

NEWS from BENTON COUNTY

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Benton County, Oregon

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Monroe library slated to open in May



From a 1930s cartoon character drawn on the original wall of the 100-year-old train depot to the brand new 5,000-square-foot wing that will house books of all kinds, the new Monroe Public Library will be a building suited to many generations.

The 7,550-square-foot facility – located at Ash Street and Highway 99W across from Monroe High School – will replace the current 1,200-square-foot library at City Hall. The library, a branch of the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, will serve the area encompassed by the Monroe School District.

Project costs total \$2.4 million, much of which was covered by an Oregon Community Development Block Grant (\$1,375,000) secured by Benton County. The other \$1,044,000 was raised through a community effort that included donations and other grants.

“It is a chance to complete a badly needed new library in the Monroe community,” Corvallis-Benton County Library Director Carolyn Rawles-Heiser said. “I’m really grateful

to the state and county for supporting the project, and I’m really proud of the people in the Monroe area who raised money privately.”

The restored train freight building that used to belong to Wilbur-Ellis was moved to the site by the community and restored as part of the construction. It will be used as library meeting space. In that area, the original wall of the depot will be on display with the drawing of “Carl” – an era cartoon character of national prominence – dated 1936 with the inscription “Carl’s Girl.” Even the newly constructed wing of the building bears resemblance to surrounding architecture. The cupolas atop the wing are inspired by those a short distance north up state Highway 99W on a building at a nearby farm.

The new library will include more seating, storage space, quiet study areas and dedicated children’s space. The library’s size will allow doubling its collection of books, CDs and DVDs, as well as the number of com-

puters available to the public. Computer access is particularly relevant in rural communities where many people have limited Internet access, constraining activities such as researching employment opportunities. Need for a new library was identified several years ago and the plans are based on input received from a series of public forums in 2005 and 2006.

The project was designed by Broadleaf Architecture in Corvallis and the construction work is being carried out by Eugene-based 2G Construction. The building is scheduled for completion in mid-April and should be ready for occupancy sometime in May.

“We are thrilled to fulfill a long-time community need,” Commissioner Linda Modrell said. “Libraries are an important community resource for information exchange, accessing knowledge off the shelf as well as electronically and promoting family literacy. We are proud to be able to help improve access to those important opportunities.”

Benton County seeks volunteers for committees

The Benton County Board of Commissioners is seeking community members to fill vacancies on a variety of panels that impact county services.

There are 18 advisory boards and committees and members may serve up to two consecutive terms. Members are appointed by the Board of Commissioners. Openings exist on the following boards (including the name of the board or committee, number of vacancies and position type):

- Emergency Medical Advisory Committee, 1 opening, public at large;
- Environmental Issues Advisory Committee, 1, Benton County resident;
- Food Service Advisory Committee, 2, one general public and one food service;
- Historic Resources, 1, public at large;
- Mental Health, Addictions and Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee, 1, high school student;
- Public Health Planning Advisory Committee, 2, one resident well informed on public health matters and one healthcare practitioner;
- Roads Advisory Committee, 2, Benton County residents; and
- Solid Waste and Disposal Site Advisory Committee, 2, one from Adair Village and one from Monroe.

Members are unpaid volunteers who devote numerous hours to these activities. Participants are involved directly in local government and provide timely input on important issues to the Board of Commissioners. Benton County values diversity and seeks to include broad representation on all boards and committees.

For more information about Benton County committees, advisory boards or the application process, those interested can contact Teresa Farley at 541-766-6890, by email at teresa.farley@co.benton.or.us or go online to <http://www.co.benton.or.us/volunteers.php>.

Forum set to discuss Homelessness Plan progress

The Benton County Homeless Oversight Committee – the community partners who created and are implementing Benton County’s Ten-Year Plan to Address Issues Surrounding Homelessness – is hosting a community forum to focus on



progress and accomplishments in 2012.

This year’s installment of the annual event is scheduled at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 28, at the Corvallis-Benton County Library Meeting Room, 645 NW Monroe Ave., in Corvallis. Local leaders will present a progress report and real-life success stories will be shared from the past year. Three years ago, the community began implementing a broad-based plan to address issues related to homelessness. The plan includes meeting the following goals:

- Prevent people from becoming homeless by supplying services allowing them to obtain housing or maintain their current housing status;
- Expand, develop and coordinate the supply of affordable housing for the homeless and those at risk;
- Increase capacity of the homeless for self-support through strategies that identify their risk of homelessness, their needs and access to appropriate housing with suitable supportive services;
- Address the societal stigma about homelessness and create new advocates for prevention through education, awareness and community dialogue; and
- Create a system of data collection and community accountability to sustain homelessness programs.

