

NEWS from BENTON COUNTY

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Re-bridging Wren and Blodgett

Benton County Public Works restored passage on Harris Road near Blodgett by replacing a bridge that was wiped out during the severe winter storm event of 2012.

In September, a crane crew lifted a 127,000-pound bridge deck and placed it onto the supports and pilings established by Benton County Public Works on each bank of the Marys River.

The re-opening of the Alder Creek Bridge restores connection on a gravel road between the Wren and Blodgett communities in the Coast Range of western Benton County. But, more importantly, it reopens the route for emergency service vehicles at the Blodgett Fire Department, log trucks and school buses. The road had been closed on each side of the river since the previous bridge was destroyed by a tree that fell across it, tearing out a portion of the deck, during a mud slide caused by winter storms in 2012.

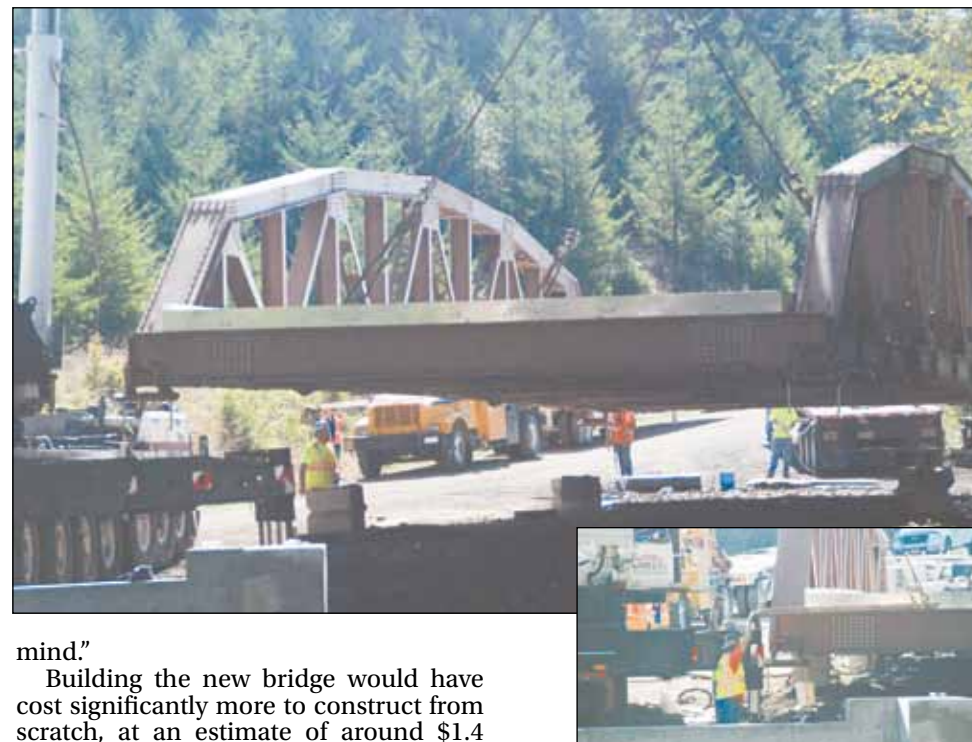
Students from nearby Blodgett Elementary School trekked down to the bridge site to watch the crew work, along with many other local officials and community members. The bridge used

for the project was provided to the county by Linn County. Its previous home had been in downtown Scio.

Recycled bridge components provide a safe and cost-effective way to complete expensive bridge replacement projects. The cost of the project was approximately \$876,000 and 75 percent of the money came from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The deck - which is 94 feet long, 24 feet wide between the arches and took more than 2,000 bolts to reassemble at the site - is rated for greater weight than the prior bridge could bear. The old 10-ton bridge that was destroyed has been replaced with a deck able to accommodate 80,000 pounds. The new bridge also is 6 feet wider than the old one.

Road Manager Jim Stouder said the engineering to measure distances, design the new foundation, repaint, transport and place the bridge safely was carefully completed, and the process took more than a year. The bridge had been stored at the Benton County Fairgrounds until its placement.

