



## Trying Times

**A**s if dealing with COVID hasn't been enough of a challenge, we were targeted last month by a hacking group and our computer servers were infected with Conti Ransomware.



The attackers likely gained access through one of several possibilities:

## Darrin Lane

Administrative Officer

attachment containing an embedded script;

- A spear phishing campaign, using tailored emails that contain malicious attachments or malicious links;
- A malicious Word attachment containing an embedded script;
- Stolen or weak Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) credentials;
- Other malware;
- Or vulnerabilities in external assets.

Information about Conti Ransomware is available at <https://www.cisa.gov/uscert/ncas/alerts/aa21-265a>.

Most of us have experienced minor — or even major — disruptions in our IT systems before, but this was by far the most significant event with which I have been involved. It started for me at 6:36 a.m. on the morning of January 24.

Our IT Director Steve Braaten told me about a problem with an administrator password and by 7:30 a.m. it was clear that something bad was

**DARRIN LANE ... See P. 3**



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

**Would you like to receive the newsletter?**

Please send your email address to Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, [apaul@co.linn.or.us](mailto:apaul@co.linn.or.us) or call 541-967-3825.

## So long Jodi Gollehon — thank you!

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

**A**LBANY — If Jodi Gollehon had her "druthers" she would run a doggy daycare.

But for now, Gollehon will stick with her day job as a deputy county attorney, but no longer in Linn County.

Gollehon capped 4 1/2 years with the Linn County Attorney's Office on January 21 and she's taking her two dogs, Lily and Rose with her to the Yamhill County Attorney's Office.

Her rescue dogs have been frequent office guests over the years and the trio usually venture over to the courthouse lawn most afternoons.

"It's bittersweet leaving," Gollehon said. "I am going to miss everyone. Everything I know about being an attorney I learned here. I adore Gene (Karandy) and Darrin (Lane)."

Both men have high praise for her as well.

"We hired Jodi as a new Oregon attorney, but with an extensive prior background in contracts and procurement with both the State of Montana and City of Portland before she passed the Oregon Bar in 2017," Karandy said. "She hit the ground running, and is quick and willing to learn new areas of law. Jodi has been a pleasure to work with, and quickly developed good working relationships with all of us in the office and those she worked with throughout the county. We will greatly miss her (and her dogs)."

## S.H. Ranger honored for 2020 fire actions

Scott Swanson

The New Era

Linn County Commissioner Will Tucker has a beef with U.S. Forest Service leaders, so he took it last week to Sweet Home District Ranger Nikki Swanson.

But not in the way that sounds.

Tucker organized a Jan. 4 meeting with Swanson, newly retired Sheriff Jim Yon and Sweet Home City Councilwoman Angelita Sanchez at the Sweet Home Ranger Station.

The purpose? To honor Swanson for what, Tucker says, was "heroism" as she dealt with forest fires on Labor Day weekend of 2020.

Two fires had been burning since August of that year northeast of Sweet Home: the Beachie Creek Fire in the

**SWANSON ... See P. 7**



Former Linn County Deputy Attorney Jodi Gollehon and her rescue dogs, Lily and Rose, have been regular visitors to the courthouse lawn over the last 4 1/2 years. Gollehon has taken a new job with the Yamhill County Attorney's Office in McMinnville.

Administrative Officer Lane noted, "I have greatly appreciated and enjoyed working with Jodi over the past several years. Jodi's attention to detail and creativity have been instrumental in helping county managers accomplish their goals. Jodi has set a high bar for any prospective replacement."

Gollehon said part of her decision to take the new job in Yamhill County is to shorten her commute. She has commuted daily from Sherwood near Portland.

"It should cut my commuting time in

**GOLLEHON ... See P. 7**



Sweet Home City Councilor Angelita Sanchez, former Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon, Sweet Home Ranger Nikki Swanson and Commissioner Will Tucker. Photo courtesy The New Era newspaper

# Stein appointed to Circuit Court

**S**ALEM — Governor Kate Brown has appointed Deputy District Attorney Keith B. Stein to the Linn County Circuit Court.

Stein fills a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge David E. Delsman. His appointment is effective immediately.



Judge Keith Stein

“Keith Stein is deeply dedicated to his community and the rule of law,” Governor Brown said. “He has the experience, temperament, and compassion to be an outstanding judge on the Linn County bench.”

Stein has worked in the Linn County District Attorney’s Office for more than 15 years. He also helps train law enforcement officials as a legal instructor for the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

Previously, Stein practiced as an attorney at the Long Delapoe Healy McCann and Noonan firm. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Southern Utah University, and his law degree from Willamette University College of Law.

In addition to his legal practice, Stein is involved in his community. Among other things, he volunteers as a high school mock trial instructor, participates in the annual Fish of Albany food drive, and previously served on the executive committee of Boy Scouts of America.

Stein also has a passion for film; even after he started practicing law, he continued working part-time as a projectionist for a movie theater in Albany.

Stein also speaks Russian and Lithuanian.

He and his wife have four children.

Other candidates for the judicial vacancy were Coleen Cerda, Michael Flinn, Tomas Hernandez, Teri Plagmann and Leonard Williamson.

