



What's happening in Linn County, Oregon November 2021

It is time to give thanks

I know it's cliché, but November is the month for giving thanks.

Like most of you, I have a lot to be thankful for; family, job, friends, etc. This November I feel like we all have something special to be thankful for, the citizens of Linn County.



**Darrin
Lane**

Administrative Officer

Once again, our citizenry have expressed, at the polls, their trust and confidence in Linn County by voluntarily giving their hard-earned money to provide us with the resources to provide outstanding law enforcement.

The Law levy passed Tuesday night by a significant majority, but it doesn't mean we should take that support for granted. Last November it was rejected by a similar margin.

See Page 4

STAFF GET INTO THE "SPIRIT" OF HALLOWEEN ... SEE PAGE 7.



Veterans Services Officer
Dee Baley-Hyder.



Billy Kelso, center, Robert Giles and Jarrett Clark of the Oregon Department of Transportation prepare and install a new solar-powered advanced warning flasher on Richardson Gap Road south of the Highway 226 intersection. The driver of the vehicle in the background rolled down her car's window and thanked them for their work.

Working together for safer roads

Linn County, ODOT team up at Hwy. 226 & Richardson Gap

SCIO — The Linn County Road Department and the Oregon Department of Transportation have teamed up to make several safety improvements on Richardson Gap Road near its intersection with Highway 226.

There have been several accidents in the area in recent years, even though there is a clear line of sight on Richardson Gap Road.

Recently, Robert Giles, Jarrett Clark and Billy Kelso of ODOT's Albany electrical crew, installed advance warning flashers on the south of the Richardson Gap intersection with Highway 226 — which already has an oversized STOP sign. Advanced warning flashers had previously been installed on the north side of Highway



Linn County Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger makes a point prior to installation of a new warning signal on Richardson Gap Road near its intersection with Highway 226 near Scio. Also pictured, left to right, Billy Kelso of ODOT, Linn County Roadmaster Wayne Mink and ODOT's Robert Giles and Jarrett Clark.

226.

"Our goal as a crew is to continue making the roads safer for all users. We leverage technology to make the roads safer and more efficient," Kelso said. "We also encourage people to pay attention when they are driving, maybe drive like they are in a school zone."

Linn County Roadmaster Wayne Mink said that intersections pose issues in any road system.

"In an intersection, a lot of vehicles move in different directions," Mink said. "About 50% of all collisions and 20% of all fatal car accidents happen at intersections. Defensive driving skills

See Page 5

Linn Together receives \$625,000 Drug Free Communities Grant

ALBANY — Linn Together has received a five-year \$625,000 Drug Free Communities Grant — \$125,000 per year — according to Linn County Health Services.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy’s DFC Support Program funds community-based coalitions that engage multiple sectors of the community to prevent youth substance use.

Linn Together will use the funding to focus on reducing youth use of alcohol, marijuana, and e-cigarettes. In Linn County, 26% of 11th grade students say they have used alcohol, 23% marijuana and 37% e-cigarettes in the past 30 days according to a 2019 Oregon Healthy Teen Survey.

Also, three out of five Linn County 11th graders say that it is easy to get alcohol (62%), marijuana (62%) and e-cigarettes (60%) according to a 2018 Oregon Student Wellness Survey.

“I have been a member of Linn Together for about 20 years and I have seen many different trends in youth utilization of harmful substances such as tobacco, alcohol and marijuana,” Dar Merrill said. “This grant will allow us to focus on these current issues and, hopefully,



Artwork from the Linn Together youth marijuana prevention campaign developed in collaboration with the Linn County Sheriff’s Office and the Linn County Juvenile Department.” As part of the DFC grant we will be creating a second phase of the campaign.

counter some of negative health and social effects by educating the community and providing as many tools as possible for parents, youth and the agencies that serve them.”

