

Three Rivers delays start, plans for some 'hybrid' learning

Only elementary students will attend a full week of classes

By Casey Crowley
of the Daily Courier

The Three Rivers School District has delayed the start of its school year by more than a week, and only elementary students will be in classrooms for a full school week.

The first day of school will now be Sept. 8, the day after Labor Day. Students in middle school and high school will attend school on a "hybrid" basis, meaning they will report to school some days and stay at home other days.

Details have yet to be fleshed out. Superintendent Dave Valenzuela told the school board Wednesday that while it still is his goal for the district to return to full-time, on-site schooling, that isn't going to be possible even with the delay of more than a week.

"I can say it's not going to be possible at every school and every grade level to return to in-person instruction every day," he said.

Since March, schools have been closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Districts around the state are now working on plans to reopen to some extent, despite a surge in cases recently.

Valenzuela had said in June that the district was planning to return to full on-site instruction this fall with social distancing measures in place.

"We understand that the restrictions aren't going to allow that," Valenzuela said. "We understand with the increase in numbers it's probably not the smartest approach."

The school board voted Wednesday to move the start of the school year back to Sept. 8, so staff could undergo coronavirus safety training. Valenzuela

Turn to SCHOOL, Page 6A

• New chair of Three Rivers School Board served 3 years as vice chair. Page 6A.

ODF set to raise fire danger to high Friday

Soaring temperatures lead to new regulations in order to help prevent wildfires. Page 3A

County seeks relief funds to help pay for sheriff's office

By Shaun Hall
of the Daily Courier

Josephine County is taking advantage of unusual language in the federal CARES Act to seek reimbursement for \$1.8 million in sheriff's offices payroll expenses incurred during the coronavirus outbreak.

The act provides relief funding for local governments to recoup coronavirus-related expenses, although federal spending guidelines contain a seemingly generous clause related to all public safety payroll spending during the outbreak that the county is using to justify its large request.

The act, signed into law in March, is a \$2 trillion economic stimulus bill that set aside \$150 billion to help state, local and tribal governments "navigate impacts" of the outbreak, according to the U.S. Department of Treasury. Those relief funds are intended to cover only expenses that "are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency," according to the treasury department.

However, county Finance Director Sandra Novak said she was surprised to find the guidelines allow all public safety payroll costs to be covered, regardless if duties performed were directly virus-related.

According to the guidance relied on by Novak, "as a matter of administrative convenience in light of the emergency nature of this program [state, tribal and local governments] may presume that payroll costs for public health and public safety employees are

Turn to FUNDS, Page 6A

Mayor breaks 4-4 tie to finalize levy rate put to voters: \$1.89

It's a 10-cent increase over the public safety tax that expires next year

By Lauren Bishop
of the Daily Courier

With a tie-breaking vote, Grants Pass Mayor Roy Lindsay on Wednesday voted to put a \$1.89 public safety levy on the November ballot.

The mayor also broke a thumbs-up tie at the July 6 workshop to propose a higher rate of \$1.9748 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. That rate

was considered by the council Wednesday but rejected in favor of the lower rate.

Those in favor of the \$1.89 rate: councilors Valerie Lovelace, Rick Riker, Clint Scherf and Joel King.

Those opposed: Councilor President Tyler Flaming and councilors DJ Faszer, Barry Eames and Dennis Roler.

The reasons why councilors sup-

ported or rejected the \$1.89 rate were varied. Some were against increasing the current rate of \$1.79, while others favored a higher amount. Voters will have the final say in November.

"Trying to find a consensus in this particular topic has been extremely challenging," Lindsay said before making the final decision on the levy amount. "As a step in good faith of trying to achieve sense of consensus

... I'm going to vote 'yes.'"

Before the vote, residents took to the lectern to say that the proposed rate of \$1.9748 was too high, though for varying reasons.

Some residents asked why general fund money was spent on huge parks projects, like Dollar Mountain and the proposed Beacon Hill Park, and the creation of GP Now, the city's newsletter-turned-newspaper, when the city is also projecting a shortfall

Turn to RATE, Page 6A

Solar panels generate savings, learning opportunity for Boys & Girls Club



Photos by ELAYNA YUSSEN/Daily Courier

Standy Lempka, an apprentice with True South Solar, installs one of the final solar panels Wednesday on the roof of the Grants Pass Boys & Girls Club. The panels will help the club reduce its carbon footprint as well as lower its monthly power bill.

