

Christmas Day Dinner

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TIGER BASKETBALL
READY TO COMPETE

Sports
PAGE B8



WHALE WATCHING WEEK
RETURNS TO THE COAST

Coast Life
PAGE B1



Lincoln County Leader

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Lincoln County, Oregon

\$2

‘Massive’ landslide closes Highway 229

JEREMY C. RUARK
Lincoln County Leader

Ten homes have been placed on evacuation notice and three structures, including two homes, have been damaged by what has been described by officials as a massive landslide along Highway 229 near Siletz. Occupants that remain in the hazard area were

See **LANDSLIDE**, page A6



This drone photo from ODOT shows the widespread area of the slide. (Courtesy photo from ODOT)

High speed chase ends in arrest

STAFF REPORT
Lincoln County Leader

Newport Police Department officers received information from area law enforcement agency at approximately 11:48 a.m. Dec. 11, of a vehicle that was suspected to be involved in a burglary from the Waldport area. Officers were provided

surveillance photos detailing the vehicle description.

While searching the Newport area for the vehicle, a Newport Police officer observed a vehicle matching the description parked in the parking lot of 150 NE 20th Street at the Fred Meyer store. While the officer

See **CHASE**, page A6

WHO WE ARE

Volunteers brighten Christmas for area families



One volunteer carefully wraps a child's gift for the holiday event.



Two of the local volunteers wrap holiday gifts for the families.

JEREMY C. RUARK
Lincoln County Leader

Volunteers are wrapping up the annual Lincoln City Christmas Toy and Food Drive. Each year, The Lincoln City Eagles, North Lincoln Fire & Rescue, and Les Schwab help between 1,200 and 1,500 area children and adults with donated food, clothing and toys. The volunteers gather the items donated at various businesses over the past few weeks, sort, wrap and assemble the toy and food boxes at the Fisherman's Lutheran Church, located at 1226 SW 13th Street in Lincoln City. Eagles Lodge member Alaina Jones has coordinated the annual Eagles and North Lincoln Fire

& Rescue Christmas Toy and Food Basket event at the church. She said the annual event is a labor of love that she has been doing since 1986. "Right now, we hope to serve 325 families, that includes in those families, 600 children," she said. We've been doing about that amount since probably 2015. Before that when the Elks were still here, we only did

See **VOLUNTEERS**, page A6

The donated toys and clothing items have been carefully sorted and laid out on large tables filling a large community room at the church. (Photos by Jeremy C. Ruark)



Coast Guard assures Newport rescue helicopter's return

SHAANTH NANGUNERI
Oregon Capital Chronicle

A rescue helicopter that's long been kept at Newport's Municipal Airport and Coast Guard facility on the Oregon Coast will remain there, an official for the federal agency assured Oregon's U.S. Senators in writing. It follows major local fallout over the Coast Guard's decision to relocate the helicopter further south on the Coast to North Bend in late October with no explanation and ahead of the

dangerous Dungeness crab fishing season. Ongoing legal battles over the helicopter's removal continue to play out in federal court, and a judge recently ordered it at least temporarily returned until late December. Oregon lawmakers and local residents have speculated that the federal government moved the helicopter so they can

begin to repurpose the airport site for a potential Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention facility. Oregon's U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden alongside U.S. Rep Val Hoyle, who represents the state's 4th Congressional District that includes Newport, had pushed for the

See **RESCUE PAGE A4**



The Newport Municipal Airport hosts a U.S. Coast Guard facility, which has been at the center of a controversy gaining national attention over the Trump administration's immigration and coastal rescue policies. (Shaanth Nanguneri / Oregon Capital Chronicle)



RECALL HALL

We must recall county commissioner Claire Hall for numerous reasons, such as ethics and non-performance.

This ad paid for by David Elton, a full-time resident of Lincoln County and the founder of "RECALL HALL" PAC. A political action committee registered with the IRS and the Oregon secretary of state (ORESTAR). Treasurer, Richard P. Burke.

Weather

Wednesday: High-51/Low-45
AM Showers
Thursday: High-57/Low-47
Rain/Wind
Friday: High-50/Low-44
Rain
Saturday: High-49/Low-43
Showers
Sunday: High-53/Low-46
Showers
Monday: High-52/Low-45
Showers
Tuesday: High-51/Low-44
Showers

Past Weather

On the Coast

	Rain	Low	High
December 9.....	3.06	..50.3°F	..56.2°F
December 10.....	0.15	..55.2°F	..56.2°F
December 11.....	0.03	..52.2°F	..59.6°F
December 12.....	0.01	..47.4°F	..61.3°F
December 13.....	0.00	..46.7°F	..62.6°F
December 14.....	0.12	..48.7°F	..54.0°F
December 15.....	0.35	..53.0°F	..58.5°F
Total rainfall from Jan. 1	58.03"		

Tides Tables

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

Low	3:38 a.m.	4.1
High	9:41 a.m.	8.8
Low	4:59 p.m.	0.1
High	11:56 p.m.	6.6

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

Low	4:20 a.m.	4.3
High	10:17 a.m.	8.9
Low	5:35 p.m.	0.3

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

High	12:34 a.m.	6.8
Low	5:01 a.m.	4.3
High	10:53 a.m.	9.0
Low	6:11 p.m.	0.6

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

High	1:11 a.m.	7.0
Low	5:40 a.m.	4.3
High	11:29 a.m.	9.0
Low	6:46 p.m.	0.7

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

High	1:47 a.m.	7.0
Low	6:18 a.m.	4.3
High	12:06 p.m.	8.9
Low	7:22 p.m.	0.7

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

High	2:23 a.m.	7.1
Low	6:59 a.m.	4.2
High	12:44 p.m.	8.8
Low	7:58 p.m.	0.6

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

High	3:00 a.m.	7.1
Low	7:43 a.m.	4.2
High	1:24 p.m.	8.4
Low	8:34 p.m.	0.4

Sunrise/Sunset

December 17.....	7:47 a.m.	4:37 p.m.
December 18.....	7:48 a.m.	4:37 p.m.
December 19.....	7:49 a.m.	4:38 p.m.
December 20.....	7:49 a.m.	4:38 p.m.
December 21.....	7:50 a.m.	4:38 p.m.
December 22.....	7:50 a.m.	4:39 p.m.
December 23.....	7:51 a.m.	4:40 p.m.
December 24.....	7:51 a.m.	4:40 p.m.
December 25.....	7:52 a.m.	4:41 p.m.
December 26.....	7:52 a.m.	4:41 p.m.
December 27.....	7:52 a.m.	4:42 p.m.

Lottery

Friday, December 12

Mega Millions

10 • 50 • 55 • 58 • 59 • PB-5

Saturday, December 13

Powerball

1 • 28 • 31 • 57 • 58 • PB-16 • x2

Saturday, December 13

Megabucks

4 • 7 • 14 • 22 • 26 • 36

Lincoln County Leader

(Publication number 0888-2110)
Published weekly, 52 issues per year
Periodicals postage paid at
Newport, OR 97365

Postmaster: Send address changes to
Lincoln County Leader mailing address,
PO Box 670 Salem, OR 97308

OFFICE ADDRESS - HOURS
PO Box 670 Salem, OR 97308
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

WORLD WIDE WEB ADDRESS
http://www.newportnewstimes.com
http://www.thenewsguard.com

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Classified advertising.....	503-842-7535
Subscriber services.....	503-842-7535

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IN COUNTY PRINT W/DIGITAL:

Annual.....	\$90
6 months.....	\$65
Monthly.....	\$10

DIGITAL ONLY:

Annual.....	\$75
Monthly.....	\$9

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The Lincoln County Leader is printed on recycled newspaper.

ICE Rally draws approximately 500 to Newport

JEREMY C. RUARK
Lincoln County Leader

A No ICE Protest organized by local chapters of Oregon Coast Indivisible Alliance drew approximately 500 people to Newport Saturday, Dec. 13.

Spokesperson Shar Walbaum said the event conducted along Highway 101 in front of Newport City Hall included a variety of people.

“Folks were all ages and all colors, and they come from as far north as Astoria and south to Bandon,” she said. “We had allies from as far east as Boring and up and down the valley from McMinnville, Salem, Corvallis, and Eugene. Many came from Indivisible Lincoln City to help or to demonstrate. This was a truly collaborative effort from start to finish.”

Walbaum said organizers set up an information table focusing on the consequences of businesses helping to build, serve, and maintain a detention camp.

“Business members of the community need to know that it will hurt individuals, families, neighborhoods, and the coastal economy,” Walbaum said. “Next part of our business accountability campaign - we talk to business neighbors up and down the coast to discuss how helping DHS means hurting their community. A camp can only be established with widespread cooperation.”



The ICE Rally was conducted in front of Newport City Hall Saturday, Dec. 13. (Courtesy photo from Mary Beth Guereña)

Cash donations of \$210 were collected for Arcoíris Cultural, Conéxion Fénix, and Centro de Ayuda, according to Walbaum.

“There was a Statue of Liberty, unicorn, Santa, frog, and two Handmaids. We had big flags, little flags, and rainbow flags,” she said.

CITY ACTIONS

In Waldport, city leaders have taken a stand against any ICE detention facility that might be proposed for that city following heightened concerns and opposition to the Immigration and Custom Enforcement agency facilities and activities within the city’s jurisdiction. The Waldport City Council has passed a resolution affirming its commitment, which reads in part:

The City hereby opposes

and objects to any Immigration and Customs facilities or housing within the city.

The City Council will, in cooperation with legislative and municipal leaders at local, state and federal level, pursue every available legal avenue to oppose any stationing of ICE personnel and activities within the city.

Finally, the City reaffirms its commitment to those words, so eloquently placed, at the base of Lady Liberty so far away, and yet so close:

Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”

The Newport City



Those at the rally held signs to express their opposition to an ICE facility in Lincoln County. (Courtesy photo)

Council continues to keep a close eye on the immigration issue and attempts to locate a detention facility in that city following several weeks of public concerns, meetings, and

legal procedures.

Follow developments online at the Lincoln County Leader website and in the Wednesday print editions of The Leader.



Organizers set up an information table focusing on the consequences of businesses helping to build, serve, and maintain an ICE detention camp. (Courtesy photo)

OSP seeking public help in animal kill investigation

Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division is asking for the public’s help to locate the person(s) responsible for the waste of one cow elk in Lincoln County near Waldport.

On November 28, 2025, Fish and Wildlife troopers responded to a report of a dead cow elk in the Alsea Unit within the Siuslaw National Forest.

The cow elk was found in a remote area near

the end of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Road 3462, off the main USFS 58 Boundary Road. The entire cow elk had been shot and left to waste. Additionally, the intestinal remains of a bull elk were discovered nearby, indicating that someone had likely shot and taken a bull elk from the same area around the same time.

