

Curry County

We Love It Here



CURRY COASTAL  PILOT

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Curry County
We Love It Here

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CURRY
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Curry County – We Love it Here

This edition of the 2020 Curry County WE LOVE IT HERE represents just a sample of the growing and vibrant communities and individuals within our county.

The stories outline the passion and commitment each has invested in their individual journey and in our county as a whole. The strength of our county lies in its people, our business growth, local resources and Curry County's natural beauty.

At the Curry Coastal Pilot, we continue to accelerate our partnerships through multiple platforms and products with local businesses to help strengthen their growth and sustainability for the betterment of our beloved county.

If you aren't a subscriber yet, we encourage you to visit our website. Follow our social media pages for the latest insightful local and community news. Our searchable E-editions, included free with each subscription, allow you to reference a past community article or other topic you have read. Our websites offer daily news and information to keep you informed about what is happening throughout Curry County.

We encourage you to explore all that Curry County has to offer and to support our local businesses.

Curry Coastal Pilot

Your County – Your Community – Your Newspaper

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5 Fun Things To Do on the Southern Oregon Coast

These are just a few of the hidden gems you will find tucked away on the southern Oregon coast. At **RE/MAX Coast and Country** we are proud of our vibrant community and love to show it off. Stop by one of our offices, addresses listed below, to pick up useful maps and brochures on things to do, nearby beaches and good local eats. Buying or selling real estate? Speak with one of our expert licensed agents today!



1 **Port of Brookings-Harbor** is the perfect place to spend the day, a weekend, or a lifetime! There are so many adventures waiting to happen within steps of each other. World-class fishing tours, walks on the beach, paddle-boarding from the river to the ocean and back, bike riding, enjoying home-made fudge & ice cream on the boardwalk and more. There really is something for everyone and every flavor with 13 restaurants within a half mile!



2 Discover local artists during the **Downtown Brookings Second Saturday Art Walk**, from April through December this event takes place at art venues within two blocks of U.S. 101 between Alder and Fifth streets. Stroll through the quaint streets and enjoy art, interviews, music, and food. Find unique offerings at venues on the Art Walk including Brian Scott, Semi Aquatic Gallery, and Wright's Fog & Fine Art Gallery.



3 Experience the Wild & Scenic Rogue River with **Jerry's Rogue Jet Boats** located in Gold Beach. Great family fun that is safe for all ages! These trips are a blend of rugged scenery, abundant wildlife, Pacific coastal estuary, personalized commentary, and adventurous whitewater jet boating. No other trips can compare to the lower Rogue's Scenic beauty, abundant wildlife, and pristine wilderness.



4 **Salmon Run Golf Course** is located behind the coastal mountains, and only 3.5 miles from downtown Brookings. With four sets of tees that stretch from 4,129 yards to over 6,000 yards, Salmon Run offers a course for every skill level in a setting that you will never forget. A restaurant, a full-service bar, pro-shop, and excellent PGA teaching staff are ready to make your golfing experience even more enjoyable.



5 **South Coast Tours** provides breathtaking kayak tours through the world renown sea stack formations that dot the coastline along the Samuel H. Boardman Scenic Corridor between Gold Beach and Brookings. Go fishing, wildlife viewing or just simply enjoy the experience of gliding across the waterways of the banana belt coast of Oregon.



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A BLESSED CURRY COUNTY LIFE...

By Court Boice



Court Boice
Curry County Commissioner.
(Contributed photo)

I was fortunate to have been born in Gold Beach, Curry County, Oregon. In May of 1971, when I was a junior in high school, I surprisingly won a scholarship to spend a week with southern Oregon Congressman John Dellenback and his family in Washington, D.C. It was a tremendous experience that eventually shaped my political career.

The following May 1972, my draft number was quite close to matching the dreaded calling to serve in Vietnam. Of course in my family there was no discussion. "You're going to serve your country." I barely missed a tour to that country! Another huge blessing came just two months later when on July 1, then President Nixon abolished the U.S. draft. Soon after, he ended that war. I had many friends that went to that frightening part of the world in my stead. I genuinely feel no one owes as much as me. Because of their sacrifices, I appreciate my Curry homestead as much or more than anyone.

Fast forward to May of 1973, I piloted my first commercial Whitewater Jet Boat Tour to Blossom Bar on the Rogue River, which led to my lifelong career and passion with jet boats on the river. Ultimately, I had the good fortune, then as part owner of Jerry's Jet Boats, to record with the U.S.

Coast Guard more than 8,000 trips into the Rogue River Wilderness. I think of those mornings as I occasionally pass under the famous Patterson Bridge some 48 years later.

My grandfather Allen Boice, Sr., as a Curry County Commissioner

actually dedicated the Rogue bridge in 1932 during his third of 18 years of total service. After Pearl Harbor, from Dec. 8-11, 1941, with their deer rifles, my grandfather, along with the other two Commissioners and the Sheriff each took 12 hours shifts, one in each of the end towers to guard the Rogue River Bay in



Allen Boice, Jr., the famous Rogue River Sheriff, whitewater river pioneer Glenn Wooldridge, and Court Boice in 1985. Contributed photo.

BUILT FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

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case the Japanese decided to send in a submarine. It was war! My family has had a long history of service to our community and to our country, and I hold those same values.