That Ten-Year Plan is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/a97qj3h>. For more information about the event, those interested can contact the Benton County Board of Commissioners Office at 541-766-6800.

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Indoor market fills wintertime demand



Julia Sunkler, owner of My Pharm

It was a glimpse into what old fashioned community markets must have looked like before modernized shipping systems, food preservatives and the modern supermarket.

People packed Guerber Hall at the Benton County Fairgrounds recently to purchase local, homemade, hand-crafted and home-grown products direct from a farm, bakery or shop in or near Benton County. The Corvallis Indoor Winter Market has been a staple for many years. It operates every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through mid-April. Artisans and farmers are on hand every week with products to sell. Julia Sunkler, of Monroe, owns My Pharm. In addition to produce, she is selling meats such as pork, chicken and rabbit. In fact, the rabbit is what distinguishes Sunkler from other vendors.

"Most people know me as the rabbit lady," she said, pointing to several pelts on a rack behind her.

Everything from traditional agricultural products to homemade soap and pine

needle baskets were available. Jams, jellies and honey appeared to be big sellers as well as fresh breads. Claude Winter was selling hand-crafted jewelry, but hand-painted Ukrainian style eggs are her staple products. Born in France, Claude speaks with a thick accent in spite of her 62 years living in Corvallis. She said business ebbs and flows from week to week.

"Sometimes we don't sell anything and other times there are lots of people and it all goes," she said.

In the background, as Winter spoke, families danced as they passed an acoustic guitarist entertaining them with blues and folk tunes. He was selling CDs of his music, as well. Behind the musician, in the corner, Philomath's Gathering Together Farms proudly displayed large quantities of pumpkins, onions and other fresh seasonal produce.

Alicia Leytem, who has worked at the farm for about 12 years, said Gathering Together has been coming to the event as long as she's been employed there. This is just one of many venues, as the farm has experienced success at First Alternative Natural Foods Co-op as well as Market of Choice and several other stores and restaurants in Portland, Newport and elsewhere around the state.

"I feel like the past couple years this market has really picked up," she said. "Corvallis found out we're here."

Jan Bullock, the market's board president, said on average she estimates approximately 2,500 people attend, and they all have different shopping habits.

"Some of them come in and they know what they're here for and they leave," Bullock said. "Some of them come out and spend all day. We have a lot of people who

come over from campus or bicycle in and one professor has given an extra credit assignment to his class for the last seven years where they visit and then talk to the class about what we do."

There are 39 vendor spaces available.

"We have between 25 and 30 vendors every week," she said. "We try to keep it that way."

One trick, Bullock said, is making sure diverse items are available to ensure multiple vendors aren't selling the same products. But when one vendor bails it's usually not hard to find a replacement. A spot in this market is sought-after by many producers.

"There's no hard and fast rule but if a produce company pulls out for some reason, we would look for a produce company to replace them for the day," she said. "We have very little turnover. We have 16 alternates right now waiting to get space. If somebody can't make it I can usually get someone out there to fill it pretty easily. If I had that Albertson's building I could fill it up with vendors."

The event is planned and staffed by an all-volunteer board; no paid staff is involved in organizing the market. The event started in Philomath many years ago and moved to the Benton County Fairgrounds around 2005. Until a couple of years ago, the market was scheduled every other weekend. Now it's every single Saturday, which is easier for consumers to remember. Even though this market fills the offseason gap when the downtown Corvallis Farmer's Market is not operating, the two are not affiliated.

"These are totally separate," said Bullock, who lives in Corvallis. "Sometimes that's hard for a lot of people to remember because we have a lot of the same vendors.

We are different because we do crafts along with the produce, meats and all of that."

Benton County Fairgrounds Manager Lonny Wunder said these activities are why the Fairgrounds exist. It's a sustainable way of living, buying local and eating natural foods. It also promotes Benton County's rich agricultural heritage.

"The market is one of the long-standing users at the Fairgrounds," he said. "It all goes back to highlighting agriculture to the community."



Alicia Leytem, Gathering Together Farms

Fairgrounds staff member Nancy Swain indicated there are plenty of great reasons to attend the Indoor Market, even if it is during a time of the year when fresh vegetables and harvests aren't top of mind.

"Just because it's not peak growing season doesn't mean there aren't great things to buy," she said. "And it's a cool scene; it's fun for people."