"We had a lot of variables to work with," Stouder said. "It's a stress load off my



mind."

Building the new bridge would have cost significantly more to construct from scratch, at an estimate of around \$1.4 million.

"I'm pretty proud of our county employees right now," Benton County Roads Advisory Committee Chairman Chuck Kratch told The Corvallis Gazette-

Times on the day of the bridge placement. "(The bridge) came out right, and they saved the taxpayers half a million dollars or more."



The North Palestine Baptist Church - currently located in Adair Village in northern Benton County - is among Oregon's latest entries into the National Register of Historic Places.

A Benton County landmark - long regarded as the oldest standing church in the county - was constructed in 1883 by

Palestine Church gains national historic listing

the North Palestine Baptist congregation and served as its church until the mid-1930s. The building later was used as a community gathering place for organizations such as the Willing Workers, organized in 1916 by the farm women from surrounding areas. That group provided a welcome support system for women and families living in a relatively isolated rural setting.

The Palestine Baptist Church is recognized as an intact example of rural vernacular ecclesiastical architecture, effectively blending characteristics of the Gothic Revival and Classic Revival in a modest building. Although the structure was built a generation after the earliest church buildings appeared in Oregon, its construction method, detailing and overall character is similar to earlier

settlement-era buildings.

Benton County acquired the structure in 2010 - at no cost, except for the price to move the building - to preserve the church and also allow the Palestine Cemetery, where it previously was located, to proceed with expansion plans. The 130-year-old structure was rolled out of the cemetery in northeastern Benton County and relocated to a grassy patch of Benton County property in Adair Village south of the Clubhouse and north of the Santiam Christian School football field.

Plans for the future of the building include leaving it at its current location permanently and using it as a county-operated facility for events, weddings, conferences and historic education opportunities, among other things. Its historic nature, attractive setting and

proximity to the Officers' Clubhouse and a nearby county park make it attractive for a variety of uses.

Oregon's State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation recommended the building's nomination at its June meeting. In that hearing, the Advisory Committee noted that Benton County has become known for preserving important rural resources and praised the county for those efforts. Final action was taken in Washington, D.C.

More than 100 historic properties now are listed in the National Register, maintained by the National Park Service under authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. For more information about the National Register and recent Oregon lists, those interested can go online to www.oregonheritage.org.

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Eckert wins first-ever county environmental award



Dave Eckert and the Corvallis Sustainability Water Action Team is the first recipient of a brand new award designated to promote achievements and work toward a better natural environment.

The Benton County Environmental Award winner was announced at the annual Benton County Environmental Issues Advisory Committee-sponsored Fall Forum in October.

Commissioner Annabelle Jaramillo presented Eckert with the award. The Benton County Environmental Award is a community award, and the winner is selected by the Benton County Board of Commissioners. The applications were vetted by the committee and the top

three from that process were submitted to the commissioners for consideration. In its inaugural year, there were eight nominees for the award. First Alternative Cooperative nominated Eckert and the Water Action Team for consideration.

Eckert, of Corvallis, is the team leader for the Water Action Team, which has been planning and implementing various water efficiency and healthy stream initiatives and demonstration projects in Corvallis and Benton County since the coalition was formed five years ago. The vision of that group is to educate and assist the community in efforts to decrease the amount of water used and discharged and to have streams running clean and clear. The award was presented in recognition of the group's hard work, dedication and vision as stewards of our lands, waters and wildlife.

Also at the Fall Forum, the county recognized one of its employees for being the recipient of this year's internal Sustainability Award. This award officially acknowledges the efforts of county employees for their personal contributions that go above and beyond Benton County sustainability goals. This

year, the award winner is Sayard Schultz, a corrections deputy in the Benton County Sheriff's Office.