Judge Delsman retired in November. He was appointed by Gov. Gov. Kitzhaber in March 2013 and was elected in November 2014 and May 2020.

# Detective Trenary receives FBI Significant Case award

**C**ybercrimes Detective John Trenary of the Linn County Sheriff’s Office recently received a Significant Case Award from the Secret Service.

The award was presented by Justin Bourne, the Resident Agent in charge of the Secret Service Office in Oregon. Detective Trenary is one of only 20 Forensic Examiners in the country to have ever received this award.

Trenary was recognized for the tireless work he did to help build evidence for a double-homicide case that occurred in 2019. He was able to compile digital evidence to piece together a step-by-step timeline before, during and after the murders took place.

Ultimately the hard work and dedication to the case by Detective Trenary, along with the assistance of other law enforcement investigators, helped build strong evidence that led to the conviction of Brent Richmond, who was sentenced on two counts of murder and is now serving two consecu-



Sheriff Michelle Duncan, Det. John Trenary and FBI Resident Agent Justin Bourne.

tive life sentences.

“This case is a testament to the Linn County Sheriff’s Office and Detective Trenary’s persistence, investigative prowess and superior knowledge of digital forensics,” Agent Bourne said.

## Linn County Board of Commissioners

Roger Nyquist



Sherrie Sprenger



Will Tucker



Call 541-967-3825

# Critical need for blood donations

**T**he American Red Cross is facing a national blood crisis – its worst blood shortage in more than a decade, posing a concerning risk to patient care. In recent weeks, the Red Cross has had less than a 1-day supply of critical blood types. Blood product distributions are outpacing donations. At times, as much as one-quarter of hospital blood needs are not being met.

### Why is this happening?

The pandemic has hit the Red Cross, which supplies about 40% of the nation’s blood, very hard.

- Since it began, we have seen about a 10% decline in the number of people giving blood.
- At schools and colleges, we’ve seen a 62% drop in blood drives since the start of the pandemic.
- It’s also caused ongoing blood drive cancellations and staffing limitations.
- The current surge in COVID-19 cases may compound the already dire situation.



### This is truly a crisis.

Doctors have been forced to make difficult decisions about who receives blood transfusions and who will need to wait until more products become available. Blood and platelet donations are critically needed to help prevent

further delays in vital medical treatments.

Use the Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to schedule your blood or platelet donation appointment.

*Pam Massey’s name was misspelled in last month’s Linn County Reporter.*

*Massey spent several years with the county’s WIC program, serving almost 60,000 clients.*

*We are sorry about the error and wish her many happy years in retirement.*





## Christmas Storybook Land adapts with drive-through

Members of the Cloud City Garrison of Star Wars reenactors visited the annual Christmas Storybook Land on December 12 at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center.

This year's event was a drive-through due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Some 18,000 guests in vehicles contributed 13,030 food items that were donated to FISH of Albany.

Linn County has supported this community-wide event for many years, providing free space for the month of December.

"Linn County has been a long-time partner with Christmas Storybook Land," said Randy Porter, Fair & Expo Center manager. "We provide them space every year that if they had to pay for it would run close to \$40,000. It is a great family friendly event for the community."

Christmas Storybook Land President Carol Wood noted in a letter to the Linn County Board of Commissioners, "Kris Barnes and Randy Porter were on call every step of the way, helping us solve problems with a new layout, signage, traffic control and a myriad of other issues. Our day-to-day needs during our 4-week stay were quickly and capably handled by the friendly maintenance crews."

Wood added that when a company that has traditionally chipped all of the trees sold, Porter offered to help dispose of



the hundreds of trees. Fortunately, the company's new owner volunteered to continue chipping the old trees.

It takes many volunteers to produce this massive event and new volunteers are needed.

To learn more about how you can become a part of this annual event, visit the Christmas Storybook Land website at <https://christmasstorybooklan.org/>.

## DARRIN LANE ... From P. 1

happening. A couple of early bird employees reported suspicious activity to IT and that triggered a massive shutdown of nearly all IT systems.

We were hit hard by Conti Ransomware.

Steve and his team met with our insurance company representatives early Monday and we identified a top tier consultant that could arrive the following day to help with recovery. All that was followed by a herculean effort to get a multitude of servers restored and more than 100 desktop computers and laptops

re-imaged.

IT staff worked long hours and for that we are grateful.

Thanks also to all employees who had to deal with the impact of temporarily losing access to IT systems and for demonstrating huge amounts of patience and consideration when needed. Remarkably, IT was able to have several significant systems back up and running by Wednesday morning, fewer than three days. Nearly everything else was back up by the end of the week, with the exception of some individual desktop computers.

Our consultant said it was the fastest recovery they had seen and they credited our IT department staff for their diligence in ensuring we have a robust back-up program that is tested regularly.

And to be clear about it, we didn't pay any ransom.

In the aftermath, you can expect some tightening of IT policies and procedures. Passwords are going to be a focus, as well as training on cybersecurity and other network hardening actions.

Let's hope the rest of February is a little — a lot — less challenging.