Linn Together collaborates with community partners to reduce youth substance use by providing information and training to parents, educators, youth, and youth-serving adults; enhancing positive decision-making skills among youth; providing support of healthy alternative activities; increasing collaboration among systems and services that help prevent youth substance use; and

enhancing community protection to reduce the risk for youth substance use.

Linn Together was originally formed as “Albany Together” in 1991 and is now a countywide coalition serving Albany and six rural Linn County communities. The Linn Together mission is, “To provide substance use education, resources, and support to the community that promote the physical and emotional well-being of youth and their families.”

Linn Together includes a youth coalition, Linn County STAND (Students Taking Action Not Drinking) that is comprised of high school students throughout Linn County.

DFC Coalitions consist of community leaders representing 12 sectors that organize to meet the local prevention needs of the youth and families in their communities. The sectors are youth, parents, businesses, media, school, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, religious/fraternal organizations, civic and volunteer organizations, healthcare professional, and state, local and tribal governments, and other organizations involved in reducing illicit substance use.

To learn more about Linn Together or Linn County STAND, visit linntogether.org or e-mail info@linntogether.org.

Linn County Board of Commissioners

Roger Nyquist



Sherrie Sprenger



Will Tucker



Call 541-967-3825



Coffee With a Cop

Sweet Home High School students dressed in pajamas as part of Homecoming Week activities were among many people who visited with Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon, left, and Lt. Bruce Davis at Sugar Vibes donut shop in Sweet Home on Oct. 6, as part of the annual Coffee With a Cop program. Below: Keith Sautel talks with Davis and Yon. LCSO staff visited about a dozen places in Linn County.

LINN COUNTY, OREGON PROPERTY TAX STATEMENT
 300 4TH AVE SW RM 214
 PO BOX 100
 ALBANY, OR 97321
 JULY 1, 2020 TO JUNE 30, 2021

ACCOUNT NO: 1590

REAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION
 CODE: 02703 PCL: 551
 MAP: 01S01E00-00-00100
 ACRES: 109.55
 SITUS: 123 Main St., Albany

Joe & Susan Taxpayer
 12345 Happy Days Lane
 Sweet Home, OR 97386

WILLAMETTE RG ESD	82.19	
CHEMEKETA CC	173.36	
NORTH SANTIAM SD #29	1,217.96	
EDUCATION TOTAL:	1,473.50	
LINN COUNTY	352.76	
LINN COUNTY LOC OP	783.85	
LINN COUNTY LOC OF II	30.47	
CHEMEKETA LIBRARY	22.66	
LYONS RFD	456.16	
4H EXTENSION DISTRICT	19.39	
GENERAL GOVT TOTAL:	1,665.29	
CHEMEKETA CC BND 2	72.07	
N SANTIAM SD #29 BND	285.29	
LYONS RFD BONDS	32.30	
BONDS - OTHER TOTAL:	389.66	

VALUES	LAST YEAR	THIS YEAR
REAL MARKET	255,130	257,210
LAND	330,160	363,250
STRUCTURES	585,290	620,460
TOTAL RMV		
TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE	291,124	299,668
EXEMPTIONS	22,028	22,689
NET TAXABLE:	269,096	276,979
TOTAL TAX:	3,449.12	3,528.45

YOUR CANCELLED CHECK IS YOUR RECEIPT
 2020 - 2021 TAX (Before Discount) 3,528.45

TOTAL DUE (After Discount and Pre-payments) 3,422.60

WE DO NOT MAIL PAYMENT REMINDERS!

GREEN STATEMENT: If you receive a green copy of your tax bill, this indicates no lender requested a copy of your information. If you have an escrow account, please contact your lender.

YELLOW STATEMENT: If you receive a yellow copy of your tax bill, this indicates a lender has requested a copy of your information. If you have questions about who should be paying the taxes, please contact your lender.

