



And the winners are . . .



Daineal Malone, county engineer, first place, Dawn Young Mental Health, second place and Yulissa Magana, Mental Health, third place. They received gift certificates to the Mad Platter Café.

Here are the winners in the first Linn County Ugly Christmas (Holiday) Sweater Contest. We had far more entries than we expected — several dozen in fact. A problem the judges ran into was that many of the sweaters weren't "ugly" at all and they looked too good on our entrants. We thank you all so much and hope you had fun with this. Let's do it again next year, so start looking for your best "worst" looking sweaters. We might even expand the contest for a "Best Christmas Tie" category.

Photos of all entries on pages 7-9 inside.

Linn County to manage 400 more USFS camping slips

By Alex Paul

Linn County Reporter

ALBANY — Linn County Parks & Recreation will nearly double the number of camping spaces it manages in 2024, after acquiring management of some 400 spaces owned by the U.S. Forest Service in Linn and Marion counties.



Stacey Whaley

That will make 1,000 camping spots managed by Linn County Parks.

Parks Director Stacey Whaley said Linn County submitted a 259-page bidding document and won out over three other applicants.

Now, Linn County Parks staff will be working with camping sites from as far south as Olallie on the county border near the McKenzie River (south of Clear Lake Resort) to as far north as Breitenbush north of Detroit in Marion County. Three of the larger campgrounds are on the Detroit Reservoir. Cove Creek is similar to Sunnyside County Park in that it has amenities like a boat ramp and coin operated showers available. Hoover and Southshore also have boat ramps. "The sites range in size from tent camping to RV's (up to 30 feet) and



Big Lake. Photo courtesy U.S. Forest Service.

group sites," Whaley said. Coldwater Cove on Clear Lake is another popular large campground

with non-motorized water access. "We are excited to be able to offer camping

New campgrounds ... See P. 2



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

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Linn County Board of Commissioners



Roger Nyquist



Sherrie Sprenger



Will Tucker

The Board of Commissioners meet at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and at the same time on Wednesday if needed.

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

Call 541-967-3825

More campgrounds From Page 1

excited to be able to offer camping again to our Clear Lake guests and their families, in addition to the cabins and yurts at the Resort.”

We are looking forward to providing more access for horse lovers at Big Meadows Horse Camp, which features corrals and other horse-specific infrastructure. This is a great jump off point for those wanting to horse pack into the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness as well as just trail ride for the day.

Several of the campgrounds have up to 60 camping spaces each, although most are smaller.

“Most Forest Service campgrounds don’t have power or showers,” Whaley said. “However, they do have potable water and vault toilets.”

The added campsites mean the Parks Department will need to shift work loads and add staff, Whaley said.

“We plan to move someone into a management role for the north area and add 25 seasonal staff,” Whaley said. “We are looking for more campground hosts and caretakers. And, we will need to add some vehicles such as trucks and carts for the campgrounds.”

Since the campgrounds are primitive, both camp hosts and caretakers will need their own RVs to live on-site.

Of the new campgrounds, Marion Forks is open year-round.

The move includes camping sites at Big Lake, a popular ATV area in the Cascades.

There are challenges, Whaley admits.

Some of the camping sites to the north are in or near areas damaged by the 2020 Labor Day fires.

“This will be the first full season for some since the fires,” Whaley said. “They didn’t lose main buildings, but some ancillary buildings burned.”