## Micah Smith is new LCSO undersheriff

Linn County Sheriff Michelle Duncan has named Micah Smith as her

new undersheriff. Smith began his career with the Sheriff's Office in 2004 as a patrol deputy assigned to Mill City. He became the first Digital

Forensic Detective at the Sheriff's Office investigating cyber and child sex crimes. He was the recipient of the 2005 National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Law Enforcement Award during his time as a detective.

After working in detectives, Smith was promoted to lieutenant in the Support Services Division in 2014. Smith streamlined the hiring process and took on numerous complicated projects throughout the office.

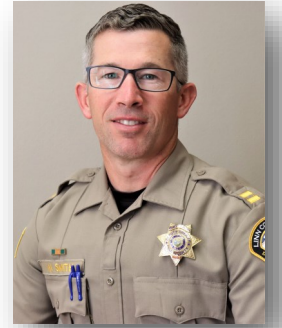
In 2020, Smith was promoted to captain of the Support Services Division.

He has been a member of Search and Rescue and is the commander of the Linn County Water Rescue and Recovery Team.

Smith comes from a farming family in Pendleton, later moving to Albany and graduating from West Albany High School. He graduated from Western Oregon, majoring in Community Crime Prevention.

He lives in the Albany area with his wife Jessica and their three children, Treyson, Ellison and Weston on their small farm.

"Linn County is lucky to have Undersheriff Smith on the LCSO team," Sheriff Duncan said. "He is always looking for solutions to lead our office into the future, while still maintaining the values our community has come to expect. He is one of the smartest and hardest working people I have had the privilege to serve with."



Micah Smith

## Andrew Franklin promoted to captain

Andrew Franklin has been promoted to LCSO Support Services Captain.

Franklin's law enforcement career began as a Reserve Deputy with the Polk County Sheriff's Office. He has been with LCSO for more than 17 years. He has served as patrol deputy, property crimes detective, mountain/marine sergeant and detective lieutenant. Franklin has also served as a drug recognition evaluator and a field training officer.

Franklin grew up in Bend and moved to the Willamette Valley to attend Western Oregon University where he earned his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. He lives in the Sweet Home area with his wife and three sons.

"I have worked with Andy on my team when he was the marine/mountain patrol sergeant in the Patrol Division," Sheriff Michelle Duncan said. "He always has an eye on doing what is best for the community and our staff, even when extra work is involved. He will continue to serve the community well in this new role."

# Everybody needs a second CHANCE

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

**A**LBANY — The staff at CHANCE — Communities Helping All Negotiate Change Effectively — share a bond with those they hope to help — they have stood in their shoes, according to Rosalie Evans, peer support and donations coordinator.

The non-profit organization was originally called Communities Helping Addicts Negotiate Change Effectively, but Evans said that has evolved to include the entire spectrum of those needing help navigating life’s challenges.

Linn County’s Alcohol & Drug department plays a major role in the CHANCE experience, Evans said.

“Linn County Mental Health is one of our biggest contracts,” Evans said.

First housed in a church at 238 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., CHANCE is now based in the former Pizza King building at 231 Lyon Street SE. There are also offices in Lebanon, Corvallis, Lincoln City and Newport.

Evans worked at the Albany Christian School for 20 years and then spent a year working at Milestones in Corvallis, when she met several CHANCE staff members.

“I got a chance to get a glimpse of different programs,” Evans said. “God put me here. He changed my perception of homelessness, drug addiction and mental health issues.”

In addition to her duties reaching out into the community for support, Evans leads a weekly “Women For Sobriety” program.

Evans said her job is “to go out into the community and develop relationships.”

Starting January 1, Evans has begun contacting what she hopes will be virtually every business in the Albany area.

“It’s not so much about how much we can get from someone, but sharing how CHANCE can actually help them, because the issues we are dealing with, affect everyone,” Evans said.

The Albany CHANCE office is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week.

Among the many CHANCE programs are:

- Out of town support groups
- Parenting classes
- Anger Management classes
- Mental Health Peer Support,
- DDA-Hearing Voices
- HIV and Hepatitis testing
- Alcohol & Drug and Mental Health peer support
- Employment support and training
- Financial planning



**Above:** Rosalie Evans invites the public to learn more about the many programs available at CHANCE, now located in the former Pizza King building in downtown Albany. **Below:** CHANCE started in a former church at 238 3rd Ave.

- Smoking cessation
- Housing support
- Birth certificate and ID support
- Transportation

CHANCE offers support for entire families, Evans said.

“We help people get their GED, with family literacy and if they need, we

teach them how to develop a resume for job applications,” Evans said.

Evans is proud that a kitchen, laundry and showers are under construction.

“Homeless people need a place to shower, do their laundry and learn how to

cook,” Evans said. “This is a big step for us.”

Evans said the number of people who drop by each day varies from none to 50.

“We have started an artist of the month display and we plan to start an open mic night,” Evans said. “The goal is to take the stigma out of those we serve. Some choose this lifestyle and are successful at it. Some have chronic mental illness and substance abusers have to want to stop.”

Evans said local support is gratifying.

“Oregon Freeze Dry recently donated 1,200 meals and the folks at Grocery Outlet have been wonderful,” Evans said.