Schultz was honored for working continuously to promote sustainability in her department and throughout the county by leading establishment of compost and recycling stations at the jail, working on the Benton County Sustainability Committee, supporting the Sheriff's Office annual drug take back event and volunteering her time as part of the Benton County Fair Green Team, helping people separate recyclable and compostable garbage, as well as the Oregon State University Benton County Extension Service Master Recycler program.

The Environmental Issues Advisory Committee is appointed by the Board of Commissioners to assist county staff members with implementing recommendations, advise the commissioners on specific environmental impact situations, provide a forum for community comment on environmental issues and gather technical input on legislative and regulatory changes applicable to the natural environment.

Jaramillo earns award for civic engagement



Benton County Commissioner Annabelle Jaramillo received an award for civic engagement from the Democratic Party of Oregon.

The award was bestowed at the party's biennial summit in Sunriver in October. The Klonoski Award - named for the late University of Oregon Professor Jim Klonoski - is given every two years to an individual or group demonstrating an

exceptional commitment to promoting civic engagement.

Jaramillo's work as Chair of the Benton County Board of Commissioners and her steadfast and hard-working approach to making change for all Oregonians - as well as her unwavering advocacy for equality and the environment - were cited as reasons she was selected to receive the award.

First elected to the Board of Commissioners in November 2000, Jaramillo has served as a research botanist for the United States Forest Service, development officer for the Center Against Rape and Domestic Violence and as part of Gov. John Kitzhaber's senior

staff. Her leadership and commitment have brought her national recognition from government, private industry and community groups.

An advocate for human rights, Hispanic and other minorities nationwide, Jaramillo served as president of National Image, Inc., a national Hispanic civil rights organization. Her community involvement includes service to United Way and work with the American Civil Liberties Union. She is a Senior Fellow of the American Leadership Forum.

An avid advocate for conserving natural resources and wildlife, Jaramillo authored the Benton County Sustainability Policy to help the county lead in ensuring environmental protection while meeting social needs and maintaining economic prosperity. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in science from Portland State University.

Klonoski - the man after whom the award is named - served as a political science faculty member at the University of Oregon for four decades, discussing, debating and encouraging thousands of students to show intellectual curiosity and consider public service. He also was a political activist, chairing the Lane County Democrats from 1970 to 1974 and then leading the state party from 1974 to 1980. He died in 2009.

Award Nominees

Dave Eckert won the first-ever Benton County Environmental Award in October, but many other deserving community members also were nominated. Here is the list and a brief description of each:

- Dr. Cliff and Gay Hall working in partnership with various government, non-profit and community groups have enhanced, protected and preserved the stream bed and banks of both Maxfield Creek and the Luckiamute River, which runs through their property, as well as the property's wetlands and upland meadows.
- Debra Higbee-Sudyka and the Marys Peak Group of the Sierra Club spent countless volunteer hours introducing the plastic bag ban initiative encouraging the use of reusable bags in Corvallis.
- Tom Kaye and the Institute for Applied Ecology were nominated for developing and implementing cutting-edge techniques for habitat restoration, conducting large scale habitat restorations and reintroductions of threatened and endangered plant species and initiating educational opportunities and distributing materials for school-aged children in the fields of ecology and habitat conservation.
- Heath Keirstead and the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District were nominated for Keirstead's knowledge about weeds, native plants and Oregon soils and the enthusiasm she brings to residents of Benton County.
- Greenbelt Land Trust, which is devoted to preserving, enhancing and protecting more than 1,800 acres of farmland, forest, meadowland and riparian areas in the Mid-Willamette Valley.
- Dr. Michael Newton, who has worked to enhance environmental conditions by using scientific methods to study environmental projects, developed specific solutions for unique problems and situations and produce best, tangible results in those environments.
- OSU Extension Service Benton County Neighborhood Sustainability Steward Program is a component of the EPA Climate Showcase Community Grant named Energize Corvallis. With many volunteers, this program addresses climate change by empowering people to make changes in their own lives and to share that information with others.