Pacific Power, Energy Trust of Oregon grants helped fund the 3,644-square-foot solar array

By Kathleen Alaks
of the Daily Courier

The impressive array of solar panels now covering the south-facing roof of the Grants Pass Boys & Girls Club is already paying off.

Even before the last of the 164 sun-soaking panels were put in place Wednesday morning, children in the club's summer program were learning just how those panels would help the club reduce its carbon footprint, the amount of carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming.

"Already, the kids are talking about how those panels are the equivalent of planting almost 49,000 trees by eliminating 2,100 tons of carbon dioxide in the air," said Greg Roe, the Boys & Girls Club's executive director.

"And how that's equal to [the carbon dioxide emissions of] 4 million auto miles, or 200,000 gallons of gaso-



The Boys & Girls Club in Grants Pass received a grant from Pacific Power to pay for the solar panels that were installed on the roof of the facility.

line." But using the solar panels as teaching tools is just a side benefit.

The 3,644-square-foot solar array can generate up to 64.8 kilowatts, allowing the Boys & Girls Club to offset its electric bill by 64%.

That will significantly slash the nonprofit organization's monthly power bill, saving it close to \$12,000 a year, Roe said.

"Our power bill, in summer especially, is well over \$2,000. This will save us at least \$1,000 a month," he said. "We're going to see some great cost savings ... and put that money back into programs."

Roe envisions savings from the solar panels will help support the club's popular STEAM program (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math).

The amount of energy produced by the panels will be monitored in real

Turn to SOLAR, Page 5A

Bear hunting could be allowed along Wild Section

By Jeff Duewel
of the Daily Courier

Last year, 171 of 201 rafting parties on the Rogue River's Wild Section reported seeing a bear.

Of those, 55 had to shoo away bears, 34 had equipment damage, and three even had a bear get in a raft where someone was sleeping to guard a cooler, according to observations forms left at Foster Bar.

So, after a long time thinking about it, the Oregon Department of

Fish and Wildlife has proposed loosening restrictions so hunters can go after some of the marauders.

For many years bear hunting has been banned within a mile of the river in the 34 miles from Grave Creek to near Foster Bar. Under a proposal released this month, bear hunting would be allowed along the banks of the Rogue River's Wild Section in the fall and spring.

It would begin in November, after the May 15-Oct. 15 rafting permit season. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife

Commission will vote on it Sept. 11.

Most of the human-bear encounters are in the lower end of the Wild Section, around popular camping areas such as Tacoma and Brushy Bar.

"We have an extremely high density of bears in that area," said Steve Niemela, a Fish and Wildlife biologist in Central Point. "This is something we've kicked around for a long time. Last year we had a very bad human safety year. People were throwing rocks at bears keeping them out of

camps.

"For local people and people concerned about the Wild and Scenic river, it's a big issue."

Bear numbers have trended up for years in Oregon, Niemela said. That dates to 1961, when bears were reclassified from predator to game animals, to better regulate killing of bears.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife says there are now between

Turn to BEAR, Page 5A



2 Sections, 16 Pages
Volume CX
No. 216 Issue 32992
Grants Pass Daily Courier
thedailycourier.com



A bright day
OVERNIGHT LOW 58°
FRIDAY HIGH 89°
5-day forecast on Page 2A

WHERE TO FIND IT
Abby.....2B
Classified.....5B
Comics.....4B
Entertainment.....1B

Obituaries.....3A
Opinion.....4A
Police.....3A
Sports.....7A
Stock markets.....5A

Independent and locally owned since 1885
Circulation.....541-474-3702
Classified Ads.....541-474-3711
News Tips.....541-474-3823
or email news@thedailycourier.com

Lawsuit filed in quest to move Oregon counties to Idaho

By Carisa Cegavske
Roseburg News-Review

ROSEBURG — Move Oregon's Border chief petitioner Mike McCarter has filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Eugene in hopes of getting the grassroots movement's proposal onto the ballot in 17 counties this November.

