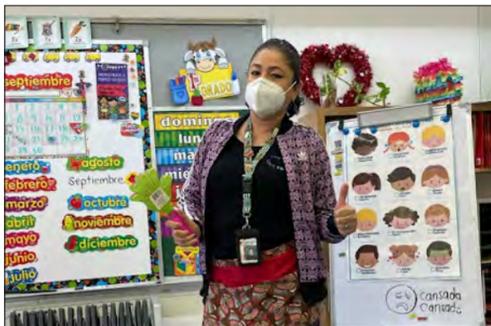


INDEX

Classifieds	B8-9
History	B7
Kidscoop	B1
Obituaries	A7
Opinion	A4-6
Police Reports	B6
Public Notices	B10-11
Senior Living	B5
Sports	A10-15
Thru the Eyes of an Elder	B14
What's Happening	B6

Weather
Mid-60's throughout the week.
Showers expected Tuesday.



Educator spotlight — Making learning fun, in English and Spanish

Gorge Local — In Business: Picture This Frame and Print — B4

COVID and The Arts — B1

Senior News with Scott McKay — B5

Columbia Gorge News

HOOD RIVER | THE DALLES | WHITE SALMON

Wednesday, October 6, 2021 Volume 2, Issue 27

\$1.00



Pig Bowl 2021

Senior Trooper Michael Holloran of Oregon State Police, above, works the crowd at the Pig Bowl Saturday, Oct. 2, at the Wahtonka Campus of The Dalles High School. Holloran led law enforcement participation in the event with 17 years of Pig Bowl history. Sparky the Fire Dog pats Evie Foster, 3, on the cheek along the sidelines of Saturday's Pig Bowl game. She was attending with her sister Gracie Foster and mom Karlie Foster. The final score gave the victory to Oregon, who racked up 3,342 points versus Washington's 3,185 points. Mark B. Gibson photos



City of The Dalles considers water agreement with Google

By Alana Lackner
Columbia Gorge News

The Dalles City Council reviewed a potential water agreement with Google, also called Design LLC, at their regular meeting on Monday, Sept. 27.

According to Mayor Rich Mays, there are two ongoing potential agreements with Google, both which will come up again in more depth at a future council meeting. The first is the Strategic Investment Program for development of Google properties, which will ultimately be decided on by the Wasco County Commissioners.

The second agreement, which was the main subject of the Sept. 27 meeting, is a water agreement between Google and the city.

Both agreements come as Google pursues the development of a new data center on the old aluminum smelter site.

Because the city's current Water System Master Plan is 15 years old, it did not anticipate the type of development that would take place on the smelter site, according to a staff report written by Public Works Director Dave Anderson.

Because of this, the city had three different analyses performed in regard to city water usage, in order to

determine the viability of Google's requests as well as to understand the city's water needs.

The first and most directly related study, conducted by environmental consultant GSI Water Solutions, found that the city's current water system capacity is 9.9 million gallons per day, according to the report. The study also found that if the city were to fully build out to the Urban Growth Boundary and reach its ultimate limits, its water demand would be 17.5 million gallons per day.

In order to make it so the city would be able to meet that demand someday, GSI's report proposed

a three-pronged plan to address potential water shortages. First, the city would need to develop all existing groundwater sources. Because the city is in a "critical groundwater area" no brand new rights to water can be acquired. However, there are 5 million gallons of undeveloped rights currently in The Dalles, Anderson said.

The second prong would be acquiring the water rights to the wells located on the aluminum smelter site, which are currently owned by Google. The rights from Google would be worth 3.8 million gallons

See **WATER**, page 8



SDS Lumber Company in Bingen, above, has announced plans to sell to three organizations — Twin Creeks Timber, The Conservation Fund and Wilkins, Kaiser & Olsen, Inc. (WKO). Kirby Neumann-Rea photo/file

SDS sale plans announced

By Jacob Bertram
Columbia Gorge News

Three organizations have agreed to acquire SDS Lumber Company's expansive timber and lumber operations, following a year-long search for new ownership.

The consortium of organizations — including Seattle-based Twin Creeks Timber, LLC, The Conservation Fund, and Carson, Washington-based Wilkins, Kaiser & Olsen, Inc. (WKO) — announced they will take over joint ownership of the timberlands and related timber and lumber operations.

The acquisition will close by the end of the year, the announcement said.