The Rogue River is considered one of the top eight most special rivers in the U.S., so noted and designated in 1968 as a gem of the original list of eight Wild and Scenic Rivers in America. The Rogue is renowned for its rafting, history, beauty, fishing, adventure and jet boating amongst rivers found anywhere in the country. Those who call this place home are quick to remind our visitors; however, it's not a conclusive list because many rivers in Curry County are magnificent.

The Rogue, however, is the powerful leader of our great Wild Rivers Coast. As told in the book "Undaunted Courage II," written by Stephen Ambrose, when Jedediah Smith came through this region to explore 20 years after the great Lewis and Clark Expedition, he was almost magically struck by the

incredible giant forests, greatest air, spectacular watersheds, most pristine rivers and unmatched salmon and steelhead runs. I am every bit as awestruck that I live in such a beautiful place.

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and Kalmiopsis Wilderness are recognized as the most diverse, most unique, most wild and special landscapes in all of North America! Our spectacular and rugged Pacific coastline is geographically the most Western part of the continental U.S. and likewise the most remote.

In the 1980s, I received a very symbolic message from one of the greatest river pilots on our Wild Rivers Coast collection of great rivers. I had the opportunity to spend time with and learn from the great whitewater river pioneer Glenn Wooldridge, who famously made the first ever successful downriver float of the Rogue in 1915, taking eight full days to travel from Grants Pass all the way to the Pacific Ocean at Gold Beach. In 1947, Wooldridge

made the first-ever upstream run by power boat in the opposite direction. He ultimately made almost 800 float trips downstream from Grants Pass to Gold Beach (with the flow) and eight upriver trips from Gold Beach to Grants Pass (against the flow)

I had the honor of boating Glenn on my whitewater passenger boat for a most special third time, in August 1985, and only one day after his 89th birthday. That morning, we left our Lodge at Paradise Bar within the Rogue River Wilderness after celebrating his special day the night before. The lodge has no road access and is where I raised my three sons. The river pioneer waved farewell to my staff, family and father, Allen Boice, Jr., the famous River Rogue Sheriff.

At the end of Glenn's last-ever Rogue River adventure, we set his fragile frame off my big three-engine boat and guided him gently down to the shoreline. He paused, looking at me and then glanced to the CBS Charles Kuralt film crew

that accompanied us, then back to me again. He paused before saying, "Court, you know there have been many wonderful tributaries in my intriguing and enjoyable river of life - those people who helped greatly along the way." He paused again, "Now I want you to go out and always be the best tributary you can be to many. Thank you for taking me on my precious Rogue today." Slowly, Glenn waved a proud "Good-Bye" and walked on his own up to more friends waiting. He passed peacefully just 23 days later.

Needless to say, Glenn left a fabulous legacy! No question, he would have told you rather directly - there's no better place than southern Oregon to call home. As one of his proud "tributaries," I couldn't agree more. I love this place and the people who connect so graciously with what we all share here. I try never to take our fabulous area and my home for granted. As a Curry Commissioner, I do my best to meet that wonderful Glenn Wooldridge challenge and pass it on.



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Cranberry Fields, For ever

By Linda Pinkham, Staff Writer



The cranberries are lassoed with handmade, wooden booms, then pushed toward a conveyor belt that loads them into a truck. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

In nearly total darkness, two points of light illuminate a large white transport truck, while the chuffing sound of a conveyor belt fills the nighttime quiet. They are harvesting at Cape Blanco Cranberries, just north of Port Orford.

The two men have been out in the flooded cranberry bed since 4:30 a.m. The bed is under water up to their knees, from when the floodgates were opened from the terraced bed just above, that had been harvested days before. The berries have floated to the top

after being gently persuaded to let go of their vines with a harrow designed for cranberries that is attached to a tractor. The harrow is gentler than the beaters used in some cranberry fields.

The truck is parked at the downwind side of the pond because the wind helps to gather the cranberries, since they float once they have come loose. The berries are rounded up using a series of hinged, handmade wooden booms arranged in a loop that lassoes the berries. The L-shaped booms are designed to float on the water, while providing an edge to gently push the berries toward the conveyor belt. One man in waders wields a hand-pushed boom on the water like one would use a push broom to guide them more quickly to the conveyor belt, and then tightens the circle of booms to keep the berries in a tight formation.

The other man keeps track of the loading of the berries into the truck, moving the truck back as needed. The rest of the time, he's shoveling the leaves that have dropped, using a funny-shaped leaf rake. Cranberries drop

about 20% of their leaves each year, but keep the remainder of their leaves year-round. The discarded leaves are removed to maintain the health of the field.

Once the first truck of the day was filled, it headed to the company's processing plant, which is just south of Bandon. The berries are then sanitized with a water, hydrogen peroxide and vinegar solution; color sorted by machine; dried and then rolled onto an inspection table for hand sorting before being packaged in 12 oz. plastic clamshells and refrigerated. The time from field to shipment all happens within a day.

Ron and Mary Puhl, the owners Cape Blanco Cranberries have been in the business since 1990 when they began building their farm. When the pair moved here, shortly after getting married, they wanted to stay and were hunting for things they could do to make a living. Ron started out as a commercial fisherman, and for a while the two ran sheep on some of their property.



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"We realized that this property that had been in my family for a long time was basically being unused," Mary Puhl said. "It was covered in gorse and brush, but it was the right type of soil for growing cranberries."