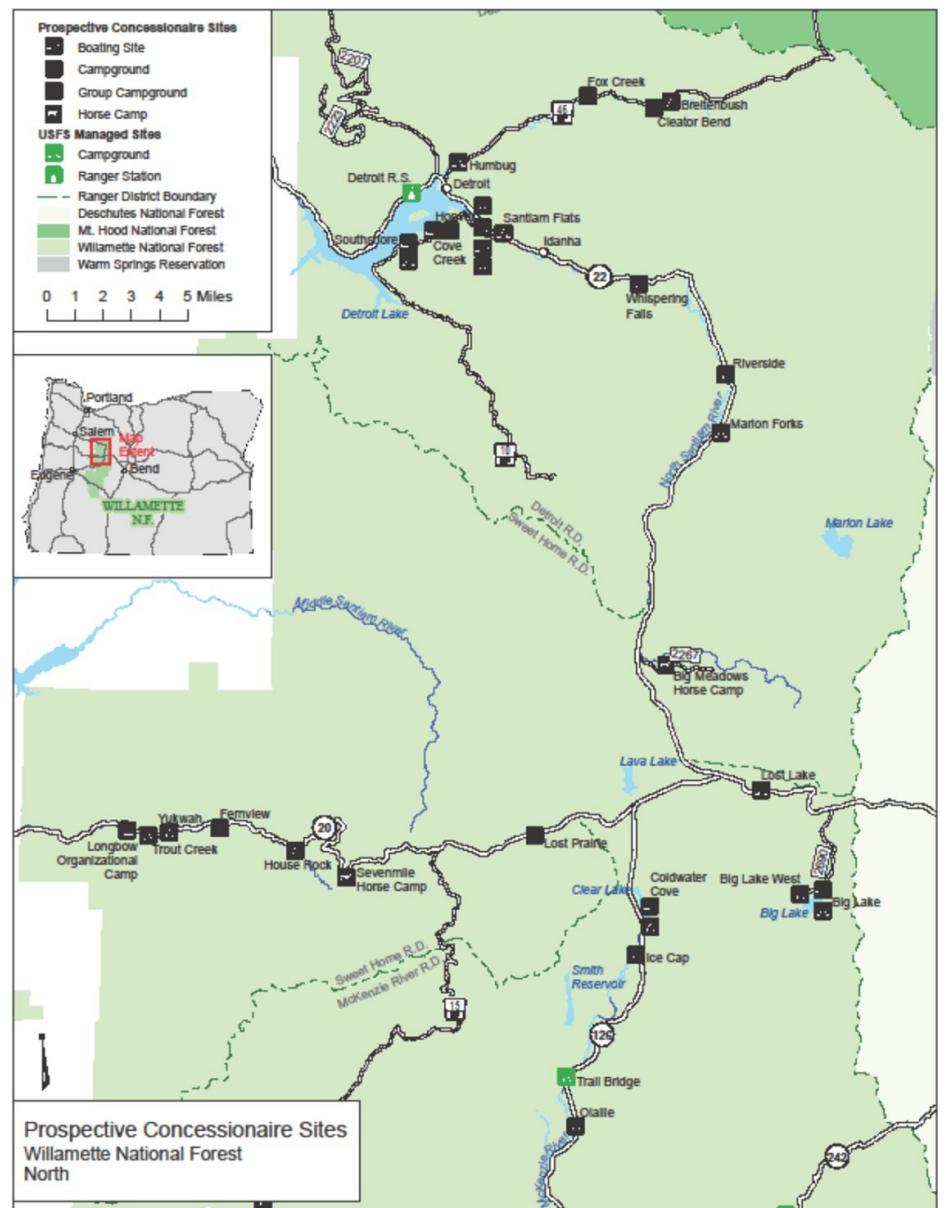
The public will need to use the federal government’s camping reservation program:

www.recreation.gov to reserve spaces at the new campgrounds, Whaley said. And, the campground fees will be different than Linn County fees.

The Linn County management contract is for five years with an option to renew for another five years.

Whaley said she and her staff have ideas to improve the campgrounds, including the possibility of adding yurts which are extremely popular at county sites.

“Our first goal is getting the campgrounds clean and up and running at the same time in the



Map of the U.S. Forest Service campgrounds Linn County Parks will manage for the next five years.



Cove Creek Campground near Detroit Reservoir.

Photos courtesy U.S. Forest Service.

spring,” Whaley said. “We are also thinking about adding interpretive programs and enrichment activities.”

Linn County will take care of routine maintenance and the Forest Service will be responsible for more long-term capital repairs.

“Linn County Parks have a reputation of quality experience and that is what we want for the Forest Service sites,” Whaley said.





Santa visits the Linn County Courthouse

Look who showed up at the Linn County Courthouse just in time for Christmas. Santa (Vernon Mills) dropped off a big box of doughnuts in the Commissioners Office. Someone must have been nice.



Deputy, Holley Church help inmates' families

We would like to give a Holiday shout out to Corrections Deputy Amber Erickson-Lovik for her hard work with her Tree Topper program she has instituted for qualified inmates and their family members.

Last Christmas, Amber came up with an idea to help loved ones of those in the Linn County Jail feel thought of during the holiday season. She worked with her captain and team in the jail, and her pastor at the Holley Church to figure out how they could best make this happen.

They created applications for interested inmates to fill out, collected and processed each application and transcribed them onto tags to hang on a giving tree at the Holley Church. The tags were all gone within one church service. Once all the gifts were bought, they were collected and brought to the jail where they were scanned, wrapped and matched with the applicant and their visitors. When visitations occurred, the inmates were able to give the gifts to their loved ones.

Things went so well last year, that the program was expanded this year and was once again a success. Between this year and last, we have been able to help more than 70 kids receive gifts from their family members currently incarcerated.

We take pride in our motto of "Keeping the peace with dignity, honesty, and compassion", and Amber and all those involved truly embraced this by being able to show compassion to families this holiday season going through what can be a very difficult time.

Thank you Amber, our entire corrections staff and members of the Holley Church.