Evans said that a year from now, she will consider her work successful if community members can feel comfortable coming into the CHANCE office



and feel like the program is something positive for the community.

Evans said CHANCE will soon work with the Linn County Sheriff’s Office.

“The Sheriff’s Office will put us in touch with inmates who want peer support,” Evans said. “We will be able to develop a plan for them, so when they are released, they will have a support system in place. They won’t have to return right back into bad situations.”

CHANCE has a continual need for some items.

Here is a list of items that are always in need.

- Thick socks

- Gloves
- Hats
- Hot hands
- Feet warmers
- Emergency blankets
- Cold medicine
- AA and AAA Batteries
- Single packets of Tylenol and Ibuprofen
- Sleeping bags
- Tents
- Any pop top foods
- Pouched chicken, tuna and/or pork Triple antibiotic single use packs

To learn more about CHANCE, visit <https://www.chancerecovery.org/m/>.

## QUOTABLE

*“God put me here. He changed my perception of homelessness, drug addiction and mental health issues.”*

Rosalie Evans

# A billion-dollar battle over more than timber

By Mateusz Perkowski

Capital Press

January 8, 2022

If most arguments over money aren't really about money, the lawsuit brought by several "timber" counties against the State of Oregon over forestry revenues is no exception.

In 2019, a jury in Linn County held the state liable for breaching contracts with 14 counties and numerous taxing districts by logging an insufficient amount of timber from state forests, reducing their share of profits. It awarded the plaintiffs \$1 billion.

As the state government seeks to overturn the jury's verdict, it has exposed a broader rift between itself and the predominantly rural communities.

"This is a lot bigger issue than a \$1 billion judgment. It's about rural jobs and economics — and a way of life," said Roger Nyquist, a commissioner for Linn County, the lawsuit's lead plaintiff.

The dispute goes beyond the stereotypical conflict between the survival of rural sawmills and the survival of protected species.

It's a legal conundrum that's also about power: The counties want to stick up for themselves, while the state wants to protect its prerogative to set forest policy.

"We've been residing on opposite planets," said John DiLorenzo, attorney for the counties.

The disagreement centers on timber revenues from 700,000 acres of state forestlands, most of which were donated to the state by county governments in the 1930s and 1940s.

Counties and other taxing bodies are entitled to a share of logging revenues, and historically these monies have been a big part of their budgets.

The state is required to manage the forestlands for their "greatest permanent value." The state's interpretation of that concept has evolved since the land first changed hands. In recent decades, the state has reduced timber harvests to protect wildlife habitat and enhance recreational opportunities.

The plaintiffs and the state disagree on what was promised when the counties gave up the land.

The state claims the lawsuit shouldn't have even gone to a jury, since the counties lack an enforceable contract governing the land's management.

The county governments argue they never would've given up such massive swaths of forestland if the state could simply reduce logging levels and timber revenues at will.

"Who in their right mind would have done that?" asked DiLorenzo. On Feb. 22, the Oregon Court of Appeals will hear arguments to decide which of their perspectives is legally correct.



Capital Press reporter Mateusz Perkowski interviews Linn County Commissioner Roger Nyquist concerning the \$1 billion breach of contract lawsuit Linn County and other taxing districts won in November 2019. The issue will be heard in the Court of Appeals on Feb. 22.

A key question in the litigation is whether the counties have the ability to challenge the state's forestry decisions, since they're subdivisions of the state government.

ments of roughly \$1 billion in past and future revenues needed for law enforcement, schools, libraries and other services.

After a month-long trial in 2019, a

jury in Linn County Circuit Court determined the state government had violated its contractual obligation to

maximize timber revenues for the counties.

"You can call this a breach of contract, but it's a broken promise," Bovett said. "It is a direct promise from the state to the counties."

Though the judgment amount has since been accumulating roughly \$260,000 in interest per day, the state government has opted against settling the lawsuit.

Oral arguments are expected to take place in early 2022 but the timeline for a ruling is unknown, in light of the case's complexity.

The state government is urging the Court of Appeals to reverse the jury verdict, arguing the judge presiding over the case should not have allowed it to get that far.

The donated forestlands are governed under a specific 1941 statute and the counties cannot enforce a "statutory contract" related to "matters of statewide public concern," according to the state.

"At least when it comes to matters affecting a statewide interest, a county cannot seek compensation for losses caused by the state's

breach of a statutory contract," according to the state.

Under Oregon law, state forestlands must be managed for the "greatest permanent value of those lands to the state," which is a matter that's within the discretion of the Board of Forestry, the state said.

"The State of Oregon gets to decide the greatest permanent value for the State of Oregon," said Ralph Bloemers, an attorney for fishing and conservation groups that oppose the lawsuit. "There's nowhere that says: Timber first, then everything else. It's everything. It's multiple uses. It's what people enjoyed back in those days and today."

Bloemers doesn't think the \$1 billion judgment has a high chance of surviving the Court of Appeals, given the multitude of legal weaknesses identified by the state government.

"There are numerous errors that infected the decision," he said. "It has a lot to choose from."

Private landowners had abandoned their "logged over" forest properties and stopped paying taxes on them, which is how they were acquired by the county governments, Bloemers said.