The soil is Blacklock clay loam. Curry County's soil survey describes Blacklock soils as "nearly level to gently sloping, dark-colored soils that are poorly drained.... A few small areas are used intensively for cranberries or are seeded to pasture." The only areas of Blacklock clay loam soil mapped in Curry County are located in tracts that extend from north of Port Orford to Langlois.

"There hadn't been a price drop in cranberries for a good 20 years, so we thought that was a really stable industry," Puhl said. They had someone teach them how to grow cranberries, and began constructing their beds, which are slightly crowned like football fields so they stay drained in the center. With a few exceptions for pest and weed

control, the only time the fields are flooded is during harvest. The beds are terraced so that water from their rainwater catchment reservoirs can be reused.

"Our cranberries are not grown in actual bog lands," Puhl said. "They grow in what are technically upland fields that we call beds. 'Bogs' has a connotation that wetlands are being used for the cranberries, which is not the case. When the beds are constructed, the land is leveled, dikes are built and the bed is sealed with a layer of clay to hold water during harvest, then a layer of sand or fine gravel is placed on top of that. The vines grow in the sand/gravel layer."

The Puhls currently have 78 acres in production, and grow Stevens, Demoranville, Gryglesi, Sundance, Haines, Pilgrim and HyRed varieties. They chose those varieties based on berry size, color of the berry and their keeping quality.

"Cranberries are perennial plants," Puhl said. "In some

places, there are 100-year-old beds. They're basically like a vineyard once you plant them. They are a low-lying vine that grows along the ground. As long as you take care of them properly, they will survive. During the summer season, the plants are watered with sprinklers every other day.

Cranberries like a moist climate, which is one reason they do well on the Oregon coast. Because of the longer growing season,

the berries develop to a desirable deep red color and can be harvested through mid-December. Most cranberry growers are done with harvest by mid-October because of freezing temperatures and snow.

The farm has 6 full-time employees and an additional 12 during harvest, Mary Puhl said. Their annual harvest is about a million pounds. The vines are pruned in January, weeds re-

(continued on page 8)



The harvest goes pretty quickly with a crew of two. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

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(continued from page 7)

moved in February, and frost control begins in March. During June and July, fertilizer is applied. In September, frost control begins if needed. Harvest begins in October.

The Puhl family eats cranberries several times a month, and their favorite ways to eat them are cooked cranberry sauce or ground cranber-

ries mixed with ground apples and oranges for a fresh uncooked sauce on turkey sandwiches. Locally, their cranberries are available through OtterBee's Market.

Probably one of the more surprising visits to their cranberry farm was when it was featured on Mike Rowe's TV show, "Dirty Jobs: Cranberry Farmer" in 2008.

Puhl said to the producer, "This isn't a dirty job. Why are you interested?" The producer had been in the area and thought people would like to see the process. Repeats of the episode usually occur about this time of year, Puhl noted.

For cranberry recipes and information about health benefits, visit capeblancocranberries.com.



The cranberries are gently guided to the conveyor belt that loads them into the truck. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

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This year's Curry County - We Love it Here

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

By Brent Bischoff



Brent Bischoff
Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative
GM/CEO

This quote from the late American author Coretta Scott King, reflects the special connection and concern Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative has for the community we serve. As active members of Curry

County, we want to do our part to ensure the region continues to prosper - because just like you, we live here too.

Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative has been providing quality electric service throughout Curry County for nearly 80 years. Recognizing the impact this plays on our community's quality of life, we strive to meet the present and future needs of our community.

Our mission is to provide our members with the safe, dependable, and affordable energy that powers their lives. It is our vision to inspire rural prosperity and enhance our members' lives. This effort to benefit the overall community is central to the way we operate

as a cooperative. In working for a better tomorrow, Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative is taking on the challenge to make best-quality fiber broadband available to our entire membership.

Beacon Broadband, a newly formed subsidiary of Coos-Curry Electric, intends to illuminate the way to a better future in our communities. Our plan to build a new and innovative fiber-to-the-premises network will close the digital divide between our rural Curry County and urban America. Reliable, high-quality internet service provides essential access to education, economic vitality, telehealth, work-from-home and other opportunities critical to Curry County's ability to thrive.

As a local community-owned cooperative, we are also proud to sponsor programs that assist and empower our members. Our participation in community-focused local charitable projects and giving programs have helped feed and clothed families, assisted those who need to keep the lights on, supported our youth and so much more. We could not do this without the support of our members. Thank you!

The future is bright as we work together to drive rural prosperity right here at home. Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative is proud to be part of the Curry County community!



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DAY 1

Do any one of these items in a Day:

- Jerry's Rogue Jets! Celebrate 50 years of the ORIGINAL Wild River-the Rogue, on the one-of-a-kind Jerry's Rogue Jets. Jerry's is the only river trip authorized to take you into the Wild and Scenic Rogue Wilderness!
- Beachcombing
- Tidepooling
- Crabbing
- Prehistoric Gardens!
- Agate or sand dollar hunting on the beach
- Guided fishing trip on the Rogue River or the Pacific
- Visit the Curry County Veterans Memorial
- Explore the Port of Gold Beach and see the sunken 1880 ship the Mary D. Hume and visit Jerry's Museum
- Search for glass floats February-April
- Rock painting - get Gold Beach Rocks paint kit at local businesses
- Hike! 2 easy, short hikes near the Rogue River: The Myrtlewood Trail (largest Myrtlewood Tree in Oregon!) and the Shrader Old Growth Trail
- Visit the Curry County Historic Museum
- Visit historic Indian Creek Fish Hatchery