COFFEE

LATTES

Alice Vanilla Latte \$4

Mother Bird Cinnamon, Honey, Oat Milk \$4.75

Lazy Daisy Irish cream, Breve \$4.50

Drink Me! Salted Hazelnut, Caramel Drizzle \$4.25

EXTRAS

American Topped with cream \$3.25

Cappuccino \$3.50

Steamer \$2

Caramel Macchiato \$4

WHITE RABBITS

Mr. Rabbit White Chocolate Mocha \$4

Jabbarwocky Coconut, White Chocolate, Americana, topped with Cream \$4.75

Pig and Peppermint Peppermint, White Chocolate Mocha \$4.25

The Caterpillar Cinnamon, White Chocolate Mocha, with Caramel drizzle \$4.50

MAD MOCHAS

Mad Hatter Dark Chocolate Mocha \$4

Deck o' Cards Coconut, Caramel, Chocolate Mocha \$4.75

Marsh Hare Toasted Marshmallow, Chocolate Mocha \$4.25

Queen Of Hearts Raspberry, Chocolate Mocha \$4.25

ENERGY

TweedleDee Sugar Free Rockstar \$5.25

TweedleDum Redbull \$5

ADDITIONS

Extra Shot \$1.00

Added Syrup \$0.50

Added Sauce \$0.75

Whip Cream \$0.25

Breve \$1.00

Milk Alternative \$0.80

Heavy Cream \$1.00

Happy New Year

The Linn County Courthouse and other county buildings will be closed on Monday, January 1, so our staff can enjoy the New Year's holiday with family and friends. The Linn County Sheriff's Office will be open.

Commissioners approve 1-mile setbacks for CAFOs

ALBANY — December 12, Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker took a major step toward defining where Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) can be built in Linn County, approving a code text change that will require a minimum one-mile setback from property lines on a property where new large CAFO's may be sited.

The code text amendment follows new state regulations and a three-quarter mile setback recommendation by the Linn County Planning Commission.

The regulations will only apply to new large CAFO permit applications and are not retroactive. Specifically, the issue is the proposed development of large-scale chicken farms that produce millions of birds per year in confined buildings.

Families in the Scio area have adamantly opposed two such large-scale chicken farms in recent years. Several spoke during Tuesday's public hearing. Although they supported the proposed three-quarter mile setback, several added they actually preferred a one-mile setback.

Among their issues is the protection of drinking water, local rivers, odors, ammonia emissions and proposed facilities being close to a local elementary school and church.

One person called the proposed setback a "good guardrail" against the large farming operations owned by hedge funds that make profit a priority over lifestyle.

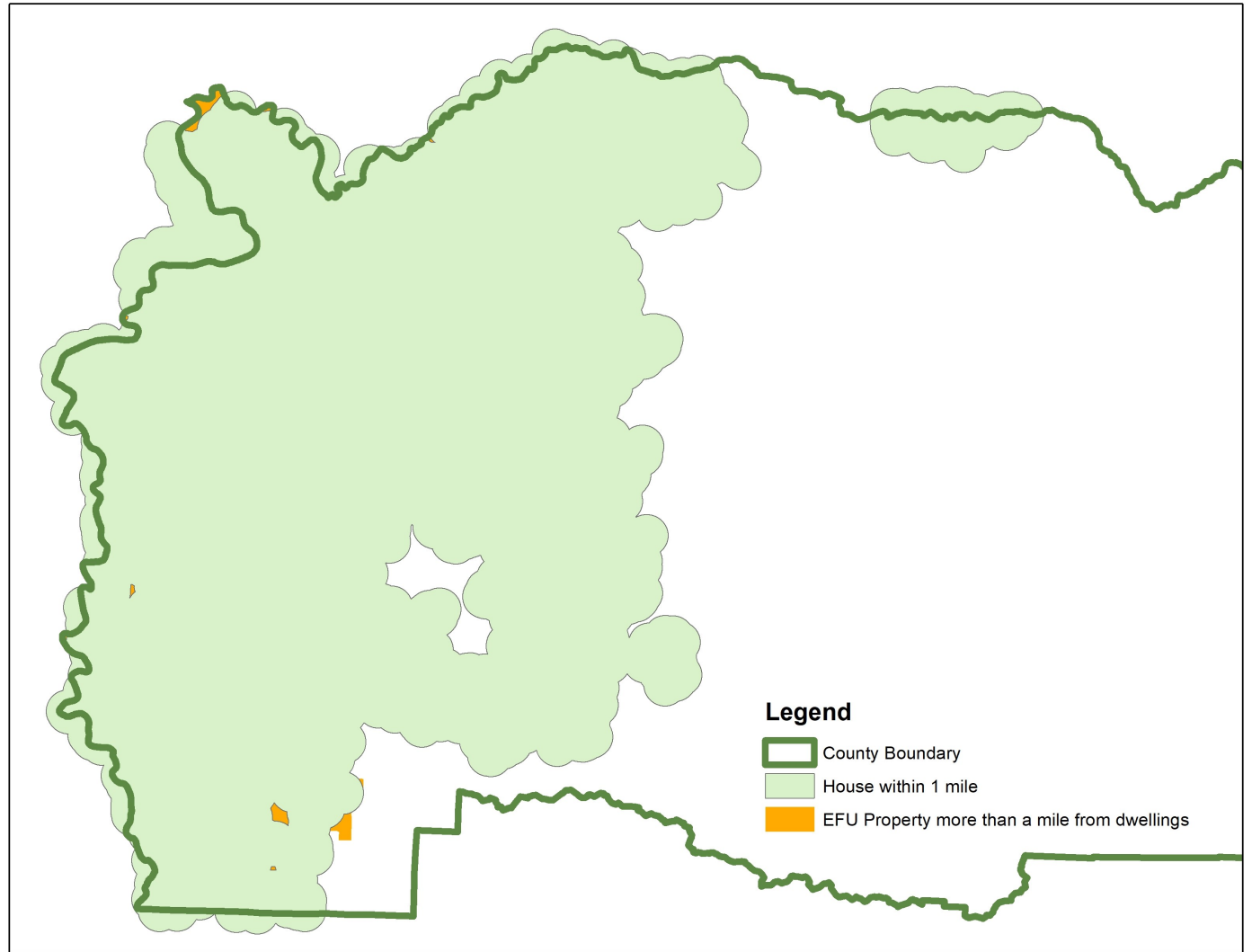
Some of those who testified fought back tears as they talked about their farms, whether they are relatively new to the area, or are living on land owned by their families for five generations.