News from Benton County

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Board of Commissioners	766-6800	Human Resources	766-6081
Chief Operating Officer	766-6800	Community Health Centers	766-6835
Public Information Officer	766-6082	Juvenile Department	766-6810
Assessment Department	766-6855	Natural Areas and Parks	766-6871
Commission on Children and Families	766-6751	OSU Extension Service	766-6750
Development Department	766-6819	Public Works	766-6821
District Attorney	766-6815	County Clerk/Records	766-6831
Elections	766-6756/766-6277	Sheriff's Office	766-6858
Fairgrounds	766-6521	Tax Collection	766-6808
Health Department	766-6835		

A Hoskins homecoming

Thirteen-month-old Newell Daniels slowly toddled up the stairs with help from his mother, Zanne Augur, as they toured the A-frame dwelling on the historic grounds of Fort Hoskins outside Kings Valley.

More than 150 years ago, that baby's great-great grandfather was born in the very same house. Undoubtedly, his little feet climbed those same wooden steps with help from his own mother, Jane Arnold Augur — wife of the fort's first commander, Christopher Colon Augur.

The history of the pre-Civil War era house became more tangible Saturday as descendants of the distinguished U.S. Army officer toured the place, the only original building at Fort Hoskins. Zanne Augur, her husband Tom Daniels and their baby traveled from California; Zanne Augur's parents, Newell and Suzanne "Tenney" Augur, came from Portland, Maine — all to see the Commander's House.

"To be able to bring my son to a place where his great-great-great grandfather was, and his great-great grandfather was born — that's a connection, that's living history," Zanne Augur said. "To be able to introduce your children to that is wonderful."

The Augurs had requested a tour of the house, but they received a homecoming.

More than a dozen people dedicated to the history of Fort Hoskins — researchers, county commissioners, a representative from the Siletz Tribe and members of the Fort Hoskins Citizen's Advisory Committee — greeted them beneath the picnic shelter atop the hill overlooking Fort Hoskins and the Commander's House.

They discussed the intertwining history of the fort, the Commander's House and Christopher Augur.

*Story courtesy of Canda Fuqua,
The Corvallis Gazette-Times
Photos courtesy of Amanda Cowan,
The Corvallis Gazette-Times*

The history

Fort Hoskins, which was erected in 1856, was one of three forts built to monitor and protect the newly established Coast Indian Reservation. The Commander's House was home to Capt. Augur and his family from the time of its construction until early 1861.

A series of captains took residence in the house during the Civil War years, at which time the fort was used to keep tabs on Confederate sympathizers.

Augur was promoted to general during the Civil War and in its final years was in charge of the Army at Washington, D.C.

"He was responsible for all of the military actions and in charge of sending out the military search parties after Lincoln was murdered," Newell Augur said. "Allegedly, he was at Lincoln's bedside. In the famous paintings of Lincoln's deathbed, he's in the picture."

There is another unbelievable part to that story, which, Newell Augur admits, may be just that — a story.

"There's a family history," he said, "that he may have closed Lincoln's eyes — I don't know if that is true."

In 1865, Fort Hoskins was decommissioned and the buildings were sold and taken away.

Benton County purchased the fort property in 1991 and archaeologist David Brauner has led the way in reconstructing its history. Fort Hoskins became a county park in 2002 with a picnic shelter, historical markers and bathrooms.

The Commander's House spent 142 years or so as a private dwelling in the nearby community of Pedee. It wasn't until last October when enough funds were raised that it could be carted — in two pieces — to its original site at Fort Hoskins, and then reassembled.



Currently, a construction document is being prepared to restore the outside of the house, like the chimney and front porch, said George McAdams, community

project manager for the Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Department. Before any work can be done, however, money will have to be raised.

To read the entire story, please go online to *The Corvallis Gazette-Times* website at <http://tinyurl.com/kmdraeq>.



County builds emergency route to Pioneer Village

This fall, Benton County began constructing an emergency access route connecting the Pioneer Village residential community with Evergreen Road.