DAY 2

Any of Day One Plus:

- Head to Cape Blanco Lighthouse -furthest point west on the Oregon Coast!
- Ride the state designated Wild Rivers Coast Scenic Bikeway & visit the Elk River fish hatchery on the way
- Visit historic Hughes House on the way to the lighthouse
- Visit Arch Rock Brewery
- Head south for a great drive through the Redwoods
- More hiking! River or coastal-check out the trails at our Visitor Center



DAY 3

Any of Day One and Two Plus:

- Visit the community of Agness on the Scenic portion of the Wild Rogue River and have lunch at any of three upriver lodges—you can even stay the night!
- South Coast Tours Whitewater rafting, kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding tours



DAY 4

Any of Day One, Two, and Three Plus:

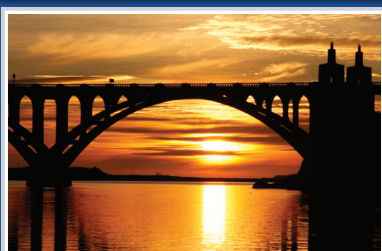
- Drive north and visit the West Coast Game Park
- Golf Bandon Dunes
- Golf Cedar Bend
- Golf Salmon Run



DAY 5

Five Days or More:

- **Do it all!**



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David Marshall
Superintendent,
Brookings- Harbor
School District

It has been a lifelong dream of my wife and I to live at the coast. When the opportunity to be superintendent at the Brookings-Harbor School District came up, it seemed as though the stars had aligned. Even in the midst of a pandemic, the families and community have been warm and welcoming. The natural beauty of this part of the Oregon Coast is outstanding. While I'm sure that just about everyone on the Oregon Coast would argue that their part of the coast is the most beautiful, the southern coast does stand out with beautiful beaches, dramatic sea cliffs and lush forests.

We love it here.

By David Marshall

I also have to admit a secret, we like doing the touristy things in addition to the simple pleasure of walking on the beach. We've already seen wild animals in Bandon and dinosaurs as well. Last weekend, we headed over the California boarder to see a giant Paul Bunyan and his Ox Babe. It was great to see Paul and Babe wearing masks. Of course their masks could cover a car. We walked high up in the Redwoods in the sky trail. There are some many fun things to do both right outside your front door and also just a short drive away. Pretty much ideal.

I am still in the process of getting to know the staff in the Brookings-Harbor school district and see a deep commitment to children in every person that I meet. The staff in the school district are truly rising to the challenge of finding new and effective ways to continue the education of our community's future. I am both humbled and proud to be a part of the school district team and a new member of the Brookings-Harbor community.

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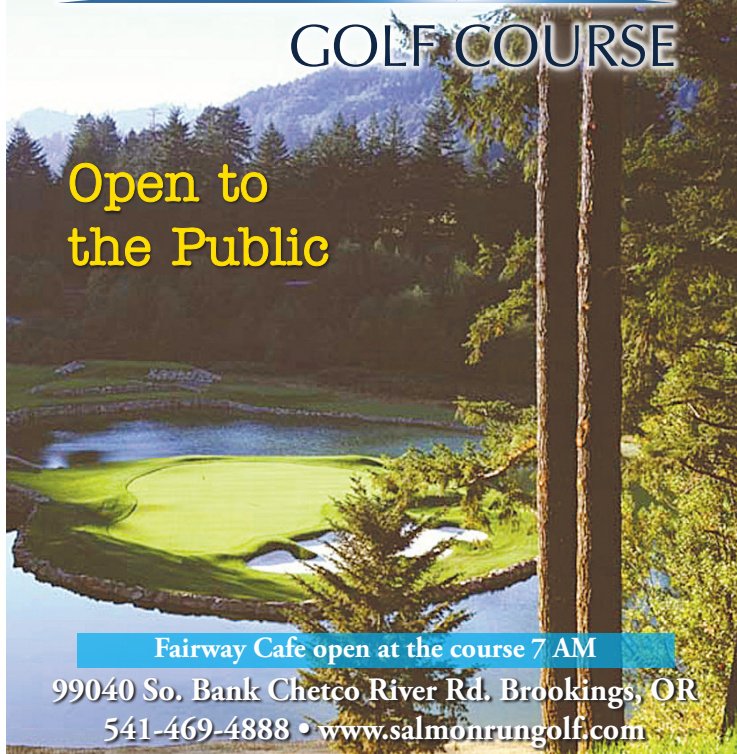
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CURRY COUNTY STATISTICS

Total Population 22,507
Rural Population: 39%
Net migration 2010-2018: 94

Public land 55%
Developed/cultivated land; 3%

Federally Recognized Tribes: CLUS COQ

Median Household Income:
Curry \$46,396

Top employment Industries
Food Services/drinking
Wood product manufacturing
Educational services

Community
Food insecurity 14%
Child poverty 15%
Index crime (per 1,000 pop) 17
Voter participation 79%

Education
Kindergarten ready 7 of 26
3rd grade reading 47%
9th grade on track 92%

Economy
Unemployment 6%
Labor force participation rate 47%
Job growth per 1000 pop 3
Property tax per person \$1,131
Rent cost 1 bedroom/1bath \$698

Infrastructure
Broadband access 94%
Transit service 9%
Mobile homes 18%
Vehicle miles traveled per capita 5,704