They suggested such large-scale operations need to be developed in more open country, not where families are more closely bunched like the mid-valley.

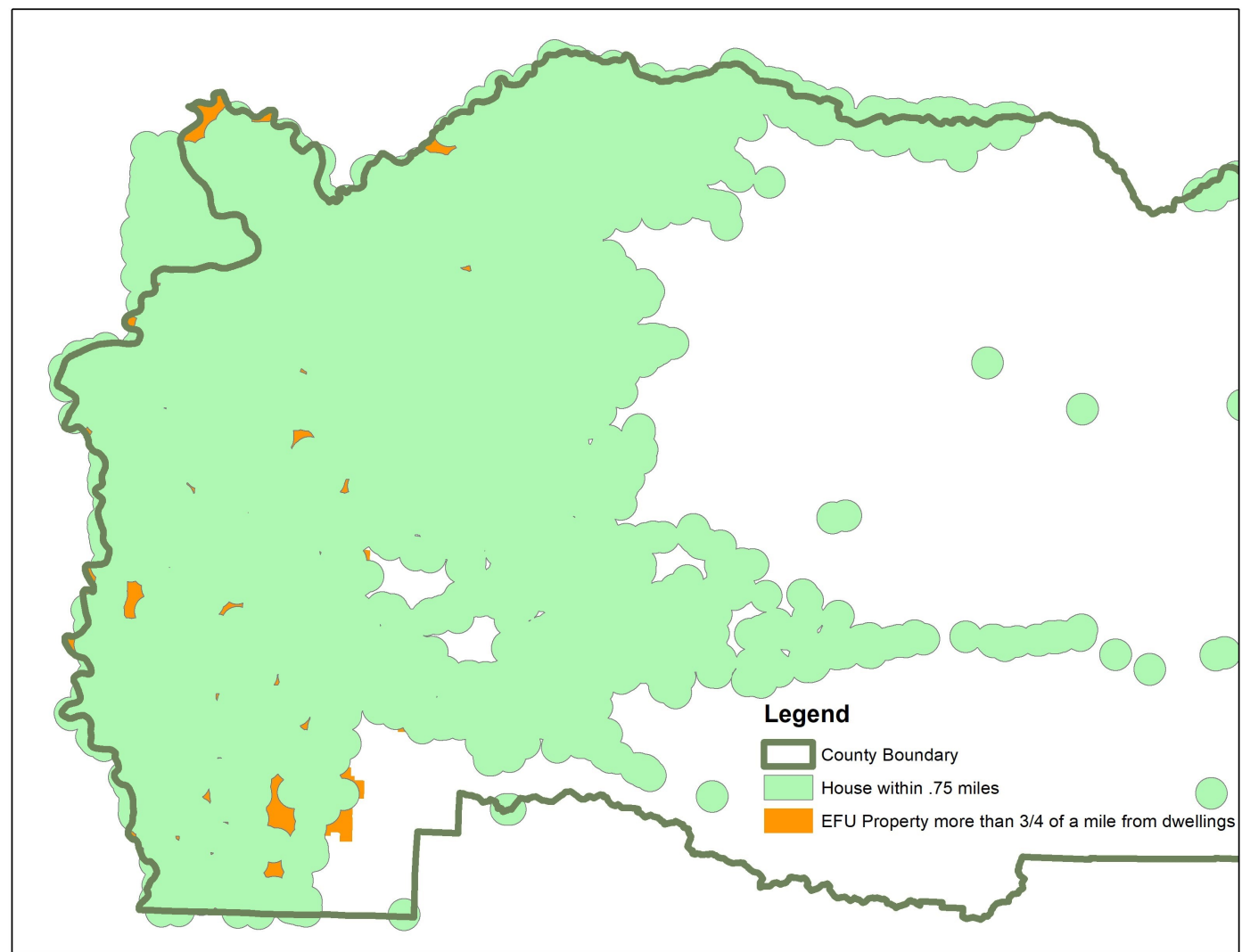
The Planning & Building Department also received numerous letters during a public comment period. All of them supported expanding the county's setback rules.

