

NEWS from BENTON COUNTY

At Your Service...Every Day since 1847



September 19, 2012

Benton County, Oregon

Volume 4, Issue 3

Community effort saves Commanders' House



A little community support is going a long way in the endeavor to move the Fort Hoskins Commanders' House back to its original location.

The Benton County Natural Areas and Parks Department and community volunteers recently spearheaded an effort to raise funds to return the house from its current location in nearby Pedee to its original home at the Fort Hoskins Historic Park.

Located in the Coast Range in Benton County near Kings Valley, Fort Hoskins was a Civil War-era military post built by the United States Army to monitor traffic to and from the Coastal Indian Reservation in Oregon. During the Civil War it also was tasked with monitoring Confederate sympathizer activity in the Willamette Valley. The fort was abandoned in 1865. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

The Commanders' House was moved at some point, across the Polk County line to Pedee. Recent work with the landowner where the house currently sits has yielded an agreement to return the house back to Fort Hoskins.

The house is in "remarkably good condition," according to Oregon State University Archaeologist David Brauner and aside from a kitchen and dining room wing added several decades ago, the original structure remains largely intact. Constructed in 1857 by Lt. Philip Sheridan (later a famous general in the Civil War), the house is one of the oldest and most historic structures in western Oregon.

"The house gives us insight into Sheridan's mind," Brauner said. "What we're starting with is a house that looked just like this. If you woke Phil Sheridan from the dead for 10 minutes and walked him up there, he would recognize that house."

The Commanders' House is tentatively scheduled to be moved the end September. The approximately \$52,000 cost to acquire the house covers moving it back to Fort Hoskins and is funded by donations. First Oregon Volunteer Infantry, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the Northwest



Civil War Council gave a combined \$11,000 and individual community members donated a total of \$2,455. The Kinsman Foundation contributed \$10,000 and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department allotted \$20,000 for the project.

"The house will go back very near its original footprint next to the park's historic parade grounds," Natural Areas and Parks Department Director Jeff Powers said. "We are grateful to the new Alliance for recreation and Natural Areas non-profit group that worked hard on community outreach and raised awareness around this project."



Elizabeth Holden - Benton County Mental Health Specialist

It takes a village

On a sunny fall day in Alsea as children buzzed around their classrooms, enjoying the refreshing beginning of a new school year, Elizabeth Holden was arriving on campus. A young girl with red hair screeched "Liz!" and ran toward her in front of the school.

The elementary school girl's sprint ended with an embrace. Holden is a Mental Health Specialist with the Benton County Health Department and the girl is one of her clients. For the past six years Holden has been paying weekly visits to the Alsea School District as part of the School-Based Services Program. She offers counseling

and case management to youth through connections to resources with community partners and agencies.

Alsea is one of the four school districts in the county that partner with Benton County's Youth and Family Behavioral Team. Additional services include individual, family and group counseling. Care coordination is provided through a wraparound team that consists of family, natural supports and providers. Advocacy and helping the families get the care and access to resources and services they need is a crucial aspect of the work of the Youth and Family Behavioral Team. Substance use, screening, assessment

and treatment also is available for county youth. In all, six county mental health professionals are serving in that role.

"We deal with fractured families, high poverty, high mobility and how do we intervene?" Alsea Superintendent Marc Thielman said. "We have kids who have classic American homes and we have kids who have the exact opposite when it comes to stability. We're really getting better resolutions to sometimes substantial issues."

Every year Holden works with approximately 25 youth total, with a caseload of about 12 or 13 at any given time. She sees

Continued on page 2

Health for the mind and the body



George Waters

When it comes to health, mind, body and wellbeing go hand-in-hand.

And when one aspect is impacted, it can trigger a chain reaction that damages every piece of personal health. The Benton County Health Department and Community Health Centers long ago recognized the connection and have been implementing

programs that keep the chain from breaking.

One of these is Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), a community-based program where people who need mental health assistance receive visits from aides who deliver medications, teach them how to use them properly and help them with basic life skills. This allows patients to live normal lives in their own communities.

"Obviously it costs a whole lot less money to do that than take them to the hospital, where it costs at least a thousand dollars a day," Benton County Mental Health Program Manager Jeanne Nelson said. "And being in the hospital is not living. The ultimate goal is to mainstream people back into the community."

Aside from the social and community-based services, ACT team members learned hard lessons about the ways that physical needs impact their clientele. So they earned a grant to help patients with physical issues bring their minds and bodies back into health.