Source
Oregon by the Numbers
(Key measures for Oregon and its counties)
Published September 15, 2020

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800-543-8471

Curry Community Health

Brookings: 541-813-2535

Curry Medical Center/ Emergency Care

Brookings: 541-412-2000

Curry General Hospital

Gold Beach: 541-247-3000

Poison Control Center

800-222-1222

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

800-273-8255

Brookings City Hall

541-469-2163

Oregon TripCheck Information

800-977-6368

Oregon State Police

(Non Emergency)
Gold Beach Office:

541-247-6641

Brookings Police

(Non Emergency)
541-469-3118

Brookings Fire Department

541-469-1142

Harbor Fire Department

541-469-5301

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Curry Public Transit

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800-921-2871

United States Coast Guard Chetco River Lifeboat

Station

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541-412-7048

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541-469-7427

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Curry County - We Love it Here

By G A COCKERHAM



G A COCKERHAM

"Before you buy anything, check out the southern Oregon coast. I've traveled around the world and have not seen a more beautiful coastline." This advice was offered to my husband, Bruce, and me by a good friend, the late Francis "Frenchy" Arrell. We'd met Frenchy through Rotary in Walnut Creek, CA. He lived half of the year in Walnut Creek and the other half in Brookings. Frenchy knew Curry County well. In the early fifties, he and his family settled in

Brookings where they became the proud owners of Chetco Rexall Drugstore and Frenchy worked thirty years as a pharmacist. Bruce and I had been looking for an ocean-view second home, so we took Frenchy's advice and drove up to Brookings. It was winter, and we watched in awe as twenty-five-foot waves crashed against the offshore prehistoric sea stacks. They exploded into a visual experience not unlike watching the fourth-of-July fireworks. It was a feast for the senses and we were convinced that Frenchy was right.

That was sixteen years ago, and we still frequently remind ourselves how fortunate we are to live in Curry County. Where else do you find ocean drama, majestic forests, and an endless array of flora and fauna. Where else can you fish for salmon one day and hunt deer the next? Hike for miles on beautiful trails, or take your young family on vacation at a clean, river-side campground only twenty minutes from home? And what about our weather? Here in the Banana Belt we enjoy temperatures of 43 to 67 degrees throughout most of the year, and considerably warmer when we experience the Chetco Effect. This phenomenon that

can happen during any month of the year is a result of air rushing down the Siskiyou Mountains compressing and warming the airmass within a localized area around Brookings.

One can't write about Curry County without including the residents living in our coastal communities. We are a county comprised of people with different ideologies, and yet we seem to be able to tolerate our differences and seek out that with which we have in common. We are a group of people from various cultures and walks of life who join together with the same mission when the need arises. Whether it's logistics associated with forest fires, lost hikers, boaters in distress, hungry kids, or grieving families, our volunteer citizens respond. We are a community overseen by good people in law enforcement whom we respect, knowing that it is our deputies and officers who are responsible for our low crime rate and safe living.

We are also a very artistic community in which artists, writers, dancers, and others with a creative flare can find comradery and enjoyment in practicing their chosen manner of expression. It is a community in which we

can periodically escape from the noise going on in the rest of the world as we simply each allow our own creative soul to soar while delighting in the accomplishments and contributions of others.

The natural beauty of Curry County and the people who live here provide a unique combination that lights up the coast like one of our many stunning red and orange sunsets. For those reading this article while pondering a trip to Oregon, consider this. Whether it's beautiful surroundings, great restaurants, good people, clean air, or safe travels you're seeking, you can't go wrong with Curry County. Thanks to the advice of a friend, Bruce and I made our home here and life is good.

G A (Georgia) Cockerham is a published author of books in several genres, including the fictional Oregon Coast murder mystery series. She is a retired investment adviser and insurance broker. Her volunteer efforts in Curry County include serving on the Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, overseeing a local non-profit, and assisting the Curry County Sheriff's Office.

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Smooth-Riding Beach Bikes

By Linda Pinkham, Staff Writer



Erin Kessler of Pineapple Express Adventure Rides checks the gears on a fat bike rental. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

You've seen those bikes with the big balloon-looking knobby tires. Why would someone ride a bike like that?

Meet the fat tire bike. Before making their way to Oregon and the coast, these bikes became very popular in Colorado, and even have a beer label named after them. The fat bikes were originally developed in Alaska a num-

ber years ago for riding in the snow on the Iditarod routes.

Bikes and snow? Which is what makes them perfect for riding in the sand, as on Oregon's beaches, according to Erin Kessler, owner of Pineapple Express Adventure Rides in Port Orford.



Eliot Feenstra of Toronto, Canada waves on his way past the Gold Beach Visitor Center. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

"I like getting off the road," Kessler said. "We've got great beaches. We live in a place where we can just access the beach and we've got all these public lands and everything."

The Pilot caught up with Kessler at Live Culture Coast on Oct. 25 to find out more about the bikes, and even tried out one of the bikes she had

available at the event for beach rides.

The bikes look big and clunky, but they are not necessarily more difficult to pedal, Kessler reassured.

"It takes a bit to get going, but they float over the sand," Kessler said. "It's like a snowshoe and floats over the surface. You can have less air pres-

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sure with the bigger platform of a tire, creating a wider surface." The gearing is pretty easy, making them also good for mountain trail rides, towing trailers and taking longer excursions, she said.