The county's Community Wildfire Protection Plan identified this community of 53 homes — located off state Highway 34 west of Philomath — as being in need of an alternative emergency access route.

Only one access point currently exists, requiring crossing a bridge over a 100-year floodplain. Residences in that area are located on steep, densely forested terrain. From the Evergreen Road side of the community, 58 homes exist with only one way in and out.

Benton County engineering staff — in partnership with Starker Forests, which owns land east of Pioneer Village — is realigning an existing public easement, resulting in a route suitable for both forest management and emergency access. This alternative access route connects to Pioneer Village at a locked gate to be used by vehicles during emergencies.

Construction began in September and stalled due to poor weather conditions. The major road-building and realignment work has been completed, but more gravel needs to be added to the middle of the route. The project is expected to be completed in the spring or early summer, when the ground dries. Once the route is complete, Starker Forests will welcome public access by users who have obtained the required access permits. Free permits will be available by stopping by the Starker offices, 7240 SW Philomath Boulevard, in Corvallis, or by calling 541-929-2477.

The project is one of several emergency access projects prioritized and funded in part by the CWPP in efforts to make Benton County more resistant to the negative effects of wildfire. In recent years, losses nationwide due to wildfire have grown with an increase in length and severity of wildfire seasons. To learn how to make a home more defensible, those interested can go online to <http://www.firewise.org> or call 541-766-6819.

Dixon appointed to Task Force on Public Safety



Jay Dixon

Benton County Commissioner Jay Dixon has been appointed by Gov. John Kitzhaber to the statewide Task Force on Public Safety.

The task force was created in response to an Oregon State House of Representatives

bill passed during the last session modifying sentencing guidelines and mandatory minimums for certain offenses.

The task force's purpose is to review the implementation of the law, consider policy implications on second look for juveniles convicted of Measure 11 crimes,

evaluate Department of Corrections financial reports and produce a report to legislators in time for the 2017 Legislative Session.

Participants include representatives from the House, as well as the State Senate, along with a county commissioner, district attorney, criminal defense attorney, law enforcement representative, community corrections director, a community-based organization and others.

The appointment began Oct. 1 and will continue until Sept. 30, 2017. Dixon is a recognized leader statewide when it comes to law enforcement and juvenile justice, serving on the Oregon Community Corrections Commission, Willamette Criminal Justice Council and National Association of Counties Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee. He is vice-chair of Oregon's Youth Development Council.



Benton County conducted a series of logging and controlled burn activities

County restores habitat at local natural areas

through September and October designed to restore upland prairie habitat to help support populations of certain endangered butterfly species.

Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Department and Oregon Department of Forestry officials conducted a controlled burn at Fitton Green Natural Area in late September.

The burn took place on an 8-acre section in the South Meadow. It was managed by Oregon Department of Forestry.

The prescribed burn is a continuation of habitat management activities undertaken at Fitton Green Natural Area

over the past 20 years. This particular burn was meant to reduce invasive species, returning that area to prime butterfly habitat. Renewal in that area following the burn includes proliferation of nectar plant species and improved access for butterflies.

Crews also planted nectar species for Fender's blue and Taylor's checkerspot butterflies, as well as expanding habitat openings. As a result, the Fitton Green section of Cardwell Hill Road and the main north and south connector within Fitton Green closed temporarily to allow for safe removal of vegetation.

Access to the South Meadow and adjacent trails at Beazell Memorial Forest also was closed weekdays during September and October to allow selective thinning of trees in that area, also in support of creating and renewing butterfly habitat. Those same access points are expected to be closed again January through March for continued select thinning projects to occur.

For more information about these projects or natural areas, those interested can contact the Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Department at 541-766-6871.

Benton County Sheriff's Office sponsors citizens' academy

Twenty-six participants attended this year's Benton County Sheriff's Office Citizens' Academy. They devoted eight Tuesday evenings and two Saturdays to learning more about their Sheriff's Office.

The 10-session, 36-hour program wrapped up with a graduation celebration on Oct. 29.