Board Chairman Nyquist said he asked the county GIS (Geographic Information System) Department to outline how many properties in the county could be used for a CAFO with a three-quarter mile setback in place. There are about 360 such properties.

He also asked how many properties would work within a one-mile setback. There are about 89, so the new rules



Maps courtesy Steve Barnett, Linn County GIS



would not ban CAFOs, they are an outright use within land use regulations.

Commissioner Tucker made a motion to approve a three-quarter mile setback, but after discussion, that motion failed. The commis-

sioners then discussed the benefits of a one-mile setback and all voted in favor of a motion made by Commissioner Sprenger.

Happy New Year!

Please don't drink and drive!

Community members turn out for Wildfire Ready Night

Ethan Hoagland

The New Era-Sweet Home

SWEET HOME — "It rained more than an inch around the county, and we're talking about fires." With that sentence, Jeff Carlson, of Carlson Property Inspections captured the mood at the Linn County Wildfire Ready Night, held on Wednesday, Dec. 6. With a month left of 2023, a variety of state and local agencies gathered in Sweet Home to give Linn County residents guidance on protecting their homes from wildfire, while collecting public input for the new County Wildfire Protection Plan. Christian Whitfield, serving as manager of the Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Program for the Sweet Home Fire District, joined SHFD with the explicit mission to help people buffer themselves from wildfire. People can mitigate that risk by clearing out dry and dead vegetation around their homes, including from gutters. If there's one thing Whitfield never wants to see on a home: cedar shakes.

"Cedar shakes should not be used," Whitfield said to the audience. "They're gonna burn. Just get rid of them."

Whitfield, who joined SHFD through a grant program, told attendees that they could have their property assessed for free through Oregon's Defensible Space initiative. For Sweet Home, Whitfield will arrange and perform that assessment. Meanwhile, planners with Linn County gathered feedback from community members about the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The plan, last updated in 2007, targets wildfire mitigation and preparedness priorities. SHFD Chief Nick Tyler explained how the CWPP could help firefighters overcome obstacles like dead-end roads. According to Chief Tyler, the document can also help bring grant dollars and resources to fire districts. More than 20 community members from around Linn County showed up to learn about wildfire risk and share their concerns.

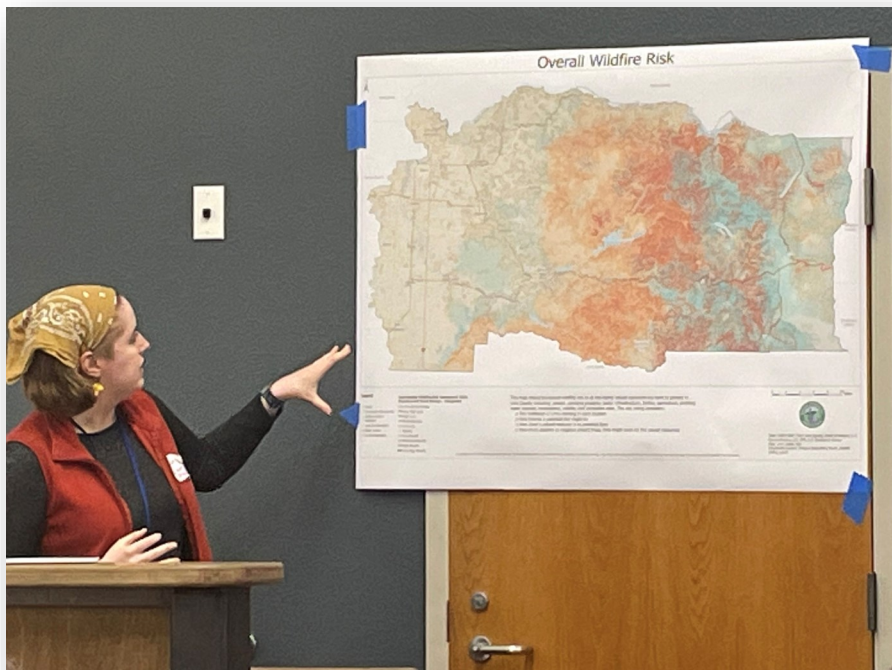
"This was a great service to the community," Steve Kohl, who lives in McDowell Creek area, said. "Even a downtown area can be threatened by fires. So this is something we all need to be aware of."