The counties didn't want to deal with the forestland and so they handed it over to the state, which has heavily invested in improving and managing the property, he said.

The legal problem of Oregon's political subdivisions suing the state government can be explained in familial terms, he said.

"It's like a kid suing his parents for not getting enough allowance, when the parents have taken care of school, taken him to the dentist,

## QUOTABLE

"What's the point of a contract if the state doesn't have to live up to it?"

Commissioner Roger Nyquist

While the state's attorneys argue the counties lack this power, the counties say they have a right to enforce their contract with the state.

"What's the point of a contract if the state doesn't have to live up to it?" Nyquist asked.

It's an "absurd notion" that the counties can't challenge the state in court over the matter, said Rob Bovett, legal counsel for the Association of Oregon Counties.

"If the state can walk away from its contracts, then we've got nothing," he said. "Then we would have a partnership that's not only broken, but not a partnership at all. It would be master and servant." More than two decades ago, the state's Board of Forestry enacted a definition of "greatest permanent value" that emphasized "healthy, productive and sustainable forest ecosystems" that generate "social, economic and environmental benefits."

The counties contend that state foresters have curtailed logging as a result, depriving local govern-

LAWSUIT... See P. 6

## LAWSUIT ... From P. 5

made sure he's safe," Bloemers said. "It's easy to pick on the state and say the state isn't doing enough."

The plaintiffs say they realize that counties can't simply legally challenge any state policy they dislike, such as marijuana legalization.

However, they argue local governments can't perform public health functions and carry out other tasks on the state's behalf if they can't rely on contracts.

"That would completely blow up the delivery of services in the state as we know it," Nyquist said.

Critics of the lawsuit point out that Oregon cannot ignore federal laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act, which restrict logging under certain circumstances. There's no argument that state law requires counties to share in timber revenues, but it's still allowed to take environmental and recreation considerations into account, said Bob Van Dyk, Oregon and California policy director for the nonprofit Wild Salmon Center.

"That doesn't mean it has to maximize timber revenue at the cost of other values," he said. "Those are perfectly legitimate interests but they need to be balanced against other interests."

Tillamook County, one of the plaintiffs, is dedicated to environmental preservation but doesn't believe it conflicts with other values, said David Yamamoto, vice-chair of the county commission.

"People think that if you manage for timber, you don't care about the environment," he said. "That's absolutely wrong."

The problem isn't that Oregon follows environmental laws, it's that



### Linn County compiles booklet of Breach of Contract proceedings

*With a licensing agreement with Lee Enterprises, Linn County has published an 88-page booklet that includes a complete coverage of issues leading up to and through the Breach of Contract lawsuit brought against the Oregon Department of Forestry by Linn County and other taxing districts with State Forest lands within their boundaries. The booklet includes day-by-day news stories of the 30-day trial that were published in the Albany Democrat-Herald and Corvallis Gazette-Times.*

state foresters have restricted logging beyond what's legally required, said DiLorenzo, attorney for the counties. That management strategy has now resulted in Endangered Species Act limitations that have further decreased logging.

"There is nothing in ESA that makes you create habitat if it's not already there. They created ESA habitat by allowing trees to age,"

he said. "They created the habitat, then blamed their inability to harvest on ESA."

The claim that inadequate logging on state forestlands has harmed counties financially is a "red herring" and "misdirection" from the real problem: Tax breaks for large timber companies, Bloemers said. If major timber companies paid more in taxes, it would benefit public services much more than

increased logging on the tiny fraction of forestland owned by the state, he said. When the \$1 billion judgment is struck down, it's only going to bring attention to that issue. "I'm expecting it's going to be a pretty big backfire," Bloemers said. Van Dyk of the Wild Salmon Center said he's also glad that Oregon decided against settling the lawsuit and is optimistic about the state's chances on appeal.

## Willamette National Forest reminds visitors of winter safety

**S**PRINGFIELD – Winter can be a wonderful time to visit your public lands. However, colder weather and snowy conditions on the Willamette National Forest mean taking caution to ensure a safer and more enjoyable trip.

Visitors are encouraged to plan and review important winter safety tips before heading out to the forest to avoid unpleasant and extreme situations. Winter weather conditions require some additional safety planning for travel, overcrowding, and parking.

### Know before you go.

Plan your visit by checking road conditions and potential hazardous weather forecast before traveling. Visit TripCheck.com for road conditions that may impact your traveling routes to the forest. Winter weather in the forest can change rapidly. Remember to pack a paper map. Most forest roads are not plowed or maintained in winter and can be difficult for passenger vehicles to navi-



gate.

GPS units on phones and other devices are convenient, but please do not rely exclusively on them -- especially during the winter. Many areas do not have reception, driving directions sometimes are not up to date and devices that use a battery can die.

Forest staff recommend bringing traction devices and a shovel, extra food, drinking water, winter clothing, blankets, a flashlight, and a first aid kit.

Visitors should prepare to encounter overcrowded parking areas for popular recreational areas and encourage you to plan alternative recreational areas for your visit.