"They're really stable," she said. "They are very good for older riders who may not have perfect balance, and you ride upright like a mountain bike." The upright posture is more comfortable for most riders than the street bikes that predated mountain bikes, which are also upright.

The bikes were exactly like Kessler said, easy to pedal but hard to get started, especially with the slightly inclined slope of the parking lot where she was set up. The ride was surprisingly smooth, especially considering the knobby tires and stiff frame, even when going over the speed bumps in the parking lot.

The fat bikes Kessler brought to the event are from Fatback Bikes of Alaska. They were one of the first fat bikes on the market, Kessler said. The company offers several models, but she carries the Fatback Rhino FLT, which is a stiff, lightweight bike with an aluminum alloy frame. (For those who become irritated with acronyms, the FLT in the name stands for Fast Light Technology.)

The tires are 26-inches tall by 4.8-inches wide and can run with as little as 3 pounds of pressure, although Kessler keeps the rental bikes at around 8 psi. The wider tires provide more traction, allowing the bikes to handle snow, mud, sand, rocks and roots. The frames are wider and specially built to accommodate the wider wheel size.

The fat bikes in Kessler's rental fleet come with a variety of gearing configurations ranging from 1 x 10, 1 x 11 and 1 x 12. The 1x configuration eliminates having multiple gears on the front hub, so there's no front gear shifting and less maintenance. Sand is not a friend to bicycle gears.

"I spend a lot of time maintaining these bicycles," she said. "They get new chains every season. I'm constantly lubing everything and getting sand out of the nooks and crannies. I try to keep them in good working order for each rental. It's very time consuming."

Kessler, who started her company in 2017, offers guided tours and bike rentals with both mountain bikes and fat tire bikes. She has tours for all levels of experience, from Bandon down to Gold Beach. Customers can also arrange rental bike drop-offs and shuttle services. She sells new Fatback brand bikes at \$2,000, but also sells off the



Sophie Traub is all smiles as she prepares to ride a fat tire bike for the first time. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

rental bikes at the end of the season for \$900. Not all fat bikes sell for as much as the Fatbacks, which are considered a pro model in the industry.

At Live Culture Coast, Sophie Traub and Eliot Feenstra from Toronto, Canada heard about the opportunity and decided to take a beach ride from the Port of Gold Beach to Kissing Rock, just south of Gold Beach. Neither of them had ever ridden a fat tire bike.

"I'm so excited," Traub said. Feenstra was also looking forward to the ride. "I've stayed before at Ire-

land's Rustic Lodges, but haven't done much in Gold Beach," he said.

After finding the right size — four sizes are available — the pair waved and took off on their adventure. When The Pilot caught up with them at the Gold Beach Visitor Center, they pedaled by smoothly on the sand and gravel beach with big smiles on their faces.

Pineapple Express Adventure Rides is located at 832 Highway 101, Port Orford; 772-633-7385 or pineappleexpress.bike

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Leavened bakery opens retail window

By Linda Pinkham, Staff Writer



Meriah Timm stands in front of the new retail window at Leavened Bakery in Gold Beach. Photo by Linda Pinkham.



The mother starter, which is naturally occurring Oregon grown and captured yeast, is fed daily to replenish it after taking 80% of it for baking each day. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

The tantalizing smell of fresh-baked bread wafts through the neighborhood early in the morning at 94213 Unit B, Second Street in Gold Beach.

Leavened Bakery, specializing in naturally leavened sourdough breads, has been baking at its wholesale location since June. But today, Oct. 2, the bakery has opened a retail window at their location where customers can buy directly from the baker herself, Meriah Timm.

The bakery is too small to host an indoor service counter, but a welcoming window with a bright teal-colored awning welcomes visitors to a window and counter where they can select and pay for their baked goods, along with a cup of Nectar of Life organic coffee to go. The bakery window is open Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Timm reminds people that they are in a residential neighborhood.

Timm says she has the capacity to make up to 80 loaves per day by herself, plus a variety

of pastries like her Kouign-Amann (pronounced “queen a-mahn”) pastries, sourdough bagels and sourdough donuts. She predicts she will be baking 20 to 30 loaves a day to meet demand, plus other treats.

“Breads and pastries are our backbone,” Timm said. “But I will have some dessert things like lemon bars and chocolate torts. I want to be able to do everything, but I can’t do everything all at once. I’m excited to see what we get and what people buy who are our regulars.”

Her most popular breads to date have been Floyd’s French Batard, Polenta Rosemary and Honey Whole Wheat—a Brookings favorite. But you can expect to find Dark Chocolate Orange Cranberry and Pumpkin loaves made with local ingredients this fall. The pumpkin loaves are shaped like pumpkins with a cinnamon stick for a stem. Although she has discontinued distribution through her other retail outlets, the breads will still be

distributed through Otterbee’s Market, with ordering online for home deliveries, so the breads will still be available in Brookings and Smith River.

The breads and pastries use naturally occurring, local Oregon grown and captured yeasts, without adding any commercial yeast, to rise the bread. The process isn’t quick, and takes 24 hours from start to finish. The day starts with making a “leaven” from the mother starter to make a batch of very young starter to begin the rising process. The mother starter is fed daily to replenish it after taking 80% of it for baking each day.