He wants to know if citizens in those counties, including Douglas and Josephine, would like to divorce Oregon and get hitched to Idaho instead.

And his case may have just received a boost from the same court's favorable decision this week in a similar case brought by People Not Politicians over a different ballot measure.

Both cases boil down to signature-gathering.

The state mandates petitioners obtain a minimum number of signatures in order to qualify for the ballot. But petitioners

for both Move Oregon's Border and People Not Politicians argued COVID-19 restrictions have made the usual methods of signature-gathering impossible.

Under these circumstances, they said, the signature requirements violate their First and 14th Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution. That's because they effectively block voters from any chance to consider their proposals.

On Monday, the District Court agreed with People Not Politicians, and said the state must reduce the number of signatures required for its measure to go on the ballot.

The Oregon Department of Justice on Wednesday filed an appeal in that case. It's asked the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for a stay blocking the District Court's order from going into effect.

The two cases make similar claims, but are a little different.

People Not Politicians involves a statewide measure. Petitioners, in that case, want to create an independent commission to oversee the drawing of state legislative and congressional district boundaries. Those boundaries are currently drawn by the state Legislature, which People Not Politicians said can lead to gerrymandering to favor incumbents at the voters' expense.

If it holds up on appeal, Monday's court decision would essentially assure People Not Politicians a spot on the November ballot, as the new court-mandated signature requirement is lower than the 64,172 they've already collected. The signatures still have to be verified, but the deadline has also been extended so they have time to replace any that aren't valid.

Move Oregon's Border (also known as Greater Idaho) on the

other hand, is a proposal to move Eastern and Southern Oregon counties out from under the state of Oregon and join them to Idaho instead. It's a movement born of frustration with a Legislature perceived by some conservatives as too liberal and indifferent to rural concerns.

Making such a significant border change would ultimately require the approval of both states' legislatures and Congress.

Before the group brings in the lawmakers, Move Oregon's Border wants to gauge the opinion of voters in the 17 counties about whether they would like to switch states.

So rather than a statewide ballot measure, they want 17 separate countywide measures. That means a similar but slightly different set of requirements is in play, and the county clerk of each of the counties is named as a defendant.

The number of signatures required to get on each ballot varies from county to county and is based on a percentage of the number who voted in the last gubernatorial election.

For Douglas County, the minimum is 2,955, and McCarter said Tuesday his group has only been able to collect 65% of those signatures so far, with a deadline of Aug. 5 looming.

In other counties, he said, it's been even harder.

"By far, Douglas County has exceeded just about every other county as far as collecting signatures. It is amazing," he said. McCarter said the idea was gathering momentum in February and March before COVID-19 hit.

He said he still has fond feelings for Roseburg from a well-attended March 7 rally here for Move Oregon's Border.

"I knew we were talking about freedom, I knew we were

talking about conservative values, but the word that came up out of the rally that I had not even thought about was hope, and people mentioned that to me. This is a hope movement that maybe we can get something changed," he said.

But five days after that rally, the governor banned large gatherings. Even collecting signatures one-on-one was made difficult by subsequent mandates to stay at home and to maintain 6 feet of distance from others.

"Who could have anticipated something like this happening?" McCarter said.

Despite the difficulties and the court challenge, McCarter said volunteers are continuing to gather some signatures. If they don't make it on the county ballots this time, they'll aim for 2022.

"It's a little rough, but we'll keep working at it," he said.

Firefighters quickly knock down grass fires

By Jeff Duewel
of the Daily Courier

Firefighters jumped on a grass fire shortly after noon Wednesday on Leaning Pine Lane off of Monument Drive in the North Valley, and kept it to a quarter-acre.

Flames were climbing the walls of two sheds when firefighters arrived, and the main house was inches from flames, Rural/Metro Fire said. But the fire was quickly knocked down,

and wildland firefighters with the Oregon Department of Forestry minimized the spread to grass, brush and trees.

A cause wasn't determined. Rick Vetter, fire chief at Williams Fire District, said a grass fire started by a riding mower burned 1 acre on Panther Gulch Road at 1 p.m. Wednesday.