While risk to people and property in downtown Sweet Home is low, a risk map from the county showed the edges of town pose a high to very high risk to people and property. Another map displaying the overall wildfire risk showed Sweet Home in a low to neutral risk category.

Nonetheless, Linn County officials picked Sweet Home to host the Wildfire Ready Night, something Chief Tyler said he's grateful for. County Commissioner Will Tucker was in attendance, alongside numerous agencies like the Oregon Department of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service. The Oregon State University Extension Office was also involved. The CWPP is currently in its drafting phase. Officials expect a final draft early next year.



Linn County Commissioner Will Tucker presents information about long-term wildfire protection plans at the Sweet Home meeting.



Linn County Associate Planner Kate Bentz.



Christian Whitfield, manager of the Sweet Home Wildfire Risk Reduction Protection Program. (Editor's Note: He is the son of Dina Dysinger in payroll.)



Steve Wills of the Planning & Building Department and Ric Lentz of LISO Emergency Management.



Sweet Home Fire Chief Nick Tyler.



OSU Extension Service



4-H kids get crafty!

Members of the Linn County 4-H Ambassadors provided lots of valuable assistance during the annual Craft Day. Top left is Rayanna Morris; top right: Gary Jorgensen, 13, and Jodi Jorgensen, 12, create a Christmas tree craft facilitated by Adalynn Johnson, 12.

Happy New Year to all of our 4-H club members, leaders and supporters.!

Below: Ashley Giff, 12, left, helps Theona Goldman, 6, create a friendship bracelet.

4-H WORLD
WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Get ready to embark on an unforgettable adventure at W.O.R.L.D 2024! This year, we're diving deep into the jungle, where leadership thrives in the wild!

Open to all youth grades 7-12
February 16-18, 2024
Oregon 4-H Center
Cost: \$160
Registration Open December 1st

Register Here:
Beav.es/qY8

LEADERSHIP
TEAM WORK

Oregon State University Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services, activities and materials on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, genetic information, veteran's status, reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made 7 days before the event to Melanie McCabe, McCabeM@oregonstate.edu, 503-588-5301.



JANUARY 23, 2024

Save the Date

LINN COUNTY 4-H
CUPCAKE WARS WORKSHOP
OPEN FOR ALL LINN COUNTY 4-H MEMBERS
& CLUB LEADERS

2023 Ugly Sweater Contest entries



Treasurer Michelle Hawkins



Breeanna Oxford, treasurer's office



Michelle Valenzuela, treasurer's office



Dee Baley-Hyder, Veterans Services



Emma Bagozzi, General Services



Erin Hogan, Mental Health



Frankie Caswell, Mental Health



2023 Ugly Sweater Contest entries



Hannah White, Mental Health



Lisa Walker, Mental Health



Julia Baker, District Attorney's Office



Above: Nanette Miller-Wustig, Mental Health.



Michelle Shannon, Alcohol & Drug Department



Nadir Pinto, Serena Stearns-Garland, Leah Brunson, Brandy Tarr, Public Health.



Left: Rebecca Torres, Brittany May, Rebecca Duerr, all of Environmental Health and their idol, Vernon Mills, General Services.



2023 Ugly Sweater Contest entries



The Washington Street Sweater Group ...

Row one: Christopher Byers, Frankie Caswell, Lisa Walker, Caitlin Chisholm Row two: Angela Johnson, Yulissa Magana, Hannah White, Amanda Bringetto. Row three: Francisco, D'Auria, Nova Sweet, Nannette Miller-Wussig and Dana McGlohn



Melissa Robinson, Jon Brady, Rachel Lytle and the Grinch (Kris Barnes) Linn County Fair & Expo Center.



Linn County Sheriff's Office: Records manager Taylor Rodriguez, Support Services Lt. Beth Miller, Corrections Nurse Angela Burger, Corrections Nurse Kelle Branham, Computer Resources Manager Joshua Perkins, Sheriff's Administrative Assistant Maralee Knox, Records Clerk Montana Knox, Communications Dispatcher Adelaine Carter, Communications Dispatcher Chelsea Peaslee



Thank you all for entering.



Quilt raffle winner

Danette Killinger, left, from Linn County Alcohol & Drug won the 4th Annual Juvenile Department Quilt Raffle. She is shown with Rhonda Nicholas of the Juvenile Department. The quilt was donated by Nicholas and the Finally Together Quilt Shop in Lebanon. All proceeds are used to purchase and build Christmas food baskets for Juvenile Department youth and their families.