“It’s just been fed, so it’s really active,” she said. The leaven has just flour, water and salt—no sugar is added. The leaven rises for six hours. Following the leaven process, the next processes of mixing the dough, turning it and shaping loaves takes seven hours, plus three hours to proof. The dough goes into the walk-in refrigerator overnight, and then is baked off the following

morning.

Even though the bread is called sourdough, she starts with a young yeast with the leaven process, so it actually is much sweeter than commercially produced sourdough, which has had a separate sour-tasting dough added to the batch to make it taste sour.

The breads and pastries are baked off in a multi-deck pizza oven for about an hour. She spends every morning baking for two to three hours.

Timm grew up in Gold Beach, then went to college for almost three years, including one year in Colorado and two years at Oregon Coast Culinary Institute (OCCI) in Coos Bay. After OCCI, she had an internship in the Cannon Beach area where she learned how to do naturally leavened breads. After her husband Conner Timm finished his schooling in Portland, the couple moved to Gold Beach to open her bakery.

For more information, call 541-373-9395.



A batch of Floyd’s French Batards from the ovens on a giant paddle. Courtesy photo.



A loaf of naturally leavened bread is a 24-hour labor of love. Courtesy photo.



Meriah Timm describes the different flours used in her breads. Photo by Linda Pinkham.



Pumpkin bread is shaped like a pumpkin with a cinnamon stick stem. Courtesy photo.

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Brookings-Harbor Community Advocate

By Judy May Lopez



Judy May Lopez

Judy was born and raised in northern Montana – Big Sky Country – and so, is very appreciative and used to living in beautiful country. In the early 80s, she managed Northern Montana College Bookstore in Havre, and had worked there for seven years. At that time, her sister and family had just been transferred to Coos Bay and she visited them and the “amazing, breathtaking, spectacular southern Oregon coast.” When she returned home to Montana, gave notice at the college, put her house up for sale, began making plans and within a year, relocated to the southern Oregon coast.

In her first job in Brookings, Judy worked at Southern Oregon Production Credit Association, and there, met her husband-to-be, Manuel Lopez, a commercial fisherman and artist. He fished for salmon, ling cod, snapper and halibut off the Oregon and California coast. He “saw” the beauty and promise of sea life

in the shapes and textures of the driftwood that littered the area beaches. Through his artist's eye, he helped her see more and appreciate the beauty we find all around us in the Brookings-Harbor area. One of his wood sculptures, First Breath, graces the main lobby of the Chetco Library (403 Alder) in Brookings. Manuel sculpted in wood, stone and bronze, and you can view some of his artwork at Forecastle Books, 547 Chetco Ave., Brookings. He passed away in 2010, but his gift of helping everyone to see things through an artist's eye will carry on.

Employed for 30 years by Chetco Federal Credit Union and Rogue Credit Union, Judy worked with the Credit Union branches in Smith River, Crescent City, Gold Beach, Port Orford, and Bandon, and grew to appreciate even more the rugged beauty of our coastal region. This paradise we live in, has spectacular views and activities around every corner: Azalea Park – the Chetco, Rogue and Smith Rivers – Harris Beach State Park and the entire Samuel Boardman Corridor - Whaleshead Beach – the Bombing Site - Alfred Loeb State Park – Chetco Point Park – Sporthaven Beach - McVay Rock State Park - Battle Rock in Port Orford - Indian Sands - Prehistoric Gardens – Port of Port Orford - Little Redwoods –

every area in this scenic region begs to be explored.

Judy believes in giving back to the community and is a member of the Rotary Club of Brookings-Harbor. She is also currently a volunteer at the Brookings-Harbor Chamber of Commerce and so, continues to promote this beautiful area and the people who live here.

The Brookings-Harbor area that we live in is outstanding – a paradise with spectacular views around every corner – that is, if you take advantage of where we are and take and make the time to look around every corner. Now is the time. Have you explored?



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Curry County: 'We Love It Here'

By Ginny Williams, CEO of Curry Health Network



Curry Health Network
GINNY WILLIAMS

Originally from New York, I relocated to California at age 23 to start my career. I began as a pharmacist and later moved into hospital administration, where I've been ever since. In 2015 my path led me to Curry County and Curry Health Network, where I know I truly belong.

When I first moved to the southern Oregon coast, I was struck by the stunning landscape and temperate climate. And while its natural beauty captivated me initially, I soon learned it was nothing compared to the beauty of the people who call this coastal community home. I've never experienced a sense of togetherness like I do here, nor have I felt a stronger connection than I do as the CEO to our rural health care system, Curry Health Network.

This unique community connection creates a sense

of togetherness that's truly authentic. People care for one another; neighbors look out for neighbors. Simple things are demonstrated in so many ways. If a cow gets loose through a broken fence, neighbors collaborate—without a second thought—to find the cow, mend the fence and put everything back together. It's that kind of place.

It's wonderful to really know your neighbors—be there for them when they are sick, and help them maintain their health. You don't get that in many places. When our exceptional Curry Health Network providers and teammates frequent our shops and local businesses, they're greeted by people they know and care for. In Curry County, we don't serve patients; we help our friends and neighbors—people we see every day. It makes me proud as CEO of Curry Health Network to be part of peoples' lives.

There are many reasons that I feel at home here. I'm an outdoor enthusiast and there's so much to enjoy: hunting, fishing, searching for agates—and walking the beaches. My personal favorite is watching storms come in off the water. Wind gusts of over 80 miles an hour showcase the beautiful volatility of nature—and mirror the versatility and grit of the people who live here. I have come to embrace the fierceness of these storms. There's nothing like knitting by

the fireplace and riding out these powerful, natural displays.