DISCOUNT IS LOST & INTEREST APPLIES AFTER DUE DATE Mailing address change on back

MAKE PAYMENT TO:
 LINN COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR
 PO BOX 309
 ALBANY, OR 97321

FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENT INFO:
www.co.linn.or.us/assessorshomep/PayOnLine.htm

How to read your Linn County property tax statement.

Communicating with Linn County residents

Linn County Assessor and Tax Collector Andy Stevens and his staff have put together a flyer to inform Linn County residents about services provided by their office.

It will be distributed in tax statements in October.

LINN COUNTY ASSESMENT & TAXATION

300 4th Ave SW, Albany, OR Room 214
 Mailing: PO Box 100, Albany, OR 97321
 Phone 541-967-3808 Fax 541-917-7448

COVID update: Our office is open, but due to COVID restrictions, we encourage taxpayers to use our website, call or mail payments rather than come into the office. We can handle most inquiries by phone or email. Email us at assessor@co.linn.or.us

Tax Payment Due Dates
 November 15, 2021; February 15, 2022; May 16, 2022
 We do not mail payment reminders. At least your first 1/3rd payment is due by November 15th. If you choose to pay in trimesters, please mark your calendar.

Payment Options

- **U.S. Mail:** Postmark is accepted! Payments will be considered timely if postmarked on or before the above due dates. Please mail early.
- **Pay online:** Visit our website.
- **Online bill pay system** at your bank.
- **Drop box:** There is a property tax payment drop box at the west end of the courthouse, located off the Ferry Street entrance.

What programs are available for tax relief?

- If you are a 40% or more disabled Veteran, or surviving spouse, you may qualify for an exemption.
- Active Duty Military service under Title 10 orders.
- Senior and Disabled citizens may be eligible to defer property taxes on their home. The time to apply is between January 1 and April 15.

If you recently experienced a loss due to a fire, or Act of God, you may qualify for relief. Please contact our office.

Please visit our website for additional information and to view an example of a tax statement with more details:

www.co.linn.or.us/assessorshomep/assessor.htm

County property values top \$21 billion

ALBANY — The real market value of all properties in Linn County climbed to more than \$21 billion for the 2021 tax year, according to Linn County Assessor and Tax Collector Andy Stevens.

That's up sharply from \$18.8 billion for 2020.

Stevens said Linn County residents will receive their property tax statements this week, as they go into the mail on Tuesday. If payment is made in full by Nov. 15, there is a 3% discount, Stevens said. November 15 postmarks are acceptable, but taxpayers are encouraged to mail early.

Stevens reminded people that most values are based on a January 1, 2021 assessment date.

Overall, residential properties in Linn County had an increase of 4.6% in the taxable value and 14.3% in real market value from last year.

Rural properties increased 3.7% in taxable value and 14.7% in real market value; farm properties increased 5.8% in taxable value and 11.4% in real market value; commercial and industrial values are up 4.8% in taxable value and 5.3% in real market value; and multi-family properties are up 8.3% in taxable value and 24.2% in real market value.

Stevens noted that Scio saw a minimal six-tenths of a percent taxable value increase in part because a large personal property account moved assets out of the county and there was a decrease in the Utility Roll within that tax code area.

Overall real market value increased 17.4% in Sweet Home from last year. Sweet Home's increase was partially due to approximately 3,500 properties being reappraised for the first time in several years last summer. The only community that saw a decrease in overall values was Gates, where numerous properties were destroyed by



Andy Stevens
Assessor and Tax Collector

the September 2020 wildfires.

Stevens said that although the Assessor's Office is open to the public, staff are practicing COVID-19 protocols and taxpayers can get questions answered by phone or online. The office website provides additional information and now includes a diagram of a tax statement that highlights information provided. It can be found at <http://www.co.linn.or.us/assessorshomep/Tax%20statement%20final.pdf>.

"We also have a payment drop box at the west-end of the courthouse, located off the Ferry Street entrance" Stevens said.

Tax statements include a flyer that provides information about payment due dates, payment options and what tax relief programs are available to area residents.

