more cost effective if someone could set up an RV salvage lot, where one company could efficiently dismantle the units and recycle metal etc.

The group also agreed this is an issue tow companies and recyclers should discuss as a group.

The group plans to meet again sometime in the future.



Creating skilled employees at Knife River Training Center

By Alex Paul
Communications Officer

Although its official ribbon cutting was held April 28, the new 80,000-square-foot dome Knife River Training Center on Kennel Road east of Albany has already been a busy place, with numerous classroom and hands-on programs already completed company officials said.

That includes five CDL classes, 15 heavy equipment classes, six leadership classes and 11 safety refresher courses.

The complex — which sits on 230 acres — was supported by the Linn County Board of Commissioners, through its inclusion in the local Enterprise Zone, which offers tax incentives for based on investment in new jobs.

It is the 17th largest dome in the world, with nearly 2 acres under cover and a simulated outdoor city in the works.

In addition to the dome, the facility includes a 16,000-square-foot training building with four classrooms that can accommodate 15 to 350 people.

The building also features a 2400-square-foot enclosed patio area and a professional-grade kitchen.

Oregon Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle said she “couldn’t be more pleased” with the facility.

“I will always brag about this place,” Hoyle said. “It’s not just an investment, it’s a labor of love. Knife River saw a problem and created a solution.”

Hoyle said the facility comes at an opportune time as the State Legislature — with bipartisan support — approved \$20 million to support vocational apprenticeships.

“Young people can make real money, real benefits without acquiring college debt,” Hoyle said of construction jobs.

Knife River President and CEO Dave Barney said the timing of the new training center “is definitely right.”



Above: Knife River President and CEO Dave Barney and Oregon Commissioner of Labor Val Hoyle, center, cut a ribbon during the grand opening of the new Knife River Training Center east of Albany on April 28. **Below left:** Ashton Sprenger, 3, grandson of Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger, got an up-close look at some of the equipment on display.

He said the facility is open for not only Knife River employees, but the



company’s many partners as well.

“Roads, bridges and schools are built by skilled people,” Barney said.

The building is made of high-strength fabric, in part because modern heavy equipment relies on GPS radio signals and fabric allows efficient communication of those signals with the equipment operators.

Knife River operates in 14 states and about 40% of the company’s employees live and work with an eight-hour drive of the training center.

Representatives from 12 of the 14 states were on hand at the ribbon cutting. Not present were representatives from Hawaii and Alaska.

Oregon Department of Transportation Director Kris Strickler said that in the next two years, Oregon will apply 200 contracts worth \$1.5 billion.

“We need a qualified workforce to do that,” Strickler said.

He called the training center a “fantastic facility” and an “investment in an evolving future.”

Other guest speakers include Brian Gray, president of the Knife River

Northwest Region, Mike Phillips, executive director of the National Ready-Mix Concrete Association and Glenn Pladsen, director of support.

Kris Latimer is the Training Center director, responsible for scheduling events and training sessions at the facility.

Latimer said the goal is to develop a pipeline of skilled workers throughout the construction industry.

“It’s not just about Knife River,” Latimer said in a separate interview. “It’s about the industry.”

Officials said Thursday that Knife River has about 1,500 employees in Oregon and there are 100 job openings.

“The opportunities presented by a training facility of this size and scope in an industry that is so desperate to find good workers is a great match to see,” Commissioner Will Tucker said. “Careers in the field of construction and specifically, materials movement trades, will always be in demand, pay well and are necessary to keep Oregon growing.”

To learn more about the Knife River Training Center, visit www.krttrainingcenter.com.