The investigation determined the elk were most likely shot sometime

between November 22 and November 24.

Anyone with information is encouraged to contact Oregon State Police Dispatch at 1-800-452-7888, call *OSP (*677) from a mobile phone, or email TIP@osp.oregon.gov. Please reference case number SP25-482212.

Report Wildlife and Habitat Law Violators

The Turn In Poachers (TIP) program is a collaboration among the Oregon State Police,

the Oregon Hunters Association, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Wildlife Coalition, the Oregon Outfitter and Guides Association, and the Oregon State Marine

Board.

The TIP program offers preference point rewards for information that leads to an arrest or citation for the unlawful take/possession, or waste of big game mammals.



The cow elk was found in a remote area near the end of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Road 3462, off the main USFS 58 Boundary Road. The entire cow elk had been shot and left to waste. (Courtesy photo from OSP)

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE in the Scoping Period for the Northwest Training and Testing Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement

The U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard are jointly preparing a supplement to previous environmental analyses to assess the potential environmental effects associated with the Proposed Action to continue at-sea military readiness activities in the Northwest Training and Testing (NWT) Study Area. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to ensure the Navy and Coast Guard are able to organize, train, and equip service members and personnel needed to meet their respective national defense missions.

Public Involvement Opportunity

The public, stakeholders, and federally recognized tribes are invited to comment on the scope of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)/Overseas EIS (OEIS), including identifying potential alternatives or issues that should be addressed in the supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, relaying environmental concerns, identifying historic in-water properties, and providing information or analysis relevant to the Proposed Action or the project's potential to affect historic in-water properties pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The Navy and Coast Guard are accepting comments during a 45-day scoping period from Dec. 5, 2025, to Jan. 26, 2026.

For more project information, please view a virtual scoping presentation at www.nepa.navy.mil/nwtteis. Comments may be submitted online or by mail to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Northwest
Attention: NWT SEIS/OEIS Project Manager
1101 Tautog Circle, Room 102
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

For information about the NHPA Section 106 review process, or if you are interested in becoming a consulting party, please visit the NHPA Section 106 Process page found at www.nepa.navy.mil/nwtteis.

Scoping comments must be postmarked or received online by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on Jan. 19, 2026, for consideration in the Draft SEIS/OEIS.

ID# SEIS-007-17-USN-1757623448

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Commissioner Claire Hall
(22nd year/6 terms)

Sudoku answers

5	6	7	9	8	1	3	4	2
9	3	4	7	2	6	8	1	5
1	8	2	4	5	3	7	9	6
3	2	5	6	9	8	1	7	4
7	9	1	2	4	5	6	8	3
8	4	6	3	1	7	2	5	9
4	7	9	8	6	2	5	3	1
6	5	8	1	3	4	9	2	7
2	1	3	5	7	9	4	6	8

RECALL HALL

We must recall county commissioner Claire Hall for numerous reasons, such as ethics and non-performance.

This ad paid for by David Elton, a full-time resident of Lincoln County and the founder of "RECALL HALL" PAC. A political action committee registered with the IRS and the Oregon secretary of state (ORESTAR). Treasurer, Richard P. Burke.

RECALL

★ HALL ★

We must recall county commissioner Claire Hall for numerous reasons, such as ethics and non-performance.



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethics....Hall is currently under investigation by “OGE”, the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, for “Open Meetings” violations of law.• Non communication with Judge Bachart, DA Jenna Wallace and Sherriff’s office (Curt Landers). See September 18, 2024 meeting video. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freedom of Speech violations of public comment section during commissioner meetings.• Non communication with general public and voters seeking “redress of Grievances”• Unethical removal and banishment of commissioner Miller. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illegal and inappropriate banishment from commissioner meetings by those Hall deemed as opposition. (Christine Hutchins)...later reversed after proved to be either Illegal or wrongful action.• It is time to end “Strong Arm” and bully tactics at the county commissioners office! |
|--|--|--|

This ad paid for by David Elton, a full-time resident of Lincoln County and the founder of “RECALL HALL” PAC. A political action committee registered with the IRS and the Oregon secretary of state (ORESTAR). *Treasurer, Richard P. Burke.*

Board confers title of President Emerita on Dr. Birgitte Ryslinge

The Oregon Coast Community College Board of Education has adopted a resolution naming Dr. Birgitte Ryslinge as President Emerita, making her only the second individual in the College’s history to receive the honorary title.

Dr. Ryslinge served as OCCC’s president for more than a decade, having joined the College in 2014. During her tenure, she led the institution through significant milestones, including the successful effort to secure independent accreditation.

The proclamation approved by the Board cited her leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic and the College’s rapid post-pandemic enrollment recovery as among the many



Pictured are, from left, Dr. Patrick O’Connor, Dr. Birgitte Ryslinge, and OCCC President Dr. Marshall Mease Roache. (Courtesy photo)

reasons for the honor. Under Dr. Ryslinge’s	leadership, OCCC expanded its offerings	in career and technical education, introducing
---	---	--

new programs in health-care, business, welding, and teacher training. She also spearheaded the seven-year campaign to develop and fund the Oregon Coast Advanced Technology and Trades Center, a project overwhelmingly supported by Lincoln County voters earlier this year.

The proclamation, made during the OCCC regular meeting Wednesday evening, Dec. 10, highlighted Dr. Ryslinge’s dedication to institutional stability, noting her work to modernize the College’s foundation through new Board policies and administrative procedures, as well as her unwavering professionalism and advocacy for rural community colleges across the state.

Dr. Ryslinge joins Dr.

Patrick O’Connor, who served as the College’s president for 22 years and led the effort to fund and construct the College’s campus facilities, as the only individuals to hold the President Emeritus/ Emerita distinction at Oregon Coast Community College. Dr. O’Connor received the honor in 2023.

“President Emeritus O’Connor and President Emerita Ryslinge have laid the foundation and structures upon which this institution will continue to grow and thrive for years to come,” OCCC President Dr. Marshall Mease Roache said at the ceremony.

To learn more about the College’s history, programs, and leadership, visit oregoncoast.edu.

SNAP benefit work rules now apply statewide

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) ended Oregon’s SNAP work-rule waivers in November 2025. Because of this, Oregon began applying the work rules statewide starting Dec. 1, 2025, expanding from six counties to all counties.

This change affects approximately 37,000 people in Oregon today, and the number of people impacted is expected to increase over time.

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is here to help, if you have questions about these new work rules or think they may apply to you, contact ODHS right away.

The change is required by a new federal law passed on July 4, 2025, along with new guidance from the USDA. This means that work rules for some adults who get Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits are now in effect across Oregon. These rules apply to people who have Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) status. ODHS has notified



SNAP helps low-income households buy food. If you qualify, you get benefits that can be used to buy groceries at authorized stores. For more information or to request SNAP replacement benefits, contact your local office or visit the Oregon SNAP benefit website or call 800-699-9075. (Courtesy photo)

everyone who is affected by this change.

WHAT CHANGED

Oregon had previously waived ABAWD work requirements in 30 of 36 counties and all Tribal lands because of limited job opportunities. These waivers were scheduled to last until Dec. 31, 2025. USDA ended them earlier.

A recent federal law also changed who must follow ABAWD work rules. These rules now apply to:

- Adults ages 18–64
- Adults who do not have children under age 14 in their SNAP household

This is a change from the previous rules, which

applied only to adults up to age 54 and households without children under age 18.

Some groups who were previously exempt now must meet work rules. This includes:

- Veterans
- People who were in foster care
- People experiencing homelessness

New exemption added:

People who are enrolled members of a federally recognized Tribe, or who have a parent or grandparent who is, are exempt from ABAWD work rules.

People who live on the following waived Tribal Lands are also exempt from work rules,

even if they are not an enrolled tribal member or descendant:

- Burns Paiute Tribe Reservation and off-Reservation Trust Land
- Coquille Indian Tribe Reservation and off-Reservation Trust Land
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians Reservation
- Klamath Tribes Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Reservation and off-Reservation Trust Land

A full list of exemptions is on the ODHS SNAP Work Rules website.

What people with ABAWD status must do

People with ABAWD status who do not qualify for an exemption must: Work or take part in approved work or training activities for at least

80 hours each month. The work can be paid or unpaid, including trading work for shelter.

If they do not meet the 80-hour requirement: They may only get SNAP benefits for three months in a three-year period (36 months).

For example: If someone does not meet SNAP work requirements in January, February and March, they will lose food benefits beginning in April. In Oregon, the current three-year period ends December 31, 2027. If their situation changes before then, like moving to a waived area or qualifying for an exemption, they may be able to get SNAP again.

What people should do now

People who think they may be affected

should contact the ODHS ABAWD Unit as soon as possible:

- Phone: 1-833-947-1694
- Email: SNAP.ABAWDTeam@odhsoha.oregon.gov

The ABAWD unit can help people learn:

- If they qualify for an exemption
- If they are already meeting the work rules
- If they should connect with the Oregon Employment Department (OED) to create a work or training plan to meet the work rules

ODHS and OED are working together to help SNAP recipients meet ABAWD work rules through job search, training and education services. A referral from ODHS is required to participate in OED ABAWD services.

RESCUE

From Page A1

helicopter’s return. The Democratic lawmakers on Friday, Dec. 12, announced that they received confirmation from Admiral Kevin E. Lunday, the U.S. Coast Guard’s acting commandant, promising the helicopter would return.

Lunday told Merkley and Wyden that it was always his intent to return the helicopter to Newport in December, and that he will visit the Newport area within a year.

“The Coast Guard will do better to communicate and be transparent with you and the Newport community in these situations,” Lunday wrote in a Friday letter. “In addition to Newport, we will continue to conduct search

and rescue response along the entire Oregon coast with helicopters and crews from AIRFAC Newport and Coast Guard Air Stations in Astoria and North Bend.”

Merkley in a social media post Friday wrote that he had “temporarily held up” Lunday’s confirmation as a U.S. Coast Guard commandant in the Senate “while we waited on this news.”

“In addition, should they ever reconsider the permanent location of the helicopter in Newport, they will start with the public meetings and congressional notification that are required in the law I wrote and passed in 2014,” Merkley said.

The announcement corroborates previous verbal assurances Wyden and Merkley reported on Dec. 4, though it still leaves the door open for more long-term changes to the Newport Municipal Airport’s Coast Guard facility.

In an ongoing lawsuit filed by the state of Oregon, alongside a local nonprofit and Lincoln County, against the Department of Homeland Security, federal lawyers have assured that the

helicopter will remain in the Newport area until at least spring 2026, according to court filings.