"Our goal is to educate the public," Stevens said.

Stevens also reminded property owners affected by the 2020 wildfires to contact his office if they have not

2021-22 % of value change

	AV % Change (Taxable)	RMV % Change
County	4.9%	12.4%
Albany	4.6%	11.5%
Brownsville	4.1%	15.3%
Gates	-19.8%	-13.3%
Halsey	4.1%	13.3%
Harrisburg	4.7%	13.5%
Idanha	6.2%	7.7%
Lebanon	3.0%	11.0%
Lyons	3.5%	10.7%
Mill City	4.7%	12.5%
Millersburg	7.6%	13.8%
Scio	0.6%	6.9%
Sodaville	3.9%	11.5%
Sweet Home	4.0%	17.4%

	AV % Change (Taxable)	RMV % Change
Residential	4.6%	14.3%
Rural	3.7%	14.7%
Farm	5.8%	11.4%
Comm/Ind	4.8%	5.3%
Multi-Family	8.3%	24.2%

done so already, because there may be tax relief options available to them.

For more information, call the Assessor's Office at 541-967-3808, email assessor@co.linn.or.us or visit: www.co.linn.or.us/assessorshomep/assessor.htm.



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.



Linn County Fair & Expo Center buildings sport newly painted red doors. The last time the buildings were painted was in 2005.

New paint for Linn County Fair & Expo Center

Kris Barnes knows all about painting the Linn County Fair & Expo Center buildings.

It's not an easy task freshening up more than 200,000 square feet of building space, but in 2005, Barnes was working with Linn County General Services and the task fell on his shoulders.

Today, Barnes is the operations manager at the Expo Center, as workers from McClinton Painting of Albany handled the spray guns and paint rollers. The Linn County Board of Commissioners approved the nearly \$100,000 facelift in a competitive bidding process.

"Everything that's concrete — including columns — and roll up and man doors," Fair & Expo Manager Randy Porter said.

Porter said the project is being paid for by funds generated by the county's 3% Transient Lodging Tax, which assists with maintenance costs.

"It's long overdue and well worth the cost," Porter said. "We constantly try to keep up maintenance.

These buildings are 24 years old and it's important we stay on top of things."

Barnes said McClinton Painting's staff started work in early September and wrapped up in mid-October. He said there were about six people working each day.

Barnes said when he painted the facility he did much of the work himself, with some



Randy Porter Kris Barnes

temporary assistants.

The Fair & Expo Center has 209,000 square feet under roof and sits on 37 acres.

Porter said that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fair & Expo Center was home to about 300 events per year.

"That could be everything from a large ag show to the use of a single conference room," Porter said. "Those events bring about 350,000 people into the community."

Porter said the annual budget is about \$1 million.

"It's been a long time coming (the new paint) and Kris Barnes has done a good job of designing the paint scheme and managing the project," Porter said.



Photos: Staff from McClinton Painting hard at work giving the buildings at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center a new coat of paint.

Darrin Lane ... From P. 1

Some say it was confusion over the way it was presented, some say it was too much of an increase. Irrespective of why it was defeated last year, it was a wakeup call to remind Linn County leadership not to take the citizen's support for granted.

Every day we should conduct Linn County business with the primary goal of serving the citizens who we represent and whose tax dollars and fees we depend on to exist. The Law Levy funds the Sheriff's Office, District Attorney and the Juvenile Department, but a loss of levy support would have far-reaching effects beyond those departments.

Thank you to all of you who show up and represent Linn County in a positive way.

You are the face of the county and the ambassadors. Without your kindness, courtesy and fairness, Linn County citizens would likely have given a

different answer when asked to support our Linn County law enforcement programs.



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.