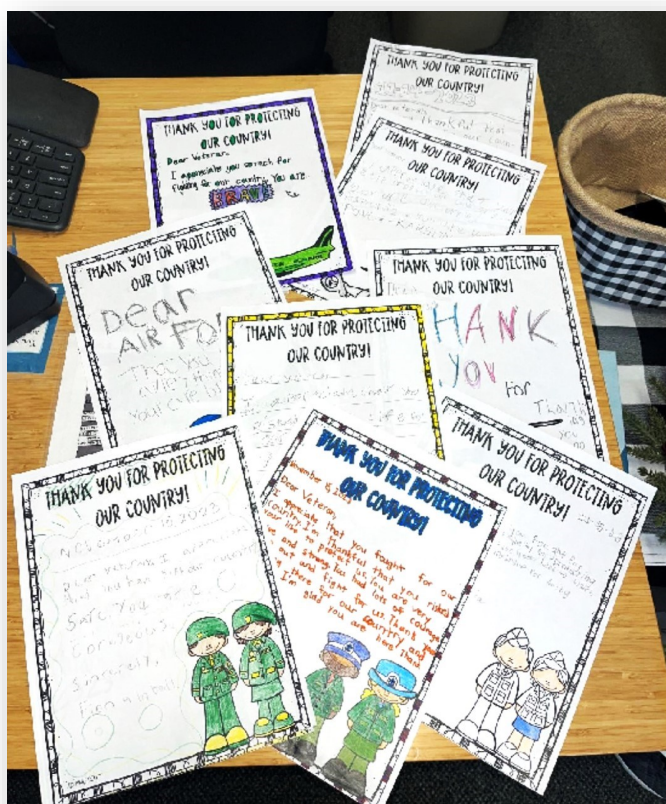


Alcohol & Drug Program Manager Justin Thomas, Celia Pineda (standing), Jamie Huebner and Dana Frenchko.

Helping hands

Staff from Linn County Alcohol and Drug participated in a community resource event Dec. 4 at the Albany Fire Station 11 to help individuals get connected to local resources. This is a monthly event to bring providers and community members together in a way that promotes easy access to resources.

Below: New A & D staff members, Brian Mayta and Isabel Dryden (standing) at the Family Tree Relief Nursery table.



Students from Periwinkle Elementary School drew thank you posters for area veterans that are being given out by Linn County Veterans Services. Director Dee Baley-Hyder said the sentiments are deeply appreciated.



Thank you!

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the annual Salvation Army Angel Tree program. You donated so many terrific toys for local children! Pictured are Courtney Leland of the Linn County Commissioners Office and Jose Garibay and Kaden Sybert of the Salvation Army. Linn County folks always come through in a big way.



Christmas Storybook Land

The annual Christmas Storybook Land is always one of the major shows of the year at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center. Although it isn't an official county event, the county strongly supports it by donating space for weeks so local families can enjoy the free show. More than 36,000 visitors donated more than 26,000 canned or packaged food items to FISH of Albany. Thank you to the many volunteers who make this fun event happen every year! Photos courtesy Christmas Storybook Land.



New laws coming to Oregon on January 1

Courtesy KGW TV

Starting Jan. 1, which new Oregon laws are going into effect?

Despite a six-week walkout, legislators passed hundreds of bills this year that Gov. Kotek signed into law. Many of them become effective New Year's Day.

PORTLAND, Ore. — Beginning New Year's Day, dozens of new laws go into effect in Oregon. While most represent subtle changes to state law, they collectively impact a broad range of subjects, including criminal law, business, health care and housing.

This year marked Oregon's long legislative session, one roiled by a record six-week-long Republican walkout in the state Senate. Despite that, lawmakers introduced thousands of bills and succeeded in passing over 650 that Gov. Kotek signed into law.

Bills that include an emergency clause go into effect immediately, and others can have a particular effective date. But any bill that doesn't specify an effective date becomes effective on the first day of the next year — in this case, Jan. 1, 2024.

Because some of the most eye-catching bills went into effect immediately, a number of the bills that begin New Year's Day are the type that might otherwise fly under the radar. Here are a few that we felt were noteworthy.

SB 1043: Narcan for discharged patients

This bill requires that hospitals, long-term care facilities and drug treatment centers provide patients with at least two doses of the opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone upon discharge, assuming the patient was there for treatment of an opioid use disorder. The Oregon Health Authority is charged with providing the naloxone.

It's not uncommon for someone who has gone some time without using drugs to relapse, then immediately overdose as their bodies no longer have a tolerance to the same amount they were using prior to treatment. Thanks to the increased availability of naloxone nasal sprays like Narcan, SB 1043 was introduced as a potential safety measure for countering these overdoses, which are often deadly.

RELATED: Distributor buy-in needed for Oregon's plan to expand Narcan access

SB 340: Organized retail theft

Retail theft has been a concern with a lot of political heat in the last year or two, as major chain stores in Portland cite it as the reason why they're closing up shop. SB 340 was drafted in response to these complaints, ratcheting up some of the consequences for people convicted of theft. Under the bill, the crime of "organized retail theft" will be added to the repeat property offender statute, so sentences will be harsher for people who were previously convicted of that crime. It also adds to the crime of first-degree theft, so someone who "recklessly engages in conduct that creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury" to someone else during a theft will be guilty of that crime. Prosecutors will also have more flexibility in when or where they file charges.