The fire burned mostly grass, and a long driveway served as a fire break, Vetter said. The man doing the mowing wasn't out of

the time frame allowed for mowing, Vetter said, though the rules change Friday, requiring a shutdown of power-driven machinery by 10 a.m.

Illinois Valley Fire District put out a 10-by-10-foot fire near Finch Road and Redwood Highway in Kerby just before 9 a.m. Wednesday. The cause is under investigation.

A fire that broke out late Tuesday night 3 miles west of Sunny Valley was in mopup

stage by Wednesday afternoon, according to ODF.

The fire, called the Steam Beer Mine Fire, started near railroad tracks and burned about 2 acres, said Brian Ballou of ODF.

Ballou said there is evidence of people congregating near the fire origin, but an official cause hasn't been determined.

ODF had two-10 person crews and four engine crews, with assistance from Rural/Metro and Wolf Creek fire departments.



ELAYNA YUSSEN/Daily Courier

Steven Cossin (left) and Billy Hogan of True South Solar install solar panels Wednesday on the roof of the Boys & Girls Club. Grants from Pacific Power and Energy Trust of Oregon helped pay for the project.

Solar From 1A

time, at a station set up at the Boys & Girls Club's public entrance.

Funding for the project primarily came from Pacific Power's Blue Sky program, a voluntary program that gives Pacific Power customers an opportunity to support renewable energy in the region.

"It's a great way to support local community projects," said Christina Kruger, with Pacific Power. "Everyone is interested and invested and working

together."

Since its inception in 2000, Blue Sky has supported 110 renewable energy projects and helped restore 90 native fish habitat projects, she said.

Locally, the Blue Sky program awarded grants for the installation of solar panels at the Josephine County Fairgrounds in 2010, at Greenleaf Industries in 2014, at the Josephine County Food Bank in 2015, and at Pacifica in Williams in 2018.

Funding for the Boys & Girls Club project also came from the Energy Trust of Oregon, an independent nonprofit organiza-

tion that helps utility customers benefit from saving energy and generating renewable power.

The Boys & Girls Club applied for the Blue Sky grant about a year ago. Contractors with True South Solar based in Ashland started the installation about three weeks ago and completed it Wednesday.

"Now they just need to hook it up and we're ready to go," Roe said.

The total cost of the project was \$116,046 — \$92,837 from the Blue Sky program, \$11,041 from the Energy Trust, and a buy-in of \$12,168 from the Boys & Girls Club.

"This is the biggest capital project we've had since we built the club itself," Roe said. "But we're so excited about it."

The Grants Pass club marks its 50th anniversary this year. Because of coronavirus restrictions, plans for an anniversary party, not to mention the club's major annual fundraisers, have all been put on hold.

"This is the one ray of sunshine in the whole miserable year," Roe said. "We finally have something to celebrate."

Reach reporter Kathleen Alaks at 541-474-3815 or kalaks@thedailycourier.com.

Bear From 1A

25,000 and 30,000 black bears in Oregon. The lower Rogue drainage is some of the best bear habitat in the state.

There is plenty of support for keeping it a sanctuary of sorts, based on the response to a "listening session" sponsored by the agency Tuesday night.

Niemela said the majority of calls were against expanding hunting.

Ann Villeisis of Port Orford, a Rogue River rafter and member of Kalmiopsis Audubon Society, called in to find out the details.

"I wanted to find out what other things they've done first," she said Wednesday. "I'd like to see them take non-lethal means first. There might be better ways they can manage it. I'm not really against hunting in general, but problem bears usually has to do with improper food storage. The first step is trying to manage people."

The Forest Service has had a handful of areas surrounded by electric fences at some campsites, including Brushy Bar.

Niemela said they're effective, but not everyone uses them.

Save Predators Now, a

wildlife advocacy group, also blamed humans for not properly storing food.

"Bears are not the problem. Humans are," the group said in a social media post. "Killing bears is not the answer. Changing human behavior is."

Save Predators Now also said shooting bears along the river from boats would be like "shooting fish in a barrel."