"We are pleased to reach an agreement with this group of organizations. Each of these entities brings deep expertise. Under their ownership and leadership there will be ongoing positive economic and environmental impacts for Bingen, the Gorge and the entire Northwest," said Jeff Webber, president for SDS Lumber Companies.

Included in the transaction are the lumber and plywood mills, associated assets in Bingen, and more than 96,000 acres of timberlands with environmental and community importance near the Columbia River in Washington and Oregon.

See **SDS**, page 8

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School district safety protocols include Gorge-wide partnerships

By Trisha Walker
Columbia Gorge News

Hood River County School District Human Resources Director Catherine Dalbey presented district safety protocols to board members at the Sept. 22 meeting.

"We say in the district that safety is our top priority, and we want to make sure that kids and staff are safe, and that ensures smooth operations so that kids can focus on their learning," Dalbey said. "During a global pandemic, there's heightened awareness of safety, so I think it's important that you all understand our processes and procedures in the district."

The district follows rules as outlined by the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), as well as Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry. "Those are guideposts for us as a district, to make sure that we're in compliance with those statewide rules," Dalbey said.

On a local level, the district follows policy and procedure set by the school board, the district's employee handbook, and annual mandatory trainings, such as reporting of suspected child abuse and bloodborne pathogens. Each district site also has a safety committee (required by federal and state law), with monthly meetings that include school-wide staff representation.

Dalbey outlined the use of standardized emergency response protocol developed by the "I Love You Guys" foundation — one of its founders lost a child in a school violence incident in Colorado.

"In that situation, they found that there was law enforcement responders from all over the state and no one was really on the same page," she said. "Each agency had



Catherine Dalbey

their own rules of engagement, but not everyone knew exactly what each other were doing, so from that was born the standard response protocol."

The protocol has five action steps

— Hold (clear the halls and remain in a room or area until an all clear is announced, the most common action); Secure (an event happening outside of the school; return to the building and lock outside doors); Lockdown (a threat inside the school; classroom doors are locked, lights are out and silence is maintained, with adults preparing to evade or defend. Lockdown drills are required by Oregon statute to be held at least twice a year); Evacuate (such as a fire); and Shelter (hazard and safety strategy).

"What I've learned from law enforcement is they say, 'You do as you drill,' so we make sure kids and staff are familiar with how to handle an emergency situation by rehearsing and practicing that," she said. Protocols are used throughout the Gorge and include multiple state and local agencies, including police, fire and dispatch.

Dalbey additionally outlined COVID-19 protocols, such as screening for symptoms prior to entering a building. Those who test positive must isolate, with close contacts to a positive case quarantining for 14 days unless they are fully vaccinated and do not have any symptoms or were at least 3-feet apart in the classroom, wearing a well-fitting face covering and not having symptoms. Virtual learning is provided for students who are quarantining.

The district has signed up to

participate in Oregon's COVID-19 testing program for K-12 schools, a voluntary, free screening program for unvaccinated students and staff; a third-party mails weekly test kits to families, with weekly results provided.

She also touched on the K-12 vaccine mandate, Oregon Administrative Rule 333-019-1030,

which states that on or before Oct. 18, teachers, school staff and volunteers must provide proof of vaccination to show they are fully vaccinated, or documentation of a medical or religious exception. Schools granting an exception must take reasonable steps to

See **SAFETY**, page 9

The Dalles district implements voluntary on-site COVID testing

By Kelsie Cowart
Columbia Gorge News

THE DALLES — In the Sept. 23 school board meeting, Superintendent Carolyn Bernal announced that starting the week of Oct. 4, District 21 is initiating an opt-in, on-site rapid COVID testing program for students as an additional mitigation measure against the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

In an effort to keep cases to a minimum, Bernal reported parents can voluntarily opt-in to the program, which will allow for their child to take the self-administered Abbott BinaxNow COVID-19 rapid test, consisting of a shallow nasal swab, should the student develop new symptoms during the school day or following a potential

school-group exposure when testing is recommended by the local public health department. She confirmed that parents will be notified if their student is being tested, and results will only take 15 minutes to receive.

Bernal also announced the district is implementing a COVID-19 dashboard, which became available on the North Wasco County School District website on Sept. 27, displaying up-to-date COVID-19 information within the school district.

Updated every week, family and members of the community can visit the page to view current District 21 COVID-19 information, such as the number of positive cases for students and staff, reported in total as well as broken down by school.

See **TESTING**, page 8