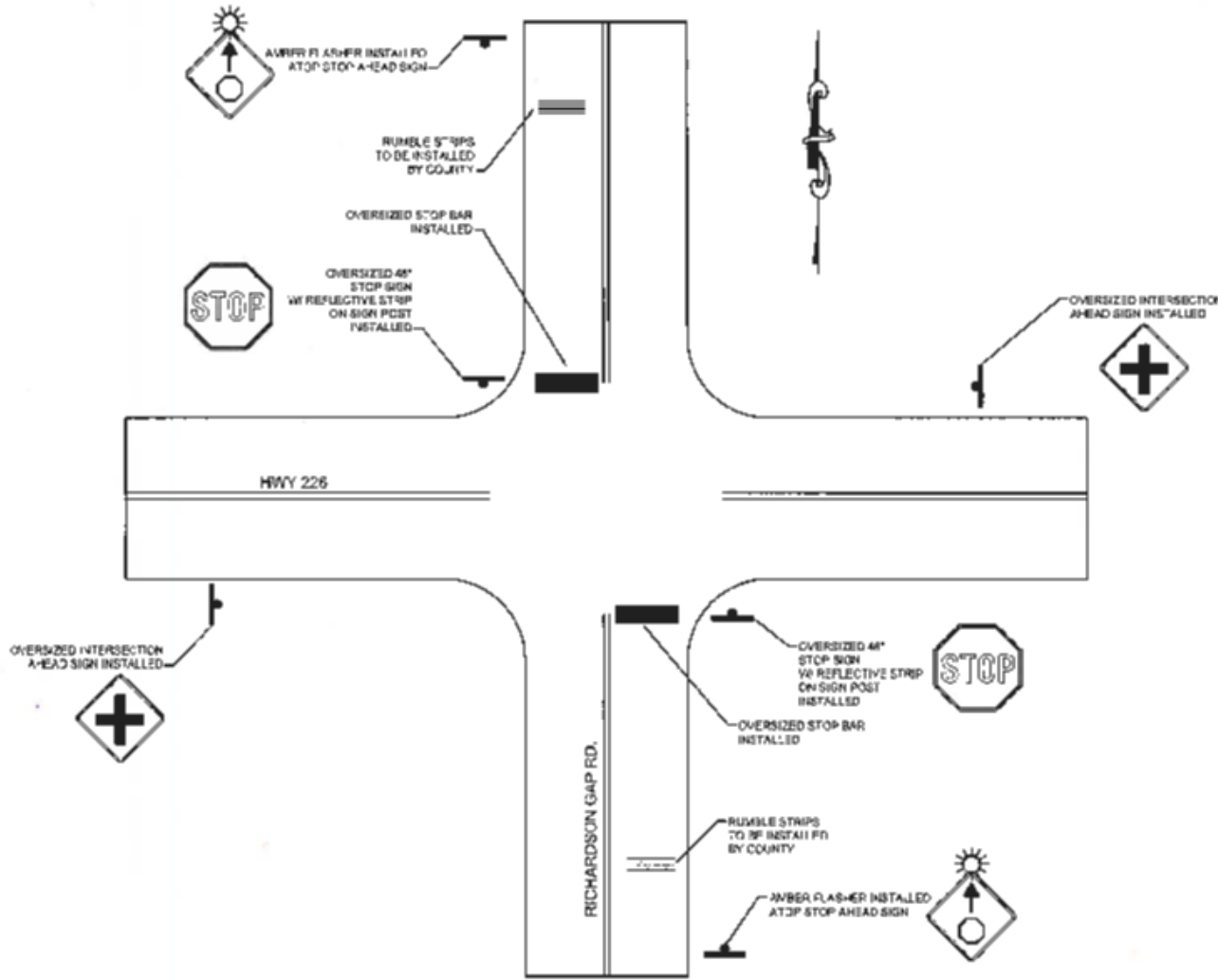
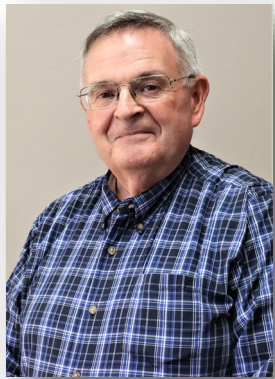


Diagram showing safety improvement projects at Richardson Gap Road and Oregon Highway 226 near Scio.