As an avid gardener, the soil is perfect for growing almost anything. Whatever you plant seems to thrive, which is symbolic of those who live here as well. When people move here, they also flourish—perhaps because it's conducive to healthy living with a host to outdoor

activities. But really, I find it's easy to grow in a place where the people are warm, welcoming and invested in one another.

When people ask why I love Curry County, my answer is simple. It's the people. The community. And it's an honor and a privilege to be the CEO of a rural healthcare system in such a special place.



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Prehistoric Gardens — still a modern wonder

By Linda Pinkham, Staff Writer



These two life size dinosaurs greet passersby and visitors in front of Prehistoric Gardens. The Tyrannosaurus rex and Brachiosaurus are hard to miss when driving between Gold Beach and Port Orford on U.S. Highway 101. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

Dinosaurs lurk in an old growth rain forest with 350-year-old trees, lush ferns and foliage plants. Kids, trailed by parents taking photos, excitedly follow a hand-drawn map from 40 years ago through the park that contains 23 life-size, prehistoric reptiles tucked amidst and sometimes towering above the abundant growth of native plants. Both plants and dinosaurs have a long history at this place located halfway between Gold Beach and Port Orford on U.S. Highway 101.

Prehistoric Gardens, after 65 years in business, is still a famous roadside attraction that is now owned and managed by Kiki McGrath. The site is a labor of love of McGrath's family since opening in 1955. Her grandfather, Ernie Nelson, at the age of 47, and his wife Kari sold his accounting business and their Eugene home in the early 1950s to purchase the original 77 acres, according to the documentary "Strange Inheritance: Dino Park."

Nelson dreamed of creating a roadside attraction filled with dinosaurs. "When you have an absolute passion

for something, you think other people feel the same way you do," said his daughter Bennie Worthington (now deceased) in the documentary.

The gamble paid off as the U.S. highway system was developed, travel by auto became popular, and roadside attractions were prolific and popular. McGrath says during the summer season, visitors still number 200 a day.

The life-size dinosaurs are constructed with steel frames with metal lathe that is molded over the frame, then they are plastered with cement and painted. The first sculpture Nelson made, and the largest, is a Brachiosaurus that is 46 feet tall and 86 feet long. It took him 4 years to build it and required constructing a scaffold to do the work. "The Brachiosaurus was his pride and joy," said McGrath, pointing to a framed photo of him standing beneath the creature between its front legs.

An interpretive sign informs guests that the largest dinosaur's live weight was estimated to be 85 tons, and he

was a plant eater from the Cretaceous period — about 125 million years ago. The park signage provides fun facts about each of the sculptures, as well as all the indigenous plants. A spring-fed creek meanders through the grounds, with an accessible path that winds past each vignette.

Nelson engineered the sculptures based on his drawings of skeletal remains and fossils found and placed in natural history museums. "He always drew," Worthington said in the documentary. "He came out of the womb with a pen." Over thirty years, Nelson constructed 23 dinosaurs.

While the sculptures are scientifically correct, the paint colors were designed to be fanciful, attractive and photogenic as a tourist attraction. "People would ask him 'How did you know what colors they were?'" and he said, "Well no one knows. It's the artist behind the paintbrush." Birds are very colorful, lizards are very colorful, but we don't know," McGrath said.



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With an average rainfall of between 6 and 10 feet per year, ferns grow to gigantic size and even the common skunk cabbage develops huge tropical leaves. Known as a temperate zone rainforest, this primeval garden developed because of its location; nestled in a valley pocket and therefore protected from the fierce winter storms that sweep the Pacific.

The landscaping requires a lot of upkeep. "You don't have to water anything but we do have to cut things back when it starts growing," she said. "Some of the skunk cabbage leaves get to be about 7 feet tall."

The dinosaurs also have upkeep. During a wind storm over the winter, one of the giant trees fell in the park on two of the sculptures. They are in the process of being repaired.

A small gift shop on the property has souvenirs for dinosaur lovers of all ages, from plush toys and coloring books for kids to fossils, agates, apparel and more for "kids" of all ages.

Over the years, family members have helped to operate the park. McGrath's

mother worked in the gift shop for a long time, and her uncle helped with building some of the park's features. McGrath has worked at the park for 40 years. "It's a lot of work," she said. Her grandparents have been gone for 21 years.

According to "Strange Inheritance," Nelson passed away in 1999 at the age of 91. His wife Kari died soon afterward. The property was left to McGrath, her mother and her uncle. The property was listed for sale, but Kiki decided she didn't want to sell the park. The acreage was split up, with 33 acres containing the park going to Kiki. The other 44 acres sold for \$1.6 million dollars.

"I'd like to keep the legacy going," McGrath said. She is confident that her daughter and son would keep it going after she retires.

The park is open daily in winter (except during extreme weather) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and until 6 p.m. in summer. To learn more, visit <http://www.prehistoricgardens.com>



The Stegasaurus was an armored vegetarian dinosaur from 120 million years ago that was 26 feet long and weighed 8 to 10 tons, with a brain the size of a walnut. Photo by Linda Pinkham.



The lush primeval garden in a rainforest attracts visitors from near and far to experience dinosaurs from a bygone era of kitsch. Photo by Linda Pinkham.

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