All sno-parks require a sno-park permit. Permits are sold at all Oregon DMV offices and by permit agents in resorts, sporting goods stores, and other retail outlets. Visit the Oregon DMV Sno-Park

Parking Permits page for more information about permits and locations. Highway and parking patrolling is active during this time. Parking along highways, in turnouts and outside designated spots block access for emergency vehicles and snowplows and is hazardous to pedestrians and other drivers.

### Recreate responsibly.

If you are not familiar with the 10 Outdoor Essentials, the seven principles of Leave No Trace, or Smokey Bear's fire prevention tips, now is a good time to review these responsible recreation basics and the Recreate Responsibly guidelines.

You can help sustain our National Forest by doing your part in packing out everything you pack in. Visit our website at [www.fs.usda.gov/willamette](http://www.fs.usda.gov/willamette), and follow us on Twitter and Facebook @willamettenf for the latest updates.

# Nikki SWANSON ... From P. 7

Opal Creek area north of Detroit Lake and the Lionshead Fire east of Mt. Jefferson. Swanson had been working on the latter and was getting nervous.

"It was a crazy period of time," she said, recounting the experience.

The Lionshead Fire was on the east side of Mt. Jefferson and "all of the models" were projecting 50 mph winds "for days and days and days," while little had been done to slow the fire's progress. "Even though the models try to forecast the worst-case scenario, they never showed the fire coming across the pass," she said.

"But," Swanson continued, "I'm a scientist. I know that models can be wrong. I know that models are only as good as the data that the model has seen. And so what if the model was wrong?"

She noted that she'd worked on the Whitewater Fire in 2017, which burned 11,500 acres in the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness, torching some of the state's most popular hiking areas.

"On the Whitewater Fire we waited too long to evacuate, and so people were evacuating with flames at their backs. We didn't want that."

As the Lionshead Fire burned east of the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness, which was full of Labor Day visitors, Swanson had a sense of déjà vu. But it wasn't shared by her Forest Service colleagues, who had other concerns.

"The fire management team wasn't even focused on our side yet," she said. "We weren't even part of the delegation. We weren't part of anything. It wasn't even our fire yet."

Swanson said she kept raising her concerns in meetings.

"I'm like, 'Hey, I want to do this,' and they're like, 'Well, I think it's premature.' And I'm like, 'Well, while I respect that you think it's premature, but given what happened with Whitewater, I want to order an orderly exit.'"

"If I'm wrong, people's Labor Day weekend got messed up a bit. But people are alive, right? And so that's kind of what kept going through my head: If I'm wrong, people will be alive to complain. And I can handle that. If I don't do anything, when I have this strong feeling about acting, and I'm wrong about that, people will die and I can't live with that."

Swanson followed through, issuing a "reverse 9-1-1" that triggered what Tucker called "an amazing effort" on Saturday and Sunday prior to Labor Day to alert visitors in the approximately 6-by-20-mile wilderness area that they



Sweet Home Ranger Nikki Swanson

needed to evacuate.

Linn County Sheriff's deputies, Search and Rescue and Posse members, and Forest Service staffers went into action, contacting visitors on Saturday and Sunday and telling them to get out. Trails and campgrounds in and beyond the Metolius Basin - including a section of the Pacific Crest Trail, were closed.

"There were over 100 cars (at trailheads) tagged with notices that they needed leave," Tucker said.

One U.S. Forest Service staffer from the Eugene area, who is a trail runner, volunteered.

"He's like, 'I can run 20 miles in a day. Let me take this segment,'" Swanson said.

Tucker said Sheriff's deputies connected with two dozen camping parties, "50 or 60 people."

"She dramatically changed what was happening by the timing, by them having a chance to respond."

By Monday, Swanson's gut feeling proved correct, he said.

During the afternoon winds from the east began picking up, and by nightfall were raging at 50 to 75 mph down the Santiam Canyon, and driving the Lionshead into the wilderness and over the pass, where it continued westward to join the Beachie Fire, which had been burning the same way northeast of Detroit. Downed power lines created 13 spot fires along Highway 22, adding to the conflagration that overwhelmed the canyon and its communities.

The merged fires, which became known as the Santiam Fire, burned a total of 313,110 acres - one of the largest in state history, destroying some 1,568

buildings and killing five people.

"Her call actually saved lives," Tucker said. "There were lots of heroes that weekend. Well, she was a hero a couple of days before."

He said Sheriff's Lt. Joe Larsen, who heads the Search and Rescue team, was in the wilderness area Tuesday.

"He would have been recovering bodies if they hadn't been up there on Saturday and Sunday.

"We heard that 20 or 30 people were contacted that were not aware of that fire. And so those lives (Swanson) saved. To be in this world, we're lucky to save one.

"And the other message I want to get across to the world with the Nikki Swanson story is that we have processes in place and those processes all work until they don't."

Tucker presented Swanson with a laser-etched maple wood medallion bearing the Linn County seal that, he noted, he paid for himself, and Yon gave her a Sheriff's Office "Challenge Coin" award.

## Soroptimist scholarships available

Hey, Linn County employees, it's time for the Soroptimist Student of the Year!