Linn County and ODOT team up ... From P. 1

help reduce those accidents.”

Mink said that ODOT has already implemented numerous safety efforts at the site:



Wayne Mink

Linn Co. Roadmaster

- Installed oversized stop bars both Richardson Gap Road approaches.
- Replaced 36-inch stop signs with 48-inch stop signs on both approaches.
- Installed reflective strips on stop sign posts.

- Installed oversized “intersection ahead” signs on the Highway 226 approaches in advance of Richardson Gap Road.
- Removed guide signs on Highway 226 in advance of Richardson Gap Road.
- Relocated the Highway 226 weigh station sign.

Mink said more projects are coming, including:

- Adding rumble strips on Richardson Gap Road leading to Highway 226.
- Installing road name plaques on the Highway 226 intersection ahead of signs on both approaches.
- Replacing a weigh station sign.
- Relocating Highway 226 covered bridge signs.

Mink said drivers need to be extra cautious at any intersection and offered the following safe driving tips:

- Before proceeding through an intersection, make sure the area is



ODOT employees prepare new solare powered warning lights for installation on Richardson Gap Road, south of its intersection with Highway 226.

clear. “Always approach intersections expecting other traffic and pedestrians,” Mink said.

- Concentrate when you are in an intersection. “Avoid any kind of distraction, such as loud music or cell phone conversations,” Mink said. “Attention should be directed to the drivers around you.”
- Look both ways to see where other vehicles are and what their intentions at the intersection may be. “Oncoming traffic may be moving faster than you think,” Mink said.
- Look ahead for traffic and wait until there is space for your vehicle on the other side of the intersection. “Remember to stop

and never run a stop sign,” Mink said. “If asked, no one would say they would risk their life to save a few seconds, but unfortunately, they do.”

Linn County Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger lives in the Lacombe area and travels frequently on both Richardson Gap and Fish Hatchery Drive.

“I’m very happy to see added safety measures on Richardson Gap,” Sprenger said. “This is a great reminder that we all have to focus on our driving more than running late, our phones, or anything else that divides our attention. I appreciate ODOT’s quick response and Linn County Road Department’s efforts to do all they can to make our roads safer.

Ken Bronson is new county Transportation Coordinator

Ken Bronson of Sweet Home has succeeded Mark Volmert as the Linn County Special Transportation Coordinator on a part-time basis for six months.



Ken Bronson

Volmert retired in September after 17 years on the job.

Bronson, 66, brings 11 years of transportation and grant-writing experience to the position, having recently retired as executive director of the Sweet Home Senior Center and Linn Shuttle, which he built into a multi-layered program with 15 buses.

“This is about rural transportation and I’m passionate about that,” Bronson said. “This is a good way to transition into retirement. “I was asked about taking this job and said no, but then I was asked again, but with the question, ‘If not you, then who?’ and that got me thinking seriously about helping.”

Bronson said his goal is to help train a new person and “work myself out of a job.”

That’s what he has done at the Senior Center. Dawn Mitchell, a former banker, was hired two years ago and gradually took over executive director duties.

“It’s extremely complex,” Bronson said.

Bronson spent 29 years in the wood products industry before accepting the job in Sweet Home.

Bronson said he is quite familiar with the type of skills his new job requires and he knows many of the people in the area and state agencies with whom he will be in contact.

Bronson said he is most proud of being able to greatly expand the number of bus routes for Sweet Home residents, noting that a student at LBCC would not need to own a vehicle, since there are buses that leave the Albany campus as late as 9 p.m. to allow for evening sessions.

Working in partnership with CoEnergy Propane and the alternative energy program at LBCC, Bronson has converted several buses from diesel to propane fuel.

“It’s so much cleaner and maintenance is reduced,” Bronson said.