It was not immediately clear how plans for a potential immigration detention facility in the city could be complicated by the announcement. In his letter, Lunday wrote that should the Coast Guard consider “any future change to the long-term status” of the Newport site, it would comply with federal law requiring notice and public comment. Aiken on Friday also allowed the Coast Guard to relocate Newport’s rescue helicopter to respond to flooding in the state of Washington.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/12/12/u-s-coast-guard-assures-oregon-lawmakers-of-newport-rescue-helicopters-return/>

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Commissioner Claire Hall
(22nd year/6 terms)

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Oregon lawmakers to grapple with economic confusion

RANDY STAPILUS
Oregon Capital Chronicle

In coming weeks, Oregon legislators will begin to consider what adjustments should be made to the state’s two-year budget and revenue picture.

Much of the attention has gone to transportation funding, and the likely ballot issue which may alter it. But the economic and funding issues lurking in the coming year are broader.

Legislators will not find coping with the full range of what comes next an easy task.

The condition of Oregon’s economy right now isn’t easy even to describe, much less predict. Some of the usual sources of information aren’t as reliably available as usual. Much federal economic data was halted earlier this year due to some agency cutbacks and the recent government shutdown. (Some resump-tions of data flow are expected soon.)

The Oregon Economic Forecast released Nov. 19 offers a heavily nuanced but partially optimistic take, suggesting the state of the economy isn’t as bad as it might have been.

“Despite a stall in net job creation in the first half of the year, aggregate income genera-tion has proven resilient, which is reflected in both personal and corporate income tax collec-tions,” the report reads. “This is an important real-time signal suggesting the economy is not in recession at present. It is also a reflection of persistent and elevated inflation, which lifts



Lawmakers will return to the Oregon Capitol next year to deal with budget issues. (Laura Tesler / Oregon Capital Chronicle)

nominal activity and in turn tax revenues.”

The report specifically says that the general fund has reg-istered an increase in projected revenue of \$309.5 million, the bulk of which (\$266.9 million) is projected to come from cor-porate income taxes.

Despite that, the report also said, “The projected ending balance as of June 30, 2027 is a negative \$63.1 million.” Many areas are stable or “softening,” including the cannabis sales which had expanded rapidly for several years after legalization but more recently has weakened.

That lopsided corporate con-tribution also means income for almost everyone else has been stagnant or down.

The most recent unem-employment statistics, from August (another example of the data gap at work), put the Oregon jobless rate at 5%,

eighth-highest among the states and District of Columbia.

The D.C. jobless rate was the highest in the nation, accounted for in large part by federal gov-ernment job cuts. In Oregon too, federal job cuts were among the largest areas of job reductions, even while state government job additions roughly offset that.

But the Oregon Employment Department also said that con-struction and manufacturing saw job losses in the last year even larger than those for the federal government — this at a time of relatively large construction in tech industry and residential projects.

The American economy has been described often this year as split between the artificial intel-ligence (AI) sector, and busi-nesses servicing it, and every-thing else. Nearly all of the increase this year in the national stock market, and most of the

national economic growth, has resulted from the massive trillion-dollar-level investment and spending related to AI. The “magnificent seven” megacor-porations — Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Tesla, Meta Platforms, Microsoft, and NVIDIA — which account for the bulk of stock market advances are heav-ily involved in AI.

Oregon, through its strong position in housing the data centers on which AI develop-ment relies, logically would be a beneficiary of some of this economic growth. To a limited degree it seems to be.

A data center industry report from May noted that “east-ern Oregon has emerged as a strategic haven for hyperscale development. From its abun-dant green power and favorable climate to political support and low costs, this under-the-radar region is shaping up to be the next great hyperscale frontier.”

But the story is mixed. Massive data center growth in places such as Boardman and Hillsboro so far mainly has resulted in one-and-out con-struction work, with eventual employment likely to be small-scale. (Construction, remem-ber, has been shedding jobs in Oregon despite all the data center construction.) Tax dol-lars (in line with the new state economics report) are likely to see some gains, but the centers are unlikely to transform local economies.

And the data centers also have generated some problems — boosts in electric power costs

and water quality issues among them — which have negative economic effects. Some of those negative effects could create state issues which may lead to calls for state program work and state spending.

And, of course, all this doesn’t even factor in the already-hot issue of transporta-tion funding, which seems likely to be upended by a new pro-posed ballot issue.

Unpredictability isn’t some-thing often measured by econ-omists. But economics watcher John Tapogna recently had this to say about the coming envi-ronment: “Many of Oregon’s systems—our schools, regula-tions, land use rules and per-mitting processes — were built for a different time, to solve yesterday’s problems,” he said. “But the future has never looked less like the past than it does right now.”

Managing these many new and conflicting economic pieces will represent a huge challenge for the short legislative session upcoming.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/12/04/oregon-law-makers-to-grapple-with-econom-ic-confusion/>

Oregon Capital Chronicle is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coa-lition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Oregon Capital Chronicle maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Lynne Terry for questions: info@oregoncapitalchronicle.com.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FOR THE SAKE OF TRANSPARENCY

For years, Lincoln County has prided itself on open government and fair deliberation. That’s why what has happened in recent Board of Commissioners meet-ings should concern every voter, regardless of politics.

Commissioner Casey Miller has repeatedly been

denied the most basic right of any elected offi-cial: the ability to place items on the agenda and to speak without being silenced. On October 1, October 15, November 5, November 26, and December 3, Miller was either blocked from intro-ducing topics or gaveled down mid-sentence. These weren’t disruptive out-bursts. They were routine

attempts to raise issues— from aerial spraying to transparency concerns— that many residents care deeply about.

Under Oregon’s Public Meetings Law, com-missioners are expected to deliberate in public. Silencing one commis-sioner prevents the public from hearing the full dis-cussion. Blocking agenda items prevents the issues

themselves from ever reaching daylight.

This isn’t about person-alities. It’s about process. When a commissioner cannot make a motion, cannot raise a Point of Order, and cannot even finish a question to County Counsel, some-thing fundamental has gone wrong in our county government.

Commissioner Hall has

presided over these break-downs as Chair. Instead of ensuring fair debate, she has allowed — and sometimes encouraged — a process that shuts down voices and shields key issues from public view.

Whether you agree with Miller or not, every voter should agree on this: no commissioner should be silenced, and no issue should be buried.

For the sake of trans-parency and basic fair-ness, recall Claire Hall - Because Fairness Matters.

Barbara Davis
Waldport

ONLINE POLL

Previous Poll

Where do you stand on you holiday shopping?

47.6%Finished already
33.4%Working on it
19%Haven't started

New Poll

Do you send holiday cards?

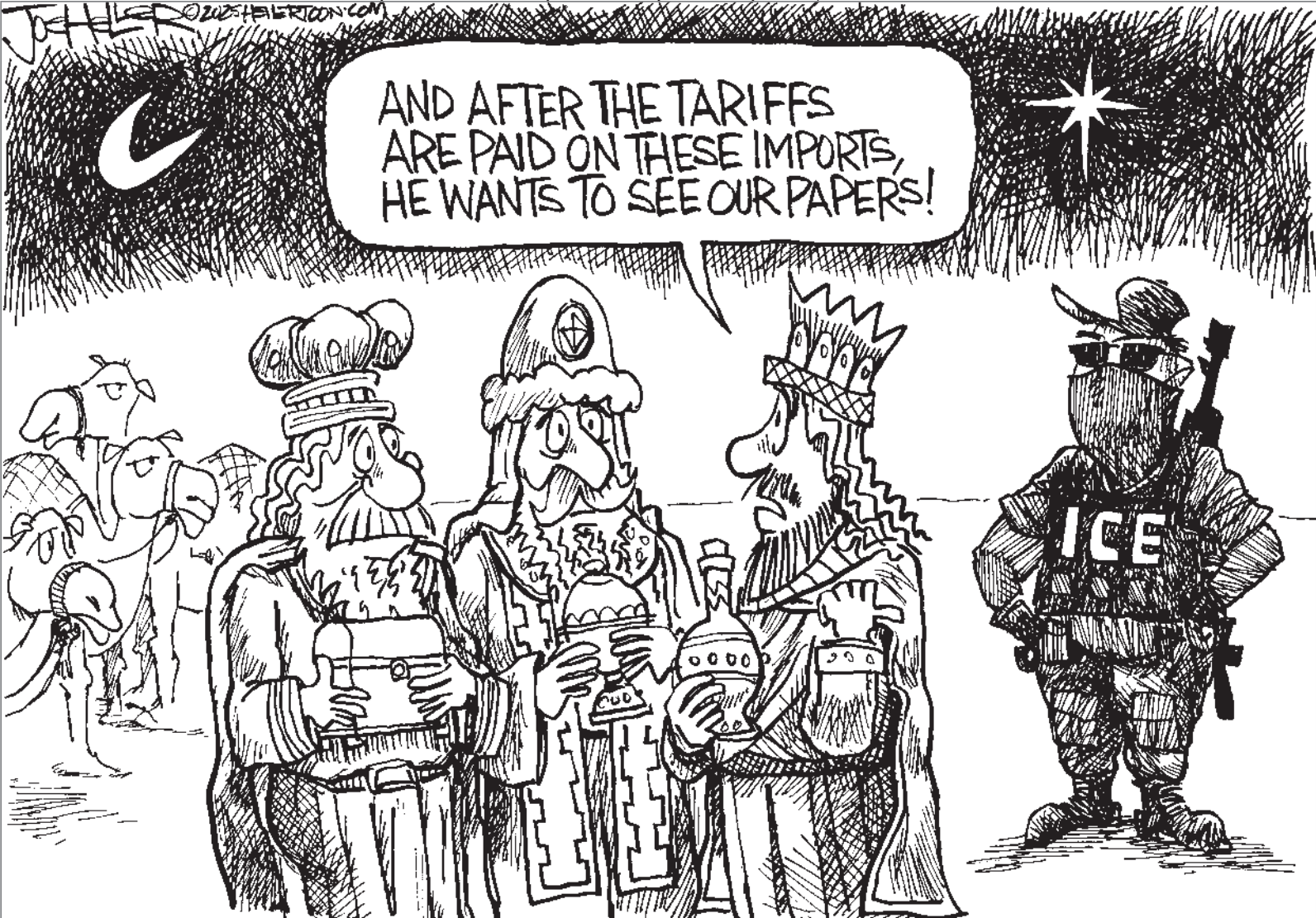
- Yes, every year
- Yes, sometimes
- No

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Commissioner Claire Hall
(22nd year/6 terms)





RECALL HALL

We must recall county commissioner Claire Hall for numerous reasons, such as ethics and non-performance.