For more information about the market, those interested can go online to <http://www.corvallisindoorwintermarket.blogspot.com> or <https://www.facebook.com/corvallis.indoor.winter.market>.

Benton County properties are tobacco-free

Joining other institutions in the community and around the state, as of Jan. 1, Benton County's properties became tobacco-free.

The county policy, approved in 2012, prohibits use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes and smokeless tobacco products, as well as electronic cigarettes, on county properties. The policy is essential to the county's ongoing responsibility to protect public health.

In accordance with Oregon's Indoor Clean Air Act, smoking already was prohibited inside all county facilities and within 10 feet from doors, open windows, accessibility ramps and ventilation intake vents. The policy expands on that to include all tobacco products and electronic cigarettes and does not allow the use of tobacco products on any outdoor property owned or oc-

cupied by Benton County.

Parks, parking lots, natural areas and the fairgrounds are included in the policy to help promote the health of our community and the environment. Providing tobacco-free places for outdoor recreation protects residents from secondhand smoke. It also lowers the risk of wildfire and promotes cleaner, safer environments by eliminating cigarette butts, which are a common source of litter. The tobacco-free environment also is expected to reduce maintenance costs for the county and lessen health costs associated with tobacco use.

To quit tobacco, or to talk with someone about how to manage cravings in a tobacco-free environment, those interested can contact the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or in-

Español 1-877-2NO-FUME (1-877-266-3863).

For more information about the policy,

those interested can go online to http://www.co.benton.or.us/health/public_health/tobacco_prevention.

News from Benton County

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Health Department	766-6835		

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BCSO honors employees, volunteers for efforts

The Benton County Sheriff's Office took the opportunity to honor those who give back to the community by contributing to public safety, some of them putting their very lives on the line for the good of Benton County.

In February, Sheriff's Office staff and volunteers, as well as representatives of other agencies, gathered to celebrate each others' accomplishments and sacrifices over the previous year. The Purple Heart, awarded to personnel injured during a life-threatening situation in the line of duty, was bestowed upon Sgt. David Peterson. During a confrontation with an armed suspect in August 2012, Peterson was hit by gunfire and wounded three times. He continued fighting, returning fire at the suspect, who was subdued.

Related to the same incident, Sgt. Peterson and Deputy Greg Goller earned the Medal of Honor for their heroic acts. When Salem Police Corporal Andrew Connolly was hit with gunfire, Goller assisted him to cover and then returned fire at the suspect.

In connection with the incident, several Salem Police Department personnel on the scene were honored with a Special Award of Thanks for their bravery and meritorious service during the shooting incident. They included Corporal Andrew Connolly, Officer Matt Gill, Officer Eric Hernandez, Officer R.J. Smith and Officer Tyler Verhaar. Those same officers also received awards from the Oregon State Sheriff's Association for their actions.

The Life Saving Award was given to members of the office who perform an active, distinctive and successful lifesaving act on another human being with strong possibility the person rescued would have died if action was not taken. Those awarded this honor included:

- Deputy Adam Miller for providing First Aid to Sgt. Peterson;
- Sgt. Peterson and Deputy Brent Iverson for saving a woman trapped on top of her car roof as a result of severe flooding on Old River Road;
- Sgt. Randy Hiner and Deputy Jerry Williams for saving a man's life who was attempting to commit suicide; and
- Deputy Kyle Cooper for actions that saved a life on the Willamette River in two separate incidents in September 2011.

Deputy Aaron Gevatosky earned a Medal of Valor for pulling the driver of a burning vehicle out of danger to render aid until medical and fire personnel arrived.

Several individuals also received Dis-

tinguished Service awards for those who bring credit to themselves and the office through single action or a body of work. The awardees were:

- John Reiman for distinguishing himself through skill as a mental health professional and his genuine interest and support of Benton County Sheriff's Office deputies and staff;
- Todd Pynch for his untiring effort and guidance as chaplain during a time of unprecedented events and challenges, providing countless hours helping ensure the office successfully met the challenges as a cohesive and successful team; and
- Linda Balzer and Mark Balzer for more than 20 years as integral members of the Benton County Sheriff's Mounted Posse serving in numerous roles.

Several volunteers were honored for their unpaid work on behalf of Benton County. Among them, Reiman was named Volunteer of the Year for his significant contribution to the development of the Peer Support Team, as well as his many years of service. Others who were honored for their volunteer efforts included:

- AirWing Volunteer John Larson, Emergency Management/Search and Rescue and Support Services Division Volunteer of the Year;
- Don and Betsy Reid (Mary's Peak Search and Rescue), Nate Meehan (Corvallis Mountain Rescue) and Linda and Mark Balzer (BCSO Mounted Posse), Search and Rescue Unit Volunteers of the Year;
- Bill Duncan from BCSO Mounted Posse, Photo of the Year; and
- Reserve Deputy Sayard Schultz, Law Enforcement Division Volunteer of the Year.