Bronson and his wife, Fran, live in Sweet Home. He enjoys cycling and has competed in the Best of the West Triathlon.



We want your Linn County photos

We still want your photographs of beautiful Linn County for our new website. This photo of Whitcomb Island on Green Peter Reservoir is by Trisha King of Sweet Home. If you have a photo or two that could be used for our new website, please contact Alex Paul, Communications Officer, at 541-967-3825 or email apaul@co.linn.or.us.

LCSO says goodbye and thank you to Debbie Heinonen

In 1972, fresh out of West Albany High School, Deborah Heinonen — then Nordyke — was hired by Sheriff George Miller to work in the Civil Division of the Linn County Sheriff's Office, which at that time was on the first floor of the courthouse.

"I was so naïve," Heinonen, 67, said. "It was an eye-opener to assist deputies with the transport of female inmates at times when matrons — as they were called then — weren't available."

She said the jail — which was on the third floor — was creepy, so she avoided going there as much as possible.

Heinonen never dreamed she would work with seven sheriffs for a total of 43 years in two stints.

But Heinonen now plans to stay retired, play a lot more golf, travel (she likes Hawaii a lot) and spend time with her two grandsons ages 7 and 4, who live in Sandy and her 92-year-old mother who lives in North Albany.

Daughter Kelly lives in Tualatin and daughter Lindsey lives in Sandy.

"I have loved coming to work," Heinonen said. "It's always interesting and different, but I know it's time to retire."

Heinonen worked for one year, married her husband Allen, and moved to Pullman, Washington, for a year.

She and Allen — who is retired from

Citizens Bank — returned to Albany and she was rehired at the Sheriff's Office, beginning a long career as an administrative assistant to sheriffs Ken Goin, Art Martinak, Dave Burright and Tim Mueller.

In 2009 she went to work for the Oregon State Sheriff's Association in Salem and returned to the LCSO in 2014, working part-time for sheriffs

Bruce Riley and Jim Yon in the accounting office.

"Debbie has served with the Sheriff's Office for 43 excellent years!" Sheriff Yon said. "Her experience and knowledge will be missed tremendously. I wish

her the best in her retirement."

Oct. 25, Yon presented Heinonen with the Sheriff's Award and a certificate. She also received flowers and other gifts of appreciation. Co-workers praised her for being someone they could always rely upon for advice and being a "gracious" person.

Support Services Division Captain Micah Smith thanked her for "training me up when I was a lieutenant and now in my new role."

"I love your wisdom," Administrative Assistant Maralee Knox said. "You are always encouraging me in ways you don't even know."

Heinonen said it has "been a privilege working here. I have worked with great people, each unique in their own way," and added, "I have special memories of all of you in my heart."

Quotable

"I have worked with great people, each unique in their own way ... I have special memories of all of you in my heart."

Debbie Heinonen



Above: Debbie Heinonen worked for seven sheriffs during her 43 years with the Linn County Sheriff's Office. **Left:** Sheriff Jim Yon presents Heinonen with a certificate during a retirement reception for her on Oct. 25.

SPOOKTACULAR STAFF



Linn County employees get into the spirit of Halloween!



Above: Kathy Engstrom from IT.



Above: the good folks from General Services got into the swing of things. Left to right: Russ Williams, James Reed, Emma Bagozzi, Madeleine Strahan, Ally Eskelin and Vern "Rowdy Roddy Piper" Mills.

Right: Julie Severance and Julie Forbis having fun (as usual) in the Clerk's Office.



Right: Michelle Valenzuela and Treasurer Michelle Hawkins.



Above: Getting the job done in Planning and Building: Breeanna Oxford, Jennifer Cepello, Ashley Heyberger, Renee Green, Jaqi Cumpiano, and Suzanne Hunt.



Above: Snap, Crackle and Pop Lisa Vanderwood, Mindy Cummings, Alaire Bryan from the Assessor's Office.