This ad paid for by David Elton, a full-time resident of Lincoln County and the founder of "RECALL HALL" PAC. A political action committee registered with the IRS and the Oregon secretary of state (ORESTAR). Treasurer, Richard P. Burke.

CHASE

From Page A1

waited for assistance from other officers, he exited his car to contact the vehicle driver giving him orders to remain in the vehicle. The driver, later identified as 32-year-old Tyler Mullen, did not comply with lawful orders and began to leave in the vehicle. Mullen drove over a curb and fled the area in the vehicle traveling out of the parking lot and then northbound on

Highway 101, according to a release from Newport Police.

The officer returned to his patrol car and attempted to stop Mullen with his lights and sirens. Mullen refused to stop and continued driving northbound on Highway 101 at a high rate of speed. At Highway 101 and NW 25th Street intersection, Mullen clipped a vehicle in the turn lane causing minor damage causing no injuries to the vehicle's driver and did not stop.

Officers continued to pursue Mullen on the highway and were able to contact partnering agencies ahead of the pursuit to setup tire spike strips. Mullen drove over the spike strips causing damage to his multiple tires.

The vehicle eventually suffered loss of traction near SE 51 ST in Lincoln City, and would not travel any further. Mullen exited the vehicle and attempted to flee on foot where he was ultimately restrained by construction workers

at the scene. Mullen was placed under arrest and refused to identify himself, the release states.

Mullen was transported to the Lincoln County Jail where he was fingerprinted revealing his identity along with providing of photograph of him. This revealed he had active warrants for his arrest for a probation violation out of the Oregon State Parole Board.

In addition to the arrest warrant, Mullen was lodged at the Lincoln

County Jail for the following charges:

- Fleeing or Attempting to Elude Police Officer (Felony)
- Fleeing or Attempting to Elude Police Officer (Misdemeanor)
- Failure to Carry or Present a license
- Reckless Driving
- Reckless Endangering (x2)
- Failure to Perform Duties of a Driver (Misdemeanor x2)

The Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, Lincoln

City Police Department and the Oregon State Police assisted in the incident.

The case remained under investigation as of late Thursday, Dec. 11.

If you have any information regarding the case, you are asked to contact Officer Mangum of the Newport Police Department at 541-574-3348. The Newport Police Tip Line is available at 541-574-5455, or Text-a-Tip at 541-270-1856 or tipline@newportpolice.net.

VOLUNTEER

From Page A1

have the town, so it was about 150 per year.”

Jones said this year, the need has increased, and the price of food has also increased.

“It’s gotten more difficult to fundraise to support the costs associated with the food,” she said.

“The Eagles buy the food for these families, so we have expanded our horizons, and we did get a grant from the city and from the Siletz Tribe of \$16,000. Our food bill will probably be about \$26,000.

The Eagles conduct two silent auctions a year and a Christmas in July event to collect funds to support the food costs.

“People tend to be very generous,” Jones said. “It’s just the increase of families and the increase of food costs are what makes it difficult for us, but we are still managing, and this effort will continue, most definitely.”

The donations of new toys and nonperishable food items have been collected in large containers placed at various Lincoln

City business locations.

“I just like to give back,” Jones said. “Our motto at the Eagles is People helping People and that’s what we are.”

Over the past few weeks, large containers have been placed at businesses around Lincoln City to collect donated new, unwrapped toys and nonperishable food items to fill the Christmas

baskets. Food will also be purchased at McKay’s Market in Lincoln City.

Volunteers will pack the food in boxes donated by Dinosaur Electronics of Lincoln City Wednesday, Dec. 17 at the church.

“We’ll fill 550 food boxes,” Jones said. “We’re all volunteers and we couldn’t do this without the volunteers.

The food and toys will

be distributed to area families North to Cascade Head, east to Van Duzer Corridor, and south to the Siletz River.

If you’d like to make a donation, contact the Lincoln City Eagles Lodge 541-996-3679.

Who We Are is a frequent Lincoln County Leader presentation highlighting the people in our community.

LANDSLIDE

From Page A1

issued additional evacuation recommendations on Dec.12. Two of the evacuated residents have been connected to the American Red Cross for services.

Community members are encouraged to use extreme caution in and around the Siletz River to avoid risk of injury from debris and dangers associated with the heightened river level.

Lincoln County

Emergency Management’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated following the Dec. 12 slide at approximately milepost 14 on Highway 299.

“The site is still active and can be dangerous,” Lincoln County Emergency Management stated in a release Dec. 14. “Avoid the impacted and surrounding area. There have been reports of debris washing up on the shores of the river, the Siletz Bay, and ocean beaches. Community members are encouraged to avoid climbing on or moving the debris. Any discovery of items with personal identification should be reported to local law enforcement.”

There is no nearby detour available. Travelers should avoid the area and plan alternate routes, and they are encouraged to check TripCheck.com for the latest road conditions before heading out.

According to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), it is unknown how long the Highway 229 closure will last. Geotechnical crews need time to assess the slope and determine next steps before a timeline can be established, ODOT officials said.

“Because the slide has taken out a portion of the road, this will be a long-term closure,” ODOT states in a release. “The closure follows several days of heavy rain and high water in the area.”

According to the release, ODOT crews have been responding to weather-related impacts along OR 229 in recent days, including emergency repairs to a sunken grade area near milepost 9 on Wednesday.

“At this time, it is not known whether the closure will last days, weeks, months, or longer: the release advises. “ODOT geotechnical crews will

need time to assess the slope and determine next steps before a timeline can be established.”

Additional Information about the Landslide

- Weather: www.weather.org
- Road closures: tripcheck.com
- Lincoln County Emergency Alerts: sign up to receive messages directly - member.everbridge.net/892807736721689/notif
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT): www.oregon.gov/odot/pages/news-releases.aspx

Landslide Alert Issued

On Dec. 8, the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries issued a landslide alert for Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Hood River, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Tillamook, Washington, and Yamhill counties.

Debris flows are rapidly moving, extremely destructive landslides, the

alert cautioned. They can contain boulders and logs transported in a fast-moving soil and water slurry down steep hillsides and through narrow canyons. They can easily travel a mile or more. A debris flow moves faster than a person can run. People, structures, and roads located below steep slopes in canyons and near the mouths of canyons may be at serious risk, according to the alert.

If your home, work, or travel route is in a watch area:

- **Stay alert.** Track the flood watch by radio, TV, weather radio, or online. If told to evacuate, do so immediately.
- **Listen.** Unusual sounds might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together. A trickle of falling mud or debris may precede larger landslides. If you think there is danger of a landslide, leave immediately.

- **Watch the water.** If water in a stream or creek suddenly turns muddy or the amount of water flowing suddenly decreases or increases, this is a warning that the flow has been affected upstream. You should immediately leave the area because a debris flow may soon be coming downstream.
- **Travel with extreme caution.** Assume roads are not safe. Be alert when driving, especially at night. Embankments along roadsides may fail, sending rock and debris onto the road.

For more landslide and debris flow information: <https://www.oregon.gov/dogami/landslide/Pages/debrisflow.aspx>

Before you travel get for up-to-date information at www.tripcheck.com and follow developments of the Highway 229 landslide online at the Lincoln County Leader website and in the Wednesday print editions of The Leader.

Get the facts!
RecallHall.com

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To: All our Clients and Friends

WE WISH YOU
Happy
HOLIDAYS
(A GREAT NEW YEAR)

Thank you so much for your business, loyalty, and friendship! We look forward to working with you throughout 2026!

The Kim Duty Agency of Farmers Insurance
Kim Duty and Sierra Lundy

FARMERS
INSURANCE

Stephen Ayers Lovejoy Sr.

August 9, 1947 – December 7, 2025

Stephen Ayers Lovejoy Sr., a devoted husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and respected Oregon attorney, passed away surrounded by family. He was born on August 9, 1947, in Palo Alto, California, to Jack and Alice Mae Lovejoy.

Steve dedicated himself to education early in life, attending and graduating from Bishop White Seminary before earning both his undergraduate degree and Juris Doctorate from Gonzaga University and Gonzaga Law School. He was admitted to the Oregon State Bar in 1973 and went on to practice law in Lincoln County for 50 years.

During his long and distinguished career, Steve represented countless neighbors, friends, and community members, changing many lives through his unwavering advocacy. He worked alongside famed Wyoming attorney Gerry Spence on a Lincoln County murder case later detailed in Spence's book The Smoking Gun. A formidable trial lawyer, Steve was known for his tenacity, sharp intellect, and fierce commitment to his clients. He earned the enduring respect of the Lincoln County Bar and Bench, as well as the friendship of many he encountered along the way.

Steve lived a vibrant and adventurous life. A licensed pilot, he flew his Cessna throughout the Northwest. He loved sailing, spent cherished time living in

Mexico, and traveled the world with his beloved wife, Marci D. Lovejoy, and their children. He was a car collector, a sometimes-mechanic, and a self-taught jack-of-all-trades who delighted in solving problems with his hands. When he wasn't in the courtroom or working on one of his many projects, Steve could often be found cheering on his beloved Seattle Mariners.

Steve and Marci were married for more than 47 years after meeting in Lincoln County, where they went on to build a loving and lively family. Steve was the proud father of seven children: Joseph Lionel Lovejoy of Bend, Oregon; Stephen Ayers Lovejoy Jr. of Seattle, Washington; Cinthia Ann Lovejoy Hash of Otis, Oregon; Gari Lynn Lovejoy of Newport, Oregon; Jacqueline Rae Lovejoy of Bozeman, Montana; Gregory Dixson Lovejoy of Otis, Oregon; and Thomas Brian Lovejoy of Tigard, Oregon. He was also a devoted grandfather to many grandchildren and, more recently, a delighted great-grandfather.

Steve's legacy is one of integrity, courage, intellect, and love. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, colleagues, and the many people whose lives he touched.

Steve's celebration of life was on December 12, 2025 at the Eagles lodge in Lincoln City Oregon.

RECALL HALL

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After nearly two-year lapse, Congress renews Secure Rural Schools funding

ALEX BAUMHARDT
Oregon Capital Chronicle

After letting funding lapse for nearly two years, Congress voted to renew crucial federal funding that rural counties and schools have counted on for a quarter century.

The U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday evening voted 399-5 to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act through September 2026, and to provide lapsed payments for the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years. The vote came after a year-long campaign led by bipartisan federal lawmakers from the West.

The U.S. Senate in June unanimously voted to reauthorize the act. It now goes to the president to be signed into law.