Several employees also earned Employee of the Year honors by division. Leslie Pomaikai, who earned Emergency Management/Search and Rescue and Support Services Division Employee of the Year, also was named overall Employee of the Year for her enthusiasm and can-do attitude, as well as her willingness to go beyond her job duties to volunteer for community activities. Other Employees of the Year by division included Nurse Nicole Kelley, Jail Division; Detective Chris Duffitt, Law Enforcement Division; and Deputy Josh Hall, Parole and Probation Division.

And more were honored for completing various levels of occupational certifications and for accumulating between 250 and 1,000 hours of volunteer service to the community through the Sheriff's Office.

Community conversations give way to Alliance

Natural, historic, educational and recreational resources are valued highly throughout Benton County but there aren't always resources to do everything many community members would like.

That was one key take-away the last time the Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Advisory Board hosted discussions with community members to gather input for a countywide Comprehensive Plan. Several members of the Advisory Board decided to act, and a new non-profit was born.

In November of last year it was announced that the Alliance for Recreation and Natural Areas (AFRANA) secured its 501(c)(3) charitable corporation designation from the Internal Revenue Service. The group's mission is to "facilitate community-supported projects to enhance recreation and connect people to their natural and cultural heritage."

"We tested the concept with a lot of different groups to make sure we were doing something that added value," AFRANA President Ellen Tappon said. "We got a lot of positive feedback, so we formed the group."

The group's goal is to work with Benton County communities to enhance and expand education and access to unique natural, recreational and historic assets. It also will strive to connect groups to foster ideas, identify and carry out projects and access financial resources through tax-deductible donations and grants.

"People in rural areas have a lot of good ideas and a lot of the assets are in rural areas," Tappon said. "They are eager for economic development but they don't want to compromise their community character. How do you get more use of assets around the county in ways that are going to balance the needs of the communities and preserve and enhance the parks and natural areas? Funding is a challenge for everybody and partnerships are key. There are people who



don't want to go through forming a non-profit group, so we wanted to be in a position where we could help people get things done."

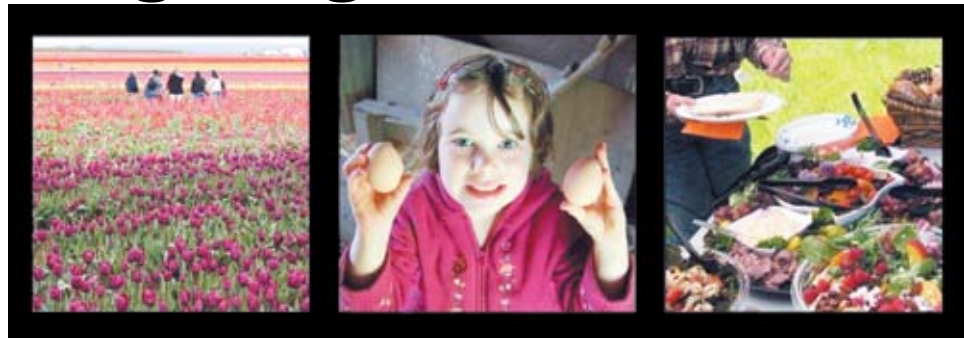
Projects are to be undertaken throughout the county. The group's initial project was moving the Fort Hoskins Commander's House back to its original location. The next phase is restoring that historic structure and interpretation development. But it doesn't stop there. The group has been talking with community members about a variety of projects including a recreation hub in South Benton County, working with Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities and assisting with the East Thornton Lake Natural Area project in North Albany. It also is looking at outdoor education opportunities and helping to make those programs possible from a funding and community connection standpoint.

"We're basically looking to help build connections among groups with common objectives to get projects done that are going to be appreciated by Benton County," Tappon said.

For more information, those interested can go online to <http://www.afrana.org> or email info@afana.org.

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Oregon Agritourism Summit



On Friday, March 1, Oregon State University Extension Service, Travel Oregon and other partners will be hosting the second of the two-part Oregon Agritourism Summit "Getting to Yes." This segment will focus specifically on public policy and regulatory issues. This summit is for policymakers, economic development, agriculture and community organizations and agri-business owners who are interested in working together around agritourism, laws and farm sustainability.