According to Niemela, hunting is allowed out of boats in Oregon as long as they are not under power, but that his agency is conferring with the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management on what rules would apply along the

river should the expanded hunting be enacted.

Niemela added that it's not a large addition to the area where hunting is allowed, and hunters may not want to take the extreme challenge of rafting and hunting in November and December, or the long hike.

"We're going to have some bear hunters, but I don't expect a ton of hunters to take advantage of it," he said. "Hopefully we'll have some bears harvested. Hopefully they're the ones most habituated to people."

Reach reporter Jeff Duewel at 541-474-3720 or jduewel@thedailycourier.com.

Briefly

Merlin Park District to hold budget meeting

MERLIN — The Merlin Park District will hold a special meeting at 6 p.m. Monday to address the 2020-21 budget.

The meeting is at the Merlin Community Center, 109 Acorn St. For more information, contact Jan Slusser, 541-660-2364.

Sprayground to open Friday at Riverside Park

Starting Friday, the sprayground at Riverside Park will open for all to enjoy. The opening was announced Wednesday at the tail end of a meeting of the Grants Pass City Council.

The sprayground, also known as a splash pad, has been closed over concerns about maintaining social distancing and polluting the Rogue River with disinfectant.

Bradley Clark, the city's interim planning director, told the council Wednesday that the city has figured out how to

address those concerns. No further details on the opening were available this morning.

City officials have previously said a sprayground at Morrison Centennial Park could be opened as well.

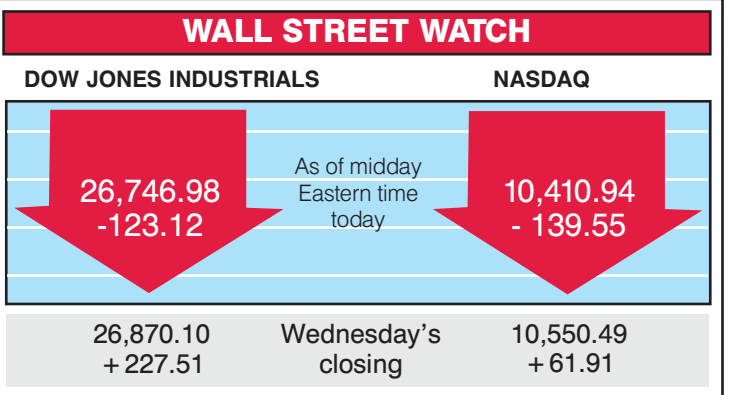
Man dies after dispute with neighbor over \$10

PORTLAND — A 67-year-old Portland man has died after being hit in the head with a pistol by a neighbor who was mad the man had called him "cheap," according to authorities and court documents.

Damian Lucas, 36, is charged with second-degree murder in the death of Jeffrey Sloan, the Portland Police Bureau said Wednesday.

According to court papers, Lucas was at Sloan's house on July 2 to repay a \$10 debt but only had a \$20 bill. When Lucas asked for change, Sloan joked that he shouldn't be cheap, according to a probable cause affidavit.