“The Secure Rural Schools program has been a lifeline for rural communities across Oregon since I originally authored the program back in 2000,” Oregon’s U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, a Democrat, said in a statement. “I’m relieved the House has finally done its job with the long-overdue passage of my bill to return the safety net for critical services to communities that need it the most.”

Wyden co-authored the original law that provided tens of millions each year for rural schools and communities that



Wind River Middle School, in Carson, Wash., closed in the fall of 2025 after Secure Rural Schools Act funding lapsed. (Courtesy photo from Stevenson-Carson School District)

previously benefited from revenue generated by natural resource industries on public lands. Since then, it has provided \$7 billion in payments to more than 700 counties and 4,400 school districts across 40 states and Puerto Rico that have large swaths of federal land within their borders.

Oregon, where more than half of the state consists of federal land, has experienced the biggest loss of any state since the funding lapsed in 2023: nearly \$48.7 million in money for rural roads, public services and schools, according to a September report from the D.C.-based Center for American Progress, a liberal public policy and think tank. Idaho has missed out on \$21.3 million, Alaska more than \$12.6 million and Washington more than \$14.7 million.

Overall, states have lost out on more than \$207 million in the two years since the act expired, the Center for American Progress found.

Twice since December 2024, the Senate has voted to renew the act in an effort led by Wyden and Idaho’s senior U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo, a Republican.

But each time the Senate approved it, the House failed to take a vote. The bill lapsed in 2023 and counties haven’t gotten payments since early 2024. House Republicans most recently failed to reauthorize the act in the tax and spending cut megalaw they passed in July.

With just weeks before the House is due to wrap its work for the year, Wyden, Crapo and 83 bipartisan lawmakers from the Senate and the House sent a letter to U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, a Democrat from New York, urging them to take a vote on the act before they recessed.

Just 12 hours after receiving the letter, the House announced it would fast-track consideration and a vote on the bill.

Washington’s U.S. Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, a Democrat representing southwest Washington’s 3rd Congressional District, led the passage of the bill in the House.

“The Secure Rural Schools program is absolutely critical, and the passage of this legislation is beyond overdue,” she said in a statement. “Candidly, the only reason it took this long is because way too many folks in D.C. have been blissfully ignorant about how disastrous the lapse of SRS has been for timber communities in

Southwest Washington and across the West. Schools have closed up, teachers have been laid off, and our kids have been left footing the bill for Congress’s neglect.”

Since the funding lapsed, schools in Skamania County in her district have laid off staff and a middle school was forced to close.

In Alaska, the failure to reauthorize the program caused rural school districts to cut their budgets, particularly in southeast Alaska, home to the vast Tongass National Forest.

Rep. Nick Begich, R-Alaska, voted for the bill on Friday, and both of the state’s senators — Republicans Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan — supported it as well.

Reporter James Brooks of the Alaska Beacon contributed to this report.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/12/09/after-nearly-two-year-lapse-congress-renews-secure-rural-schools-funding/>

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Gov. Kotek, lawmakers call for streamlined permit, land use rules amid concern for Oregon business

SHAANTH NANGUNERI
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek called upon Oregon’s business community on Monday, Dec. 8, to support her plan to create more jobs and streamline the permitting process, as the state battles lagging economic growth and a reputation for crushing businesses with taxes and regulation.

The governor made her remarks at the annual Oregon Leadership Summit in the Oregon Convention Center’s Portland ballroom on Monday. The economic policy forum was established in 2002 when the state was grappling with a recession and high unemployment.

Last week, Kotek formally announced her plans to run for reelection in 2026, when she will have to defend her record against what many business leaders perceive as an unfriendly statewide market filled with regulations, fees and taxes that make it impossible to survive in the state. On Monday, she touted her previously-unveiled “prosperity roadmap” which has come with a goal of reforming permit systems, increasing global trade and providing corporate tax incentives.

While some Oregon lawmakers echoed her priorities at Monday’s summit, the governor’s roughly 20-minute speech

in front of hundreds of industry leaders was largely a defense of her record. She argued that she has planted the seeds for improvement in Oregon’s business, education and housing sectors, framing some of the state’s challenges as a result of the Trump administration’s priorities.

“Oregon now has to focus on the seamless, continuous execution of these policies and investments. We are in the process of continuous performance improvement across our state,” Kotek said. “We’re making real progress on these core issues, each of them vital to Oregon’s ability and wellbeing, and because of that, we have laid the foundation that we need to have to respond to today’s economic headwinds.”

Kotek also called upon attendees to help enact her prosperity roadmap, setting an end-of-year deadline to name a chief prosperity officer and council of leaders who would be able to make policy recommendations. She said she is planning to introduce legislation in the 2026 session which would create a fast-tracked program to provide permits for “large projects that can create jobs and grow our economy.” She also said she plans to seek one-time funding from the Oregon Legislature dedicated to land ready for industrial development.

“The takeaway that we should all focus on is: there’s an opportunity here,” Kotek said. “There’s an openness, and I think a bipartisan openness, to try new things.”

This year’s summit was themed “At a Crossroads,” as the Beaver State battles rising unemployment, declining population growth, economic uncertainty from President Donald Trump’s tariff policies and test scores for students in English, math and science that have yet

to return to pre-pandemic levels. In an 11-page report released ahead of the conference, analysts for the forum described Oregon as “a state built on growth and innovation now confronting the limits of both.”

“What you want to do is ensure that we are competitive, that we look to innovations, but the approach has got to be inclusive,” U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat who helped launch the summit in 2002, told the Capital Chronicle. “You’ve got to make sure that people who are affected are having a chance to get new jobs and new opportunities and have the fruits of innovation.”

Oregon lawmakers seek permitting, land use readjustments

The one area of consensus between lawmakers on the left and right on Monday appeared to be easing the regulatory burden facing businesses, with legislators offering suggestions for changes to Oregon law in the 2026 session. House Speaker Julie Fahey, D-Eugene, said Monday that she was “open” to conversations about easing land use regulations to help spur development across the state. For more than 50 years, the state’s land use system has regulated residential, industrial and commercial development to protect Oregon’s natural resources and unique environment, including through limiting where and how cities can grow.

“It is worth looking at, ‘How can we introduce some additional flexibility to the system while still keeping what works?’” she said. “The land use system prevents sprawl. It helps preserve our valuable farm and forest, one of the big economic drivers in the Willamette Valley, and it protects Oregon’s natural beauty.”

House Majority Leader Ben

Bowman, D-Tigard, said he was bringing forward two ideas in the short legislative session set for February 2026 that are “not going to change the world overnight.” One proposal would set clear requirements regardless of rules changing after a company has applied for a permit, and another would ensure “timeline clarity” given that some permit applications can stretch on for years.

“This is not super sexy. This is about procurement. This is about hiring. This is about permitting timelines. This is about the rulemaking process,” he said. “We need to streamline all of that, not so that we’re saying yes to everybody, but so that we can actually achieve our own stated goals as a government.”

Although Bowman and Fahey did not elaborate further on any details, their ideas could receive some bipartisan support. Senate Minority Leader Bruce Starr, R-Dundee, said he did not disagree with Bowman, adding that he was hopeful that lawmakers could leave the summit with a unified goal in streamlining land use rules.

“It’s too expensive. It’s too kind of cumbersome, the ability for virtually anybody to, with a stroke of a pen and appeal, to stop a process,” he said. “We got to figure out how we could move forward on this together.”

At the same time, it’s unclear the extent to which lawmakers have found consensus on the issue. Starr cited Austin, Texas as a positive example of an area streamlining its housing regulations, while Fahey criticized the state of Texas for allowing “eternal sprawl.”

House Minority Leader Lucetta Elmer, R-McMinnville also spoke on Monday alongside Bowman, Starr and Senate Majority Leader Kayse Jama, D-Portland.

Elmer called for the state to

“be more competitive in our taxes,” and referred to the signatures gathered by opponents of the \$4.3 billion transportation package Oregon Democrats passed during a special legislative session in September. Critics have reported receiving nearly double the 78,116 signatures necessary to place the measure on the November 2026 ballot, with the goal of undoing the increased taxes and vehicular fees the package mandates.

But she was also hopeful lawmakers could find consensus.

“Senator Starr and I have lots of great solutions. Bowman has said he wants to work with me, so, I mean, today’s a good day,” Elmer said. “We can turn it around. This is a gorgeous place. We can be the pioneering state once again.”

Although she did not speak on stage at the event, Kotek’s top political rival and state Sen. Christine Drazan, R-Canby, attended with several of her Republican colleagues. When announcing that she would be running for governor in 2026, she said in late October that small businesses such as welders, builders, farmers and shop owners “are being buried under taxes and regulations and red tape every single day,” while calling for expedited building permits and lower taxes and fees.

<https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/2025/12/08/gov-kotek-lawmakers-call-for-streamlined-permit-land-use-rules-amid-concern-for-oregon-business/>

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RECALL HALL

**We must recall county commissioner
Claire Hall for numerous reasons, such
as ethics and non-performance.**



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethics....Hall is currently under investigation by “OGE”, the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, for “Open Meetings” violations of law.• Non communication with Judge Bachart, DA Jenna Wallace and Sherriff’s office (Curt Landers). See September 18, 2024 meeting video. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freedom of Speech violations of public comment section during commissioner meetings.• Non communication with general public and voters seeking “redress of Grievances”• Unethical removal and banishment of commissioner Miller. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illegal and inappropriate banishment from commissioner meetings by those Hall deemed as opposition. (Christine Hutchins)...later reversed after proved to be either Illegal or wrongful action.• It is time to end “Strong Arm” and bully tactics at the county commissioners office! |
|--|--|--|

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Lightkeepers open the house for the holidays

A Christmas celebration as old-time as anything on the Oregon Coast happens again this year at the Heceta Head Lightkeeper's House, just below the lighthouse north of Florence off Highway 101.

This year's Victorian Christmas will feature all the staples, from caroling to hot chocolate and cookies and one of the best views on the coast. It's also no secret that it's one of Santa's places to visit, so bring the kids.

Take either of the first two turns (left or right) north of the Cape Creek Bridge/tunnel down to the parking lot. Parking is \$10 but admission to the lightkeeper's house is free. It's a brisk walk up

See HOLIDAYS, page B2



Photo by Tony Reed / County Media, Inc.

Rising Stars: How a small scholarship sparked a \$1.6M legacy

LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

It began with a simple question at Newport High School, one that no one realized would change hundreds of students' lives.

In 2017, Newport High School's College and Career Coordinator Melinda Dye approached longtime ASPIRE volunteer Ron Brocklehurst with a dilemma. A small \$250 scholarship was no longer being funded. Would he, by chance, be willing to help cover it?