The daylong event will take place at the LaSells Stewart Center on the Oregon State

University campus in Corvallis, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Throughout the day there will be discussion sessions based on case studies. The goal will be to productively address key barriers identified by agritourism business operators. Featured focus areas include on-farm lodging, food service, working across county lines on agritourism ventures and using farm buildings for agritourism businesses.

Oregon Small Farms Conference

The 13th-annual Oregon Small Farms Conference will take place from 8 a.m.

to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 2, at The LaSells Stewart Center on the OSU campus. The theme of this year's conference is "Greenhorns and Grayhorns." This daylong event is geared toward farmers, agriculture professionals, food policy advocates, students and managers of farmers' markets. Twenty-one sessions will be offered on a variety of topics relevant to small farmers. Speakers will include farmers, OSU Extension faculty, agribusiness representation and more. 2013 Session Descriptions are available and registration is currently open. A Grayhorns/Greenhorns mixer will be held after the conference at the Marys River Grange featuring local food, music, beverages and networking opportunities.

Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farm Management

The OSU Extension Small Farms Program and its partners are excited to offer the Growing Farms Workshop Series this year in Independence. In collaboration with Oregon Tilth, the Small Farms Program is presenting this workshop series to provide introductory tools and

information for beginning specialty crop and livestock farmers. Growing Farms is geared toward farmers who are in their first 5 years of business, who would benefit from knowing the risks associated with farming. Topics include strategic planning, farming operations, marketing, production systems, farm finances and managing liability. The course will consist of both classroom and field instruction, and will give the information necessary for a whole farm plan.

The Growing Farms workshop series will be held from 5 to 9 p.m. every Wednesday from March 13 through April 17. A full-day farm field tour will be on Saturday, April 6. The course will be held at the Civic Center in Independence. Cost is \$275 per person or \$450 for two people from the same farm team. Fees defray the costs of weekly classroom instruction, two catered locally sourced dinners and accompanying field trip and resource materials.

For more information on the opportunities mentioned above or to register, go online to <https://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu>.

Health Department focuses on improvement



Even though Benton County has been named Oregon's healthiest county by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for three years running, the Benton County Health Department is not resting on its laurels.

In 2012 the Health Department researched, created and released a Community Health Assessment that identifies conditions, strengths, needs and gaps that impact the health of everyone in the county. Using the information in the assessment, staff members launched into community meetings to gather input for a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

The CHIP planning group – consisting of representatives from Benton County Government, city governments, school districts, community groups, the health care

industry and many others throughout the county – is creating a comprehensive plan.

The combined assessment and improvement plan is designed to meet many mandates and planning needs for agencies such as Samaritan Health Services, the county-operated Community Health Centers, the newly formed Coordinated Care Organization and the United Way of Benton and Lincoln Counties.

In addition, the Assessment and Improvement Plan comprise two of the three initial requirements for the Benton County Health Department to apply for national accreditation by the Public Health Advisory Board. The third requirement (which currently is underway) is updating the Health Department's strategic plan. National accreditation is a new process and Public Health Accreditation is designed to:

- Promote high performance and continuous quality improvement;
- Recognize high performers that meet nationally accepted standards of quality and improvement;
- Illustrate health department accountability to the public and policymakers;
- Increase visibility and public awareness of governmental public health, leading to greater public trust and increased health department credibility and ultimately a stronger constituency for public health funding and infrastructure; and
- Clarify the public's expectations of health departments.

"This is brand new and we want to be on the leading edge of it," Health Department Deputy Director Charlie Fautin said. "It's a way for us to demonstrate that we are doing a good job based on objective national standards. We want to especially recognize the Northwest Health Foundation which provided grant funding that really jump-started our efforts."

Benton County's Community Health Improvement Plan will be unveiled to the Board of Commissioners – which acts as Benton County's Board of Health – for adoption at a special event coordinated with National Public Health Week from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on April 9 at the Sunset Building Meeting Room, 4077 SW Research Way, in Corvallis. In addition, public health volunteers

will be recognized and this year's Sheldon Wagner Award winner will be announced. The event is free and open to the public.

"We have the health rankings from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation which help indicate we're doing a good job, but evaluating how we are accomplishing that is part of the accreditation process," Fautin said. "They don't just review outcomes and status. They review how we do the work, policies, employees meeting minimum professional standards and our entire organization."

Copies of the Community Health Assessment are available online through the Health Department website at http://www.co.benton.or.us/health/public_health/health_assessment.php.

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