During the program, participants learned about the day-to-day operations of the Sheriff's Office through many activities, including the following:

- Meeting the forest patrol deputy to learn about the unique challenges of patrolling the forest;
- Boat rides with the marine deputies on the river;

- Seeing K-9 Officer Bus in action;
- Learning about the school resource deputy program;
- Touring the Transition Center with parole and probation deputies and the jail with corrections deputies; and
- Meeting volunteers from several of the search and rescue units, the Auxiliary Team, Peer Support Team and Reserve Deputy Program and learning about their important contribution to the Sheriff's Office.

Participants also were exposed to factors a deputy must consider when faced with a use-of-force decision and tried their hand at the "Shoot/No Shoot" simulator. From civil to animal control and

emergency planning to investigations, participants were exposed to all aspects of the Sheriff's responsibilities.

"This has been an awesome experience," one participant noted. "Never did we feel like an afterthought. Kudos to all the staff who worked so hard and long to let us into your world. Thank you!"

"I am very happy I made the time for this program," another participant commented. "Keep it up!"

The Sheriff's Office sponsors one Citizens' Academy each year, usually in the fall. Interested individuals can visit the Sheriff's Office website at www.co.benton.or.us/sheriff to learn more.



Sgts. Mohr and Werdell take the class on a tour of the Jail.

Gardening event set in Corvallis

Benton County Master Gardeners Association will be providing an informational resource for gardeners and gardeners-to-be this February in Corvallis.

The Master Gardeners will be presenting their 25th-annual Insights into Gardening event from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 28, at the LaSells Stewart Center on the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis. The event includes a series of seminars for home gardeners and gardeners-to-be as well as gardening related exhibits and books.

Raffle tickets are available for sale to support the Marie Madison Horticulture Scholarship. Marie Madison worked for the Benton County OSU Extension Service for 19 years and provided program assistance to Master Gardeners, retiring in 2009. As one of her retirement gifts, Madison was given tuition to attend the Master Gardener training herself. She did and the Albany resident currently is an active Master Gardener in Linn County. She also has held positions

on the county Master Gardener board and on the state level. Benton County Master Gardeners established the Marie Madison Horticulture Scholarship in her honor for a student majoring in horticulture, botany or plant science fields at Oregon State University or Linn-Benton Community College. The award is a one-time scholarship of \$1,000. For more information about the scholarship, those interested can go online to http://extension.oregonstate.edu/benton/sites/default/files/13_scholarship_application_0.pdf.

Pre-registration for the all-day gardening event is \$30, with a \$35 admission at the door, payable by cash or check only. A catered box lunch is available to participants who pre-order for \$8. All proceeds for the event benefit the Benton County Master Gardeners Association and parking is free.

For more information, those interested can go online to <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/benton>. Registration for the event opens in January.

A new leaf: Oak Mistletoe

By Brad Withrow-Robinson
OSU Extension Service

Oak mistletoe is a native parasitic plant commonly seen in our native Oregon white oak, landscape oaks and occasionally on some other native hardwood species in the mid-Willamette Valley.

It does not affect conifers (they have their own quite different mistletoe). You will see this large green perennial shrub high in the crowns of its host tree, as it is a light-loving plant. The mistletoe taps into the xylem and inner bark of the host to steal water, mineral nutrients and some carbohydrates while producing its own carbohydrates, also through photosynthesis.

Up close you can see a simple leathery, somewhat hairy, oval leaf. It has inconspicuous flowers, followed by small shiny pale white to pink berries in fall and winter. The berry takes two seasons (13 months or more) to mature. The seeds are sticky to help attach to the small branches



they can infect.

Many birds are fond of the berries and help spread the seeds around. And, of course, mistletoe has a rich folklore among people, including the holiday traditions of hanging a sprig in a doorway.

"A New Leaf" is a series featuring native trees and shrubs in western Oregon. Find other articles about woodlands and forests in the bi-monthly Extension Express, or online anytime at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/benton/forestry>.