Ron and his wife Barbara didn't just cover it, they transformed it. That year alone, they donated \$7,000 of their own money so that seven students could receive \$1,000 scholarships. What seemed like a



ASPIRE volunteer and Rising Stars founder Ron Brocklehurst give the "Thumbs Up" after receiving the Partner In Education Award at last year's Compass Awards ceremony. (Courtesy photo from Susan Schuytema)

generous one-time gift became the spark for something much bigger. Ron, a CPA with deep ties to clients in the Los Angeles area, began

See LEGACY, page B2



Gray Whale breaching off the Oregon Coast. (Courtesy photos from Oregon Parks)



Watch for the spray to spot the whales.

Whale Watching Week returns to the Oregon Coast

JEREMY C. RUARK
Lincoln County Leader

Oregon State Parks will host Winter Whale Watch Week along the Oregon Coast Saturday, Dec. 27 through Wednesday, Dec. 31.

Trained Oregon State Park volunteers will be stationed at 14 sites along the Oregon Coast from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to help visitors spot gray whales on their southward migration to the calving lagoons in Mexico.

The sites are some of the best places to watch for whales on the Oregon Coast. A map

See WHALE, page B2



This is the Whale Watching Center at Depoe Bay.



Trained Oregon State Park volunteers will be stationed at 14 sites along the Oregon Coast from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to help visitors spot the gray

It's a fact, Oregon grows more Christmas trees than any other state

Climate Researchers want to keep it that way

MIA MALDONADO
Oregon Capital Chronicle

As Oregonians prepare for Christmas, researchers are looking into how they can keep the state's Christmas tree industry alive for decades to come.

Oregon grows more Christmas trees than any other state in the country,

See TREES, page B4

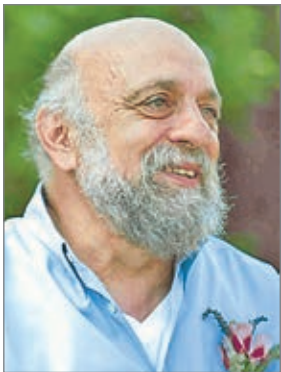


Priya Rajarapu is an assistant professor at Oregon State University's College of Forestry. She is a Christmas tree specialist, researching new climate resilience strategies at the university campus in Corvallis and at the North Willamette Research and Extension Center in Aurora. (Courtesy photo from Oregon State University)

\$10,000 Matching Challenge for the Ron Spisso Lighthouse Fund

The Oregon Coast Community College Foundation has announced a major boost for the Ron Spisso Lighthouse Fund for Small Business Success: a \$10,000 matching-gift challenge issued by Rob Thompson, owner of Thompson's Sanitary Service in Newport and a former longtime client of Spisso's.

Thompson will match all gifts made to the Lighthouse Fund dollar-for-dollar, up to \$10,000, between now



Ron Spisso
and Jan. 31, 2026.
The Lighthouse Fund, created earlier this year, honors the legacy of Ron Spisso, the beloved Small



Rob Thompson
Business Management Coordinator who served Lincoln County

See FUND, page B3



RECALL HALL

We must recall county commissioner Claire Hall for numerous reasons, such as ethics and non-performance.

This ad paid for by David Elton, a full-time resident of Lincoln County and the founder of "RECALL HALL" PAC. A political action committee registered with the IRS and the Oregon secretary of state (ORESTAR). Treasurer, Richard P. Burke.

Chamber of Commerce presents annual awards

The Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce has presented five awards recognizing local businesses and organizations.

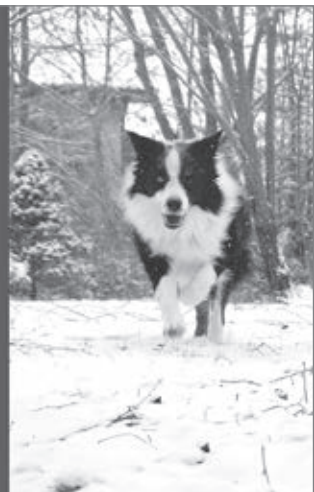
- BEST NEW BUSINESS:**
Fancy Fish & Aquascapes
Owners, John & Beth Towers
- EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE:**
Beachcrest Brewing Company
Owner, Amy White
- BUSINESS OF THE YEAR:**
Grocery Outlet
Owners Richard & Jenni Miller
- BEAUTIFICATION AWARD:**
Lincoln City Parks & Recreation
Director Jeanne Sprague, Parks & Recreation Board Members, Jane Mulholland, Beth Towers & Donna Eddy
- COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD:**
North Lincoln Fire & Rescue
Cody Heidt & Nancy Oksenholt
The award presentation was conducted at the Lincoln City Cultural Center Nov. 13.

SHERIFF’S TIP OF THE WEEK

SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER WEATHER
Winter weather can mean fun in the snow, but it is also a time we should pay close attention to the safety of our pets.

Here are some safety tips to follow as the weather gets colder:

1. Monitor your pet’s food intake. Pets who live outdoors should be fed a bit more in the winter because they need the extra calories to stay warm. Indoor pets typically receive less exercise during cold weather and may require fewer calories.
2. Oregon law requires all companion animals be provided shelter from the elements. They should have fresh water put out a couple of times a day. Consider a special bowl that prevents the water from freezing.



3. In severe weather, allow outdoor pets in your house or garage.
4. If your pet goes outdoors, be aware of the temperature. Pets can get frostbite very easily on the ears, tail, and paws.
5. When walking your dog in freezing conditions, check their paws to make sure ice is not building up between toes and that salt or gravel is not irritating the skin.
6. If your dog is a swimmer, keep them on a leash around open water or unstable ice. Hypothermia can set in quickly and your dog may be unable to get out of the water.
7. Before you start your car, ensure no cats are napping in the warm place your car provides by honking the horn or

banging on the hood.

8. If you are decorating for the holidays, keep ornaments out of the reach of your pets. Remember that poinsettias, holly, mistletoe, and other plants can be toxic if ingested.
9. Ingesting anti-freeze can be fatal for dogs and cats. It has a sweet taste and even a small amount can cause severe kidney damage or death. You can use a pet-safe antifreeze, look for brands containing propylene glycol instead of ethylene glycol. If you spill anti-freeze, soak it up immediately. Clay cat litter works well to absorb spills, discard the litter once the anti-freeze has been absorbed.

For more information and tips visit www.lincolncountysheriff.net

HOLIDAYS

From Page B1

to the house, but shuttle service to the Keeper’s House will be available for free.

The State Park will open the historical light-house as well, so bring your flashlight and jacket to explore it after dark.

The house will be open December 21.

Holiday lights will be on display through Jan. 2.

WHALE

From Page B1

of volunteer-staffed sites is available online at the official event webpage: https://oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=thingstodo.dsp_whaleWatching

This is a great time to see one of the world’s longest migrations, as the gray whales are traveling by our coastline,” said Park Ranger Peter McBride.

The National Oceanic

and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced an end to an Unusual Mortality Event impacting gray whales in 2023 when it looked like the population was rebounding. But since then, the population has declined to its lowest level since the 1970s. NOAA now estimates about 13,000 gray whales along the West Coast.

In a previous interview with the Lincoln County Leader, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department spokesman Chris Havel said people are fascinated by the whales for good reason.

“People are clever and

good at inventing and building ways to survive and thrive, and wildlife, like whales, do the same thing through sheer awesome power,” he said.

“There’s still some mystery about their lives and seeing them in action is a thrill. Seeing them in real life is also a reminder of how we affect all marine life and have a responsibility to eliminate pollution and be careful stewards of the planet’s resources.”

Havel adds that people are naturally attracted to the whales’ beauty, mystery, and power.

“But we also appreciate being reminded in these natural systems, and it

makes us all feel part of the family,” he said.

Winter Whale Watch Week provides an opportunity to see not only the gray whales but other coastal wildlife including birds and other marine mammals with help from trained volunteers and park rangers.

The Whale Watching Center in Depoe Bay will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 27-31. Visitors to the center can enjoy interactive whale exhibits and take in the panoramic ocean views. Binoculars are provided. Park rangers from Oregon State Parks will also be on hand to answer questions about the

whales.

All Whale Watch Week visitors are encouraged to dress for the weather, to bring binoculars and to follow beach safety guidelines such as remaining out of fenced areas, knowing the tide schedule and always keeping an eye on the surf. Go to <https://visittheoregoncoast.com/beach-safety/> for a list of safety tips.

For more information about coast parks and campgrounds, visit <https://stateparks.oregon.gov/>

Visitors are encouraged to share their photos and videos from Winter Whale Watch on social media using #ORWhaleWatch.

Support these Local Nonprofit Organizations!



Samaritan HOUSE

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Samaritan House envisions a community where all families can live together in safe, affordable, and sustainable housing; and all generations are able to thrive.

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Phone: 541-574-8898
Sam House
samfamshelter.org



Please donate

LEGACY

From Page B1

sharing the stories of resilient Newport students, describing the need, and inviting others to join. The response surprised even him. “It is such a blessing,” Brocklehurst said. “It’s just incredible the support we’ve received.”

Year after year, the momentum grew. Donations increased. More students applied. The program expanded into Toledo Jr/Sr High

and Eddyville Charter. And now, just eight years after that first conversation, Rising Stars has awarded \$1.6 million to Lincoln County students.

Last year, the program awarded \$350,000 in scholarships. The minimum scholarship has grown from \$3,000 to \$5,000, with top awards reaching \$10,000. For many students, these amounts aren’t just symbolic awards, they help make post-secondary education a reality.

Rising Stars emphasizes access to community colleges and trade programs that can lead directly into well-paying careers. “The popularity of trade school continues to grow, with electricians being a big thing now,” Brocklehurst said. “I’ve also seen more females wanting to get into trade school.”

Four-year university students are also supported, but the heart of the program lies in opening doors for students who might otherwise walk away from college or training simply because it felt financially out of reach.

“If a kid wants to continue school, it’s going to happen,” he said.

Unlike many scholarship programs, Rising Stars has no minimum GPA requirement. Instead, it recognizes academic effort, personal resilience, and the many forms of excellence found in LCSD’s student body.

Applicants submit transcripts, a resume,

and an essay telling the story about the challenges they’ve faced, the obstacles they’ve overcome, and the goals they hope to achieve. Brocklehurst said some students have endured hardships most adults never experience, and for many, the application process becomes an act of reflection and courage.

“It’s staggering what some of these kids have overcome,” Brocklehurst said. “It gives hope for the future. These are just great kids, really strong and resilient kids.”

The program now includes several special awards such as the R.E.A.L. Scholarships (Recognizing Excellence in Academics and Life), the Brocklehurst Grit Award, honoring students who have persevered through extraordinary adversity, and memorial scholarships honoring the lives of former students.