HB 3320: Hospital financial assistance

Nonprofit hospitals in Oregon have programs where they will reduce or cover the cost of someone's medical bills if they can't otherwise afford them, commonly called "charity care." But multiple sources have accused hospitals of heaping medical debt on patients who should have been eligible for charity care. HB 3320 is supposed to create more protections for those patients, directing hospitals to be more forthcoming about options for financial assistance and keeping the door for that assistance open for longer. Hospitals will have to refund patients for their medical bills if it's later determined that they are eligible for assistance.

SB 529: In-custody substance abuse



treatment

People incarcerated in the Oregon Department of Corrections are much more likely than the rest of the state population to have a substance use disorder — something now acknowledged in state law through SB 529. And with the entire state grappling with a crisis of addiction and lack of access to treatment, this bill is supposed to make it easier for inmates to access drug treatment while incarcerated. The bill removes some outdated requirements for prison programs, including that they be "highly structured and regimented" and "include a component of intensive self-discipline, physical work and physical exercise" — it really can't be understated how much the old statute emphasized discipline and physical labor.

Importantly, SB 529 provides that DOC programs include a wide range of treatment services, recovery activities, engagement with peer mentors, educational and vocational services and self-help groups. They must address addiction as a chronic disease and recognize that participants have individualized needs.

HB 2772: Domestic terrorism crimes

A few bills in the 2023 legislative session concern what the legislature

defines as domestic terrorism or "paramilitary activity." The first, HB 2772, creates two new crimes: first-degree and second-degree domestic terrorism. Both involve either the destruction of "critical infrastructure" — which includes a laundry list of utility services and public or private infrastructure — or deploying a "toxic substance," which is just about anything that can cause death or serious injury when ingested, inhaled, consumed or absorbed.

Another bill, **HB 2572**, proved controversial while it was making its way through the legislature due to its potential for broad application. Generally speaking, it defines "paramilitary activity," which includes the use of deadly weapons in public patrols or drills, carrying weapons when disrupting government proceedings, assuming the duties of a law enforcement officer or government official, or using that activity to intimidate or coerce others. The Oregon Attorney General will be empowered to take civil or investigative action in order to gather information on paramilitary groups. Someone injured as a result of paramilitary activity can also bring civil action against the person or people responsible.

Finally, **SB 618** adds the use of body armor to the list of considerations for a court when determining "aggravation" while sentencing someone for a criminal conviction, if the person was wearing body armor to either facilitate the crime or in fleeing from it.

RELATED: Oregon bill would create nation's strongest law against paramilitary activity

HB 3632: Expanding sex abuse statute of limitations

This bill is a simple but important one. It expands the statute of limitations for first-degree sex crimes to 20 years from 12, or by the time the victim turns 30 years old if they were a minor at the time of the abuse — whichever is later. This change applies to all crimes committed before or after the law takes effect, but does not revive

any prosecutions that were barred by the old statute.

HB 2095: Photo radar expansion

Prior to 2024, only the state of Oregon and a handful of cities were authorized to operate photo radar for traffic enforcement. HB 2095 expands that option to all cities in the state, assuming they cover the costs of operation. It also eliminates restrictions on the number of hours per day that photo radar can be used at a location and expands the authority of a city to set speeds for some residential streets — even if it's 10 miles per hour lower than the speed set by law, but they can't go lower than 20 miles per hour.

RELATED: Gov. Kotek signs bill allowing use of photo radar in all Oregon cities

HB 2032: Domestic partnerships for all

Before same-sex marriage became legal nationwide under a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision, Oregon passed a law in 2007 known as the Oregon Family Fairness Act. It allowed same-sex couples to register as legally recognized domestic partners. Not only is that law still on the books, HB 2032 expands on it. Starting in the new year, opposite-sex couples can also apply for a domestic partnership, meaning all couples will have the same sets of options available to them.

SB 82: Insurance coverage for wildfire damage

With more and more Oregonians losing their homes to wildfire in recent years, lawmakers are trying to provide them with greater protections if they find themselves facing the unthinkable. SB 82 was designed to establish certain requirements for insurers before they decided to cancel or not renew a homeowner insurance policy or increase premiums due to wildfire risk. Insurers must also allow homeowners at least 24 months to repair, rebuild or replace damaged or destroyed property if the loss was due to a fire subject to Oregon's Emergency Conflagration Act. Insurance companies are barred from using the state's wildfire risk map as a basis for canceling, declining to renew or increasing premiums on a policy.



Learning how Linn County operates

Linn County Commissioner Will Tucker tells members of the Albany Chamber of Commerce Leadership Albany program how county government functions during a visit to the Courthouse. District Attorney Doug Marteeney also talked to the class that had also visited the Fire Department on their way to the Courthouse.