<https://sialbany.org/awards/student-of-the-year/>

One scholarship is awarded to a High School Senior at AOS, West Albany or South Albany High Schools for their community service activities, by SI Albany. If you, or someone you know,

"The fact is, there are people like Nikki who I just want them to go through life knowing they are special to us," Tucker said.

Swanson said her favorite memory from the incident was hearing from a father and his son who were doing "this sort of rite-of-passage, first-long-trek-with-your-son kind of backpacking trip," who got to a road and were able to hitch-hike to safety.

"The way he tells the story is that they were so far in there, they wouldn't have had a chance

"I went to a fire meeting at 6 p.m. and at 8 p.m. I'm getting a phone call saying 'it's six miles on your side.' It spotted six miles in a matter of two hours. There would have been no getting anyone out then."

Tucker said U.S. Forest Service authorities have been "reluctant" to recognize the importance of Swanson's decision.

"There were lots of heroes. I get that. But this woman had a gut feeling and she went and she did it."



are a high school senior, apply today!

# JODI GOLLEHON ... From P. 1

half," Gollehon said.

Gollehon grew up in Conrad, Montana, a small community about 90 miles from Glacier National Park.

"The closest big city is Spokane, Washington, and that's about six hours away," Gollehon said.

Gollehon, 38, did not set out to be an attorney. In fact, she earned a degree in economics from Montana State University and worked in the mortgage field, but tired of it during the recession of 2008.

Gollehon's friend was in law school, which piqued Gollehon's interest in a career change. She enrolled at the University of Montana, earning a Master's Degree in Public Administration and her law degree at the same time.

After graduation, she worked for the state of Montana in its contracting division for four years, then moved to the Portland area in 2015, where she worked in the contract office of the parks and rec department.

She came to Linn County in 2017 and has "done a little bit of everything," focusing on contracts and property issues.

Gollehon said the Yamhill County Attorney's office is about the same as

Linn County in terms of staffing, but she expects to work more in the land use area.

Gollehon said she enjoys running, camping and hiking, especially Mt. Hood in the summer months.

"Oregon is so pretty," Gollehon said. "The mid-valley has so much to offer in terms of outdoor activities."



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

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

# Thank you Sheriff Yon for 28 years service

By Alex Paul  
Communications Officer

Former Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon took a lot of good-natured ribbing at a retirement reception in his honor January 12 at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center.

And it was his 51<sup>st</sup> birthday as well.

Yon retired at the end of December, after serving 28 years with the Linn County Sheriff's Office, rising through the ranks from resident deputy in Harrisburg to sheriff.

New Sheriff Michelle Duncan said Yon has received numerous awards for his work over the years, including a Medal of Valor for rescuing a man out of a river. He was named Supervisor of the Year twice, an honor voted upon by staff members.

He was a member of the dive team for many years and was a Field Training Officer.

Duncan said comments about Yon always focus on "the way he treats people and that he is always willing to help."

"He is hard working, dedicated and very compassionate when helping people who have experienced the death of a loved one," Duncan said.

Duncan said Yon once gave someone a speeding ticket and that person sent him a thank you note for how he handled the situation.

District Attorney Doug Marteeny said it is important that the District Attorney and Sheriff work "should-to-shoulder" to provide effective law enforcement.

"I have appreciated Sheriff Yon," Marteeny said. "Law enforcement has taken many hits in recent years. Jim has known when to fight and when to be quiet. He has navigated this extremely well."

Yon received accolades from both the Oregon State Police, FBI and the Sher-

iff's Posse.

Lebanon Police Chief Frank Stevenson — Yon's brother-in-law — said he has known him since he was 8 years old.

"Aside from my dad, you are my hero," Stevenson said after making several humorous comments. "I have always looked up to you and appreciated your advice."

He gave Yon a large banner with Stevenson's photo on it as a gag gift.

Albany Police Lt. Robert Hayes said he went to middle school with Yon and they have been friends ever since. He praised Yon's dedication and professionalism.

Former Sheriff Bruce Riley said he worked with Yon all of Yon's career.

"He's like the little brother I never had," Riley said.

Riley outlined a 4,000-mile camping adventure the Yon and Riley families took last summer, focusing on events such as Yon having to secure old kayaks numerous times during the outing.

Linn County Commissioners Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker thanked Yon for his dedication and presented him with a commemorative plaque.

Undersheriff Micah Smith presented Yon's wife, Angie, with a certificate for her dedication being married to someone in law enforcement. Family members sacrifice many hours due to the demands of their spouse's career duties.

Yon said he has been blessed with a wonderful family and that he had a great career that he enjoyed very much.

"I had a great run," Yon said.

Yon was presented with numerous gifts, including a new Orvis fly fishing outfit, cooler and fishing trip.



Retired Sheriff Jim Yon receives a badge from new Sheriff Michelle Duncan.



Yon receives a special gift from his brother-in-law and Lebanon Police Chief Frank Stevenson.