— Associated Press



New York Exchange

NEW YORK (AP) —	CocaCola	46.56	+16	HeclaM	4.33	-09	Pfizer	35.49	-24
Today's noon New York	ColgPalm	74.48	-21	Hess	49.08	+42	ProctGam	124.08	-42
Stock Exchange selected	ConocoPhil	42.01	+39	HonWillint	153.22	+1.29	RockwAut	223.09	+1.05
prices:	ConEd	71.83	+32	Idacorp	90.40	+35	SempraEn	122.75	-40
Stock	CurtisWrt	93.03	+2.52	IBM	124.42	+1.42	SouthnCo	53.66	+64
AT&T Inc	Deere	174.78	+2.39	InfPap	37.54	+1.24	Tegna	11.64	+13
AerogelTR	Disney	118.99	-1.91	JohnJin	147.15	-1.11	Textron	33.97	+31
Altria	Dupont	55.15	+29	Loews	36.68	+63	TM Co	160.54	+1.21
Altria	Eaton	94.47	+1.07	LaPac	29.21	+44	Timken	48.24	+30
AEP	EdisonInt	56.46	+1.18	MDU Res	21.91	+33	TriContl	25.42	-03
AplInlGrp	ExxonMbl	44.73	+10	McDnld	191.07	-70	UnionPac	177.83	+3.44
BP PLC	FMC Corp	107.44	-44	McKesson	154.91	+1.41	Unisys	11.30	+12
BkofAm	FootLockr	29.16	+01	Merck	79.16	-28	USSteel	8.18	+13
BarrickGld	FordM	6.87	+13	NCR Corp	18.08	+04	VarianMed	127.02	+85
Boeing	GenDynam	147.24	+1.45	NorfolkS	185.38	+4.10	VerizonCm	55.35	+2.29
BrMySq	GenElec	7.18	+04	NorthropG	302.02	+1.26	ViaaCorp	17.17	+11
Brunswick	GenMils	65.10	+50	OcciPet	17.33	+15	WallMart	131.74	-26
Caterpillar	GenMotors	27.12	+24	Olin	12.47	-11	WellsFargo	26.03	+68
Chelipor	HP Inc	17.89	+10	PG&E Cp	9.12	-08			
Citigroup	Hallbrtn	13.34	+34						

Commodities

Gold

Lead - \$1839.50 metric ton, London Metal Exch.
Zinc - \$0.9922 per lb., London Metal Exch.
Silver - \$19.313 Handy & Harman
Silver - \$19.685 troy oz., NY Merc spot
Platinum - \$835.00 Handy & Harman
Platinum - \$835.00 troy oz., NY Merc spot n.q. - not quoted n.a. - not available

Lumber

Chicago Mercantile
LUMBER 110,000 bd. ft. \$ per 1,000 bd. ft.
Open High Low Settle Chg.
Sep 20 508.0 520.0 508.0 520.0 +14.8
Nov 20 481.0 491.2 481.0 490.0 +8.8
Jan 21 480.0 480.0 474.1 476.1 +9.2
Mar 21 452.0 452.0 452.0 452.0 +11.2
May 21 430.0 430.0 430.0 430.0 +11.8
Est. sales 348 Wed/ sales 621

Metals

NEW YORK (AP) - Spot nonferrous metal prices today.
Aluminum - \$0.7439 per lb., London Metal Exch.
Copper - \$2.8705 (pound) NY Merc spot

Northwest Stocks

PORTLAND (AP) — Closing quotations Wednesday from the National Association of Security Dealers. They do not include markup, markdown or commissions.				
Name	High	Low	Last Change	Ratio
Banner Cp	37.22	36.22	37.04	+28 +8
ColBng	29.54	29.12	29.08	+19 +6
Costco	327.90	324.23	324.89	+1.81 +6
FLIR Sys	43.06	42.12	42.95	+59 +1.4
Intel	59.11	58.40	58.96	-07 -1
Keycorp	12.23	11.72	12.22	+23 +1.9
Kroger	34.31	33.81	33.97	+20 +6
LithiaMot	176.35	170.78	173.72	-1.28 -7
Microsoft	205.70	202.31	203.83	-4.21 -2.0
NikeB	98.23	97.36	97.43	-1.11 -1.1
Nordstrm	16.24	15.61	16.16	+05 +3
OraSure	14.89	14.40	14.77	+07 +5
Umqua	10.99	10.56	10.88	+08 +6
US Bancrp	38.47	37.02	38.36	+72 +1.9
WellsFargo	26.09	24.82	26.03	+68 +2.7
Weyerhsr	25.48	24.47	25.38	+32 +1.3

LOW VOLTAGE LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

Enhance the Exterior of your Home with Lighting

Benefits include...

- Security and safety
- Beautifies and expands the use of your yard after dark
- Showcases the architecture of your property
- Adds value and enjoyment
- Easy to install for Do-It-Yourselfers

Bring us photos and drawings of your property and our Lighting Consultants will help you find your home's hidden potential!

WE LOVE LIGHTING, AND SO WILL YOU!

1001 Rogue River Hwy, Grants Pass, OR
(541) 476-6638 | GroverElectric.com

ELECTRICAL PLUMBING LIGHTING IRRIGATION