No one in that 2017 conversation imagined that a discontinued \$250 scholarship would ignite an effort that has now invested \$1.6 million into the futures of local students. But Ron Brocklehurst and Rising Stars show what can happen when one person sees potential in students and whose generosity inspires many others to join in.

And it all started with one small question: Would you be willing to help?

Lincoln County Leader

5	6	7		8	1	3	4	2
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	8		4	5			9	
	2		6	9			7	4
7			2	4	5		8	
			3		7	2		
4		9						1
		8			4		2	
	1		5	7			6	

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

SUDOKU

数独

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers.

The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once.



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Commissioner Claire Hall
(22nd year/6 terms)**



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Nonprofit organizations, Oregon Tribes awarded \$1.4M

The Spirit Mountain Community Fund (SMCF) awarded 28 grants totaling \$1,447,909 to nonprofit organizations and Oregon Tribes supporting programming in the areas of arts & culture, education, environmental preservation, health and public safety. Grant funds were awarded during the fourth quarter check presentation at the Grand Ronde Governance Center on December 10, 2025.

During the check presentation, the Community Fund awarded 11 small grants worth \$63,750, 11 large grants worth \$585,000 and eight tribal grants worth \$799,159.

Among the nonprofits to receive grants from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund this quarter were:

- Benton County: Grace Center for Adult Day Services - \$50,000
- Lane County: Ophelias Place - \$50,000; The Arc of Lane County - \$100,000; Oregon Health and Education Collaborative - \$7,500
- Lincoln County: Oregon Coast Aquarium - \$100,000; Nuu-da’Mv-ne’ - \$7,500
- Marion County: Liberty House - \$50,000; Assistance League of Salem-Keizer - \$7,500; Bridgeworks Oregon - \$3,750
- Multnomah County: Elevate Oregon - \$50,000; Water Watch of Oregon - \$25,000;
- Northwest Alliance for Alternative Media and Education - \$7,500; Oregon TRIO Association - \$7,500; Rehab Sisters - \$7,500; Street Roots - \$7,500
- Washington County: Domestic Violence Resource Center, Inc. - \$50,000
- Yamhill County: Juliette’s House - \$50,000; Yamhill Community Care - \$35,000; Yamhill County CASA - \$25,000; McMinnville Area Habitat for Humanity - \$7,500
- Oregon Tribal Community: Burns Paiute Tribe - \$100,000; Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians - \$100,000; Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon - \$100,000; Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon - \$99,159; Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation - \$100,000; Coquille Indian Tribe - \$100,000; The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs - \$100,000; The Klamath Tribes - \$100,000

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon is committed to honoring the Tribal traditions of sharing and giving back. In 1997, through a formal compact agreement between the Tribe and the State of Oregon, Spirit Mountain Community Fund was established as a way for the Tribe to give back to the local communities that supported them during their most vulnerable time, the termination era.

Through the Community Fund, the Tribe donates 6 percent of casino revenue to nonprofit organizations throughout northwest Oregon. We accomplish this by providing competitive grant programs in an 11-county service area, as well as to government agencies in Lane, Polk, Tillamook and Yamhill counties, and to the nine federally recognized Tribes of Oregon.

The primary focus is to improve the quality of life for all people living in northwest Oregon through community investments consistent with the Tribe’s culture and values. Since inception, the Community Fund has awarded 3,482 grants totaling \$103,228,571.

FUND

From Page B1

entrepreneurs for more than 25 years through OCCC’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Spisso passed away in 2023, but his presence remains deeply felt among the many small businesses he coached, supported, and celebrated.

“Ron helped our business and countless others turn challenges into opportunities,” Thompson said. “He brought out people’s strengths, and his impact continues to ripple through our community. This match is my way of helping extend that spirit of support.”

Ron Spisso joined OCCC in 1991, shortly after relocating to Oregon, and later earned his MBA from Oregon State University while continuing to guide small business owners across the county. He was known for his patience, practical expertise, and his signature “deli stories,” valuable lessons drawn from his earlier experience running the Inlet Deli in Barnegat Light, New Jersey.

These stories were more than entertaining anecdotes; they helped clients feel understood, encouraged, and ready to move forward. And, very often, Spisso found that many small businesses here in Lincoln County, whether they were engaged in food services or not, shared common traits with the starkly seasonal, tourism-driven delicatessen in far-off New Jersey.

The Ron Spisso Lighthouse Fund provides small, timely financial supports to local entrepreneurs facing one-time

expenses that can be barriers to growth—such as certification costs, licensing fees, equipment needs, or similar modest but essential investments. Examples include helping a vacation-rental cleaner afford the \$450 Property Manager’s License course needed to expand their business.

“This match will significantly expand the Lighthouse Fund’s reach and impact,” OCCC Vice President of Engagement Dave Price said. “The generosity of Rob and Aimee Thompson in making this matching gift, which will support a great number of businesses in the community they love, is truly awe-inspiring.”

“Ron specialized in helping people like Rob and Aimee take the next step in their businesses,” OCCC Foundation Director of Development Jeanette Campagna said. “We hope those who knew Ron, who learned from him, or simply believe in the power of small business, will consider contributing. There has never been a better time to give. Ask any small business owner across our county – they will tell you these are uncertain times, and

every new emergency resource could be a difference-maker for someone they know.”

Gifts to the Lighthouse Fund can be made through the Oregon Coast Community College Foundation. Donors who give before Jan. 31, 2026, will have their contributions doubled thanks to the Thompson match. To give or learn more, visit www.oregoncoast.edu/lighthousefund or call 541-867-8531.

Oregon Coast Community College serves Lincoln County at campuses in Newport, Lincoln City, Waldport, and Toledo, offering degree programs, workforce training, and community education opportunities. As it has for more than 30 years, even before Ron Spisso joined the team, the OCCC SBDC provides confidential, no-cost advising to anyone who requests it.

Learn more at oregoncoast.edu or by calling 541-867-8546.






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-District paid medical, vision & dental

District Office Manager
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-District paid medical, vision & dental


Substitute Bus Drivers
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TREES

From Page B1

selling 3 million trees in 2023 and contributing \$118 million to the state’s economy, according to the most recent federal data available. More than half of those trees are sold in California, with other Western states, Mexico, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Panama, Singapore and Maldives among Oregon growers’

top markets, according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

The state’s mild summers and wet winters are ideal for growing popular Christmas tree species like the native noble and Douglas firs, but researchers are looking beyond native species to find trees that can withstand hotter and drier conditions.

Priya Rajarapu, an assistant professor and Christmas tree specialist at Oregon State University,

works closely with growers and spends much of her time diagnosing sick trees.

“The two most significant problems that we have right now with climate change is one, keeping the seedlings alive after they are transplanted in the field the first year, and two, the older trees are more stressed because there is not enough water, which makes them prone to pests and disease attacks more frequently,” she told the

Capital Chronicle.

Rajarapu is researching how species from Eurasia are growing in Oregon — a project that started under her predecessor, Chal Landgren, who collected Nordmann fir and Turkish fir seeds from Georgia and Turkey. Those trees are now growing at a 3-acre site she oversees in Aurora. So far, Rajarapu has found that they are more tolerant to drought and pests, which reduces the need for chemical

insecticides.

The species are a growing percentage of Oregon’s crop, and the research supports a vital part of Oregon’s economy that supports seasonal jobs in rural areas, Rajarapu said.

“When you buy a real tree, you’re supporting a local Oregon business, and you should take pride in it, because we are the leading producers of the trees in the country,” Rajarapu said.

[https://](https://oregoncapitalchronicle.com/briefs/oregon-grows-more-christmas-trees-than-other-states-researchers-push-for-climate-resilience/)

oregoncapitalchronicle.com/briefs/oregon-grows-more-christmas-trees-than-other-states-researchers-push-for-climate-resilience/

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Christmas SERVICES

Atonement Lutheran

In-Person & on Zoom

Christmas Eve Candlelight at 7 p.m.

Christmas Day Worship at 10 a.m.

Zoom link <https://zoom.us/j/99421101904>

2315 N. Coast Hwy • Newport • 541-265-2554



CHRISTMAS EVE

Candlelight Service

12.24.2025 • 6 P.M.

 **NewportNaz**

227 NW 12 St., Newport

2025 HOLIDAY SERVICES

Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH, NEWPORT	OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE
Christmas Eve 5 p.m. Children’s Mass	Christmas Day: 11 a.m. Mass
Christmas Eve 8 p.m. Bilingual Mass	
Christmas Day 9 a.m. Mass	
New Year’s Day 9 a.m. Mass	

Sacred Heart Catholic Church: 927 N Coast Hwy, Newport
WWW.SACREDHEARTNEWPORT.ORG
Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission: 231 Logsdan Rd, Siletz • (541) 265-5101

St. Peter The Fisherman Lutheran Church

Invites you to Celebrate the birth of Jesus!



Come as you are and bring the entire family to a music-filled and inspiring Christmas Eve Candle Light Communion Service. Sing the beautiful Christmas Carols and hear the message of hope that comes with the birth of our Savior.

The service begins at 6:30 p.m.

Refreshments will be serviced after the service.

We are located in Lincoln City on Highway 101 and SW 13th (across from the Lincoln City Outlets)



301 SE 40TH ST.

SOUTH BEACH, OR 97633



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Amber Waves



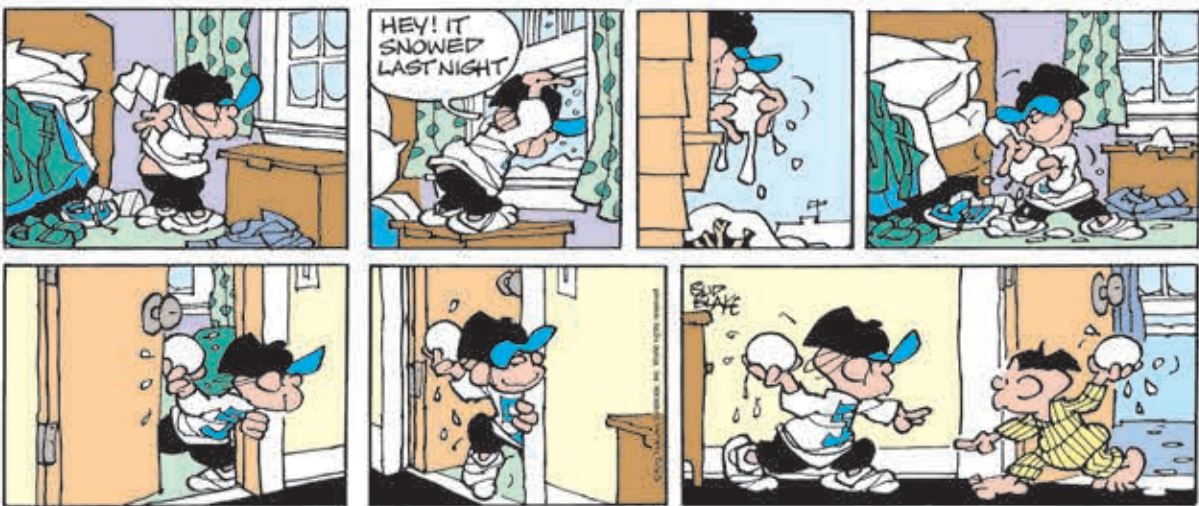
Out on a Limb



The Spats



TIGER



OLIVE & POPEYE



HOCUS-FOCUS



Just Like Cats & Dogs



CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: U equals G

GH LPO FWXGWTW WTWELFPZL
QYP RNLJR JYWL'TW HPOVZ N
QNJWE-QPEV ENTGVW, G
UOWRR LPO'EW UOXXL-FXW.