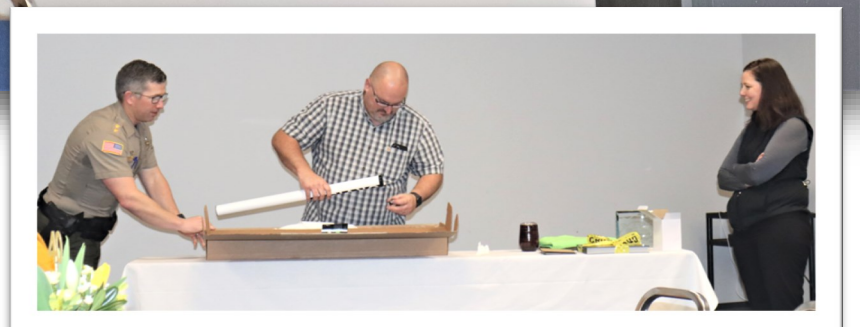
Yon receives a plaque from Commissioners Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker.



Linn County Parks Director Brian Carroll looks over memorabilia during retirement reception for Sheriff Jim Yon.



Above: Yon receives an emergency bottle of Mountain Dew from District Attorney Doug Marteeny. Right: Yon opens one of several gifts, a new Orvis fly rod.







The former Willamette Industries mill site in Sweet Home will soon have a new owner. Two bids were received by the Linn County Board of Commissioners

## Linn County receives two bids for SH mill site

**A**LBANY — The Linn County Board of Commissioners reviewed two bids for the former Willamette Industries mill site Tuesday morning.

County Property Manager Rachel Adamec opened a bid of \$800,000 from Sweet Home Real Estate Restorations LLC, whose principal is Joshua Victor of Sweet Home, and \$450,000 from Sweet Home Mill Site LLC, whose principal is Scott Lepman of Albany.

Victor's bid included a cashier's check for the full amount of the bid and Lepman's check was for \$45,000, or 10% of the bid. The property is being sold "as is."

The property has a real market value of \$1,646,550, but the minimum acceptable bid was set at \$406,087.

### UPDATE

*At their Tuesday, Feb. 8, meeting, the Board of Commissioners accepted the high bid from Sweet Home Real Estate Restorations.*

Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker and Adamec will review the bids with county counsel and anticipate announcing a bid award at next Tuesday's meeting.

Linn County took possession of the site about 12 years ago for more than \$500,000 in back taxes. The property was part of a planned, but failed, housing project by Western States Land Reliance Trust.

The property includes about 150 acres. Linn County recently agreed to give the city of Sweet Home about three acres for possible development of a homeless encampment.

Over the years, Linn County has worked with the Department of Environmental Quality and former owner Weyerhaeuser, identifying and mitigating contaminated areas of the property. Commissioner Tucker has focused on that work and has said he believes final environmental clearances were coming within the year.

Sale of the property will remove Linn County from that process.

The county has previously offered the property for sale and at one point received four bids, but turned them down. At another auction, the minimum bid was set at \$2.7 million and attracted no bidders.

The county had considered selling individual parcels of the property, but members of the Sweet Home City Council asked that the property be sold as one unit. Linn County was concerned that if sold as one unit, the purchaser could partition contaminated areas and not pay taxes on them. In six years, Linn County could be forced to take over those parcels in lieu of back taxes.

Linn County had also offered to give the property to the city of Sweet Home, but the offer was rejected because city councilors were concerned environmental cleanup cost could be expensive.

Linn County has previously given the city 220 acres that was the former Morse Brothers and then Knife River quarry that borders the South Santiam River. The community plans to develop the site into a venue for the Oregon Jamboree and other community activities.

## LDS church donates food, supplies to Linn Benton Food Share

**T**ANGENT — Semi-truck loads of food rolled into the Linn Benton Food Share warehouse Tuesday and Wednesday, a gift from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the families in Linn and Benton Counties.

Linn Benton Food Share Director Ryan McCambridge said the donation is valued at more than \$80,000 and comes when the number of people making food requests is on the rise.

"This is the second time the LDS church has offered truckloads of food to Linn Benton Food Share," McCambridge said.

He said the first loads of food arrived in March 2020, just prior to the initial COVID-19 lock downs.

"This is high-quality, shelf-stable food that meets the demands of our food pantry network at a time of supply chain worries and food cost inflation," McCambridge said. "The donation includes cleaning items such as detergent and laundry soap as well."

The food donation equates to about two weeks of local need.

"Linn Benton Food Share is thankful for the local LDS chapter arranged this donation. Their efforts make a real difference in making sure that everybody eats," McCambridge said.

Deseret Industries is the charitable arm of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Mike Johnson, area welfare specialist for the church, said "We are grateful to join an excellent local organization in benefiting local folks with needs."

In 2021, Linn Benton Food Share pro-

vided 3.5 million pounds of food, including 200,000 pounds of locally grown fresh produce to families in mid-valley communities.

More than 850,000 pounds of food was saved through the fresh alliance grocery recovery program.

Linn Benton Food Share provided enough food for 260,000 meals and more than 29,000 emergency food boxes. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program supported 350 elderly community members and saves them an average of \$500 which can be used for rent and medications, among other needs.

Volunteers play a vital role at Linn Benton Food Share. Last year, volunteers donated more than 300,000 hours.

Linn Benton Food Share operates under the umbrella of Community Services Consortium.

To learn more, visit <https://communityservices.us/linn-benton-food-share/>.