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Booster
TOCKER

Consume
OUDERV

Intellect
NABIR

Guide
CORSET

TODAY'S WORD

CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

TPETJP UPSOHU NIPPUES EN
GTPPDL QE SOAP KT NEI QLP
NIPPUES EN QLEKFLQ XLYDL
QLPZ OBEYU.
— GEIPH AYPIAPFOOIU

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Trivia test

1. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Who was the first left-handed president?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What country is home to the largest cave in the world?
3. MOVIES: Who is the voice of Buzz Lightyear in the "Toy Story" movies?
4. HISTORY: Who was the first emperor of Rome?
5. LITERATURE: In what city is James Joyce's novel "Ulysses" set?
6. TELEVISION: What is the name of Data's cat on "Star Trek: The Next Generation"?
7. ASTRONOMY: What is an exploding star called?
8. SCIENCE: What kind of cloud is associated with thunderstorms?
9. U.S. STATES: Which states have no sales tax?
10. ANATOMY: What is the function of the carotid arteries?

Answers

1. James Garfield.
2. Vietnam.
3. Tim Allen.
4. Augustus.
5. Dublin, Ireland.
6. Spot.
7. A supernova.
8. Cumulonimbus.
9. Five states have no sales tax: Alaska, Delaware, Montana, New Hampshire and Oregon.
10. They supply oxygen-rich blood to the face, neck and brain.

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People demand freedom of speech to make up for the freedom of thought which they avoid.

answer
CryptoQuote

If you believe everybody who says they've found a water-worm ravine, I guess you're gully-bile.

CryptoQuip

BREAK
Today's Word
3. Brain; 4. Escort
1. Rocket; 2. Devour;
solution
SCRAMBLERS



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Tiger basketball ready to compete

WILL LOHRE
Lincoln County Leader

Boys and girls basketball are getting up and down the court to start the season this December, and both programs are in the process of getting new players up to speed and developing the style of basketball they will play in the coming months.

With league play starting in January, the games and weeks prior are the perfect time for lineup tinkering and brushing up on the fundamentals. Let's take a look under the hood and see what both Tiger basketball teams are doing as the season gets into full swing.

Girls Basketball
After a 2025 that saw the Tigers win the most games in season history and Head Coach Jacob Tolan earn PacWest Coach of the Year, this season is about forming a new identity.

Coming into this season, Tolan is thrilled with the crop of players he'll be leading.

"I feel really good about this group. They're coachable, they care about each other, and they're willing to work," Tolan said. "We have a nice mix of experience and younger players, and what stands out most is their willingness to compete and learn. We're still growing, but the attitude and effort have been really encouraging."

The Tiger squad that won 20 games last season graduated five seniors. With just two seniors this year and a host of juniors, this year's team is a younger group, ready to define itself in its own way.

"Last year was special, and we're proud of what that group accomplished, but this is a new team and a new journey," Tolan said. "Our expectations are centered around daily improvement and playing the game the right way. We've set goals around togetherness, effort, and consistency. If we take care of those things, the



Action from Taft's opening win against Siuslaw. (Courtesy photo from the Taft Tigers Girls Basketball Facebook page)

wins and accomplishments will take care of themselves."

The Tigers started December off with a 2-3 record, scoring wins against Siuslaw and Oregon Episcopal while being defeated by La Grande, Pendleton, and Harrisburg. The 70-29 win over Siuslaw in the season opener was a perfect start, showing both the offensive and defensive tools the Tigers have at their disposal.

Though each of the losses came in their next three games, the loss to Pendleton at the Red Lion Round Robin Tourney on Dec. 6 was a close, hard-fought game, with the Tigers barely losing 56-59. The final loss in the streak was against Harrisburg on Dec. 10, but the Tigers got back to winning ways a few days later, beating Oregon Episcopal 54-42 on Dec. 13.

Tolan emphasized that in this young stage of the season, wins and losses take a back seat to development.

"Early on, our biggest focus is building habits. That means understanding our standards on both ends of the floor, learning how to communicate, and competing the right way

every day," Tolan said. "We're less concerned with results right now and more focused on growth—getting better each practice, learning from film, and figuring out who we are as a team before league play begins."

Something Tolan is focusing on this season is offering his players more opportunities to take ownership of the program - on and off the court. Bringing that extra sense of self to the program will help benefit the team and Tiger basketball in the long term, not just this season. Tolan said one of the adjustments he made this year is to emphasize communication, togetherness, and mental toughness. With those elements serving as the program's tentpoles, fans should expect a resilient ambush of Tigers this season.

"I'm most excited to see this team grow together. Watching players step into new roles, gain confidence, and support one another is one of the best parts of coaching," Tolan said. "I'm also excited to see how we respond to challenges—those moments tend to define a season."

The Tigers played against Scio on Dec. 16, but the result of that game is not available at the time of press. Taft is next in action against Salem Academy at home on Dec. 19.

Boys Basketball
Taft's boys have been off to a good start this December, and the Tigers aren't close to being a finished article yet. The Tigers opened the season with a three-game win streak, beating Siuslaw 76-53 and then downing Catlin Gable and Harrisburg, beating each by nine points. The fourth game was a narrow 53-55 defeat against Oregon Episcopal on Dec. 13 to break the streak.

For Head Coach Zach Lillebo, the non-league portion of the schedule is all about building chemistry and helping players get back into the groove of getting up and down the court. The Tigers have a younger squad this season, with just two seniors bringing significant varsity experience. Seniors Zack Hankins and Kol Tolan are the team's captains and were also among the players who led the charge during the 2024-2025 season, which

saw Taft qualify for the state championship bracket.

Though Tolan and Hankins will set the tone for the Tigers, Lillebo said there are nine players who are newer to the varsity scene, but he's excited about the prospect of working with this group.

"[We have a] great group of kids who have embraced the change and [are] beginning to gel on and off the court," Lillebo said.

Coming into this year, Lillebo is focused on prioritizing his team's health and minimizing burnout among his athletes. When the grueling, high-intensity sprint that basketball season entails comes to an end, Lillebo said it is usually the teams that have stayed healthy and full strength who are left standing at the final site in March. With that in mind, Lillebo wants to ensure his squad can enjoy the season without reaching a point of exhaustion, mentally or physically.

With a 3-1 record to start, the Tigers have matched the record they posted at this point in the season last year. The Tigers put together a daunting 21-5 record in 2024-2025, so equalling it would be a tall order, but for Lillebo, this season is all about contending with other top teams and bringing success from within, without spending energy on factors beyond their control.

[Our] goals are to compete at the highest level possible and focus on Taft, not our opponents," Lillebo said.

The Tigers played against Scio on Dec. 16, but the result of that game is not available at the time of press. Taft is next in action against Salem Academy at home on Dec. 19.

Follow game results at osaa.org and see Lincoln County High School sports features online at the Lincoln County Leader website and in the Wednesday print editions of The Leader.

Newport boys basketball start season 3-1

WILL LOHRE
Lincoln County Leader

Newport is off to a hot start this season, and they have a 3-1 record to show for it while also boasting the highest scoring in the Oregon West Conference.

The Cubs came out of hibernation with some fire this December, starting the season with back-to-back double-digit wins against Cottage Grove and Elmira. Though a loss against Westside Christian on Dec. 11 is the only blemish on their record, the Cubs quickly shook off any disappointment they may have felt with a 68-33 win against Tillamook the next day.

The win against the Cheesemakers marked the fourth time in four games that the Cubs have score more than 60 points. Through their first four non-league games, Newport has scored 273 points, 29 more than any team in their league has scored in the opening slate (Sweet Home is second with 244).

The offensive output is indicative of Head Coach Will Burghardt's focus for the team in this preseason portion of the



A Cubs' fastbreak ends with a finger roll at the rim. (Photo Courtesy photo from Newport High School Athletics Facebook page)

schedule.

"We are focusing on finding our identity in our non-league games and being sharp on the details that can help us win games throughout the course of a long season," Burghardt said. "These details include making free throws, getting multiple defensive stops in a row, and taking care of the ball, allowing us to get the best shots possible every possession."

That focus on doing the little things to fuel offensive

production and defensive solidity has paid off in a big way in the staging period of the season.

Last year, the Cubs were a playoff team in 4A off the back of a 16-9 record, which landed them at #8 in OSAA's rankings. Coming off that successful season, Burghardt said his approach has not changed: Newport always adjusts based on personnel, but the fundamental way they play remains the same.

"The foundation of our program is based off playing harder than your opponents and being more disciplined, so those things remain the same at all times," Burghardt said. "We will look to increase tempo, play with a high level of intelligence, and work together as a unit with one common goal."

As far as goals for this Cubs team, Burghardt said he wants to improve on a day-to-day basis and establish a culture where players play for each

other. With a commitment to incremental development and team culture at the center of their mindset, Burghardt said that positive things will follow.

The Cubs had a solid core of seniors leading the way last year, and this season, the team's makeup is more of a mix. In addition to three senior veterans, the Cubs are integrating a crop of younger talent who are ready to make an impact at the varsity level. Burghardt is excited to watch the group's growth and see what they can achieve this season.

"I am extremely excited about this group, as I feel our ceiling is very high if we can stay healthy and play together as a unified group. We have a mixture of very talented, experienced players as well as young, talented players who are looking to prove themselves in the early parts of the season," Burghardt said. "I am looking forward to seeing how we progress each game."

The Cubs will be back in action against Creswell at the Battle of I-5 tournament on Dec. 18.



RECALL HALL

We must recall county commissioner Claire Hall for numerous reasons, such as ethics and non-performance.

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