George Waters is one of those clients. The 51-year-old Corvallis man is disabled and has lived in the area for approximately 16 years. His treatment started with mental health services due to a bout with heavy

depression. That was the gateway to county services. After that, he began receiving treatment from the Community Health Centers for two crushed vertebrae in his back suffered when he was working.

"I still have an incredible amount of pain," he said.

That made it difficult – nearly impossible – to exercise. As a result, Waters put on weight and suffers from diabetes. Even though he now has health insurance, Waters has found his health home at the Community Health Centers.

"There was a period I didn't have insurance and now I just kind of stayed here," the former ferryboat captain and father of four children from Pennsylvania said. "There's nobody here that has ever treated me wrong. Most of them at the front desk know who I am and they don't even have to ask my name to get me checked in."

Working with his physician, and through the ACT program, staff members began providing passes so Waters could exercise in the pool at the Osborn Aquatic Center. It's made all the difference. Waters is losing weight, which has helped his mental and physical wellbeing. Now, he swims just about every day and continues improving his health. Today, he walks to his

appointments at the Health Department building in Corvallis.

"He's just functioning so much better now," Nelson said. "He used to scare me to pieces. He was really, really depressed. Now, I think he's going swimming every day."

Waters still has tough days, but his outlook on life is much better. He is thankful to be part of the ACT program, which typically serves approximately 25 clients at any given time. He still participates in group discussion sessions and also sees his mental health and physical health practitioners regularly.

"I still have pain but it's not nearly as bad," Waters said. "Because of that, my mental health has improved. It just gives you a better outlook on life. The two things kind of intermingle."

Patients, regardless of whether they are insured, can seek care at the Community Health Centers. Appointments can be made at the Benton (541-766-6835), Lincoln (541-766-3546) or Monroe (541-847-5143) locations.

"They've helped me through so much in the last five years it would probably take a lifetime to repay them," Waters said. "I'd just like to thank all of them who helped."

Village *Continued from page 1*

between six and eight a week in the school nurse's office – designated as a safe and secure place. When she doesn't get a chance to see a client one week, she makes sure to visit with that youth the next time she is in Alsea.

"Most of our services are to Oregon Health Plan and non-insured and there are a lot of students here who don't have OHP and I've worked with them to sign them up," Holden said. "We coordinate and work with many partners with the intent to maximize services and coordinate care."

Holden has developed strong relationships in the community, as well as with the children. Alsea is a close-knit community where everyone knows each other. She has become acquainted with many families and children, gaining their trust and, in some instances, serving multiple children from a couple of families.

"We've definitely come a long way in terms of the trust relationship with the provider," Holden said. "Everybody knows everybody else so building these relationships

with people who normally wouldn't trust a professional provider is important."

Youth are building a stronger sense of community, as well, by serving as mentors to younger students. Holden also focuses on finding the reasons why children may not be coming to school or appointments. Often the causes are financial or have to do with living in an isolated location. She sometimes drives children to school and provides families with gas vouchers to help them get their children to school and medical appointments.

"We really try to reach families that just don't have a lot of financial resources," she said. "We go to where the clients are. That's a lot of what I do. It's seamless care, and that's what we strive for."

This is not the only way that the Alsea School District is working to improve students' lives through enhanced programming. A local nurse visits youth who need medical care in the school so their parents don't have to take time off from work. Benton County Sheriff's Office School Resource

Deputy Megan Hussey is a recognized figure on campus, and a positive influence on the young people.

"It creates a broader base of conversation and greater awareness of what everyone's doing," Thielman said. "We're working together as a team. Now that we're working together in synergy the kids are getting better quality."

To prepare students for kindergarten, Alsea has implemented a thriving preschool program. It's getting results. Many of the children are entering kindergarten recognizing letters and numbers, accelerating their learning. The programming fits with the state's focus on education as one integrated system that begins in preschool and ends when the student reaches 20. Thielman acknowledges that community partnerships and support lead to better educational outcomes.

"The results speak for themselves, and I'll just leave it at that," Thielman said. "Nobody's arguing with the kind of support our students are receiving."

News from Benton County

Published quarterly and distributed in The Gazette-Times, The Democrat-Herald and other mailer publications, as well as at Benton County office locations and events. Publication is created by Public Information Officer Rick Osborn. To subscribe for an electronic copy via e-mail, please contact us at pioinfo@co.benton.or.us.

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

Creating a safer community through efficiency

Benton County Sheriff's Office jail personnel are always looking for ways to keep the community safer and also be good stewards of public resources.

That is why they continually examine their practices from various perspectives to improve service to the community in an efficient and cost-effective way. One change, initiated a few years ago, is keeping assault victims safer and reducing repeat offenses.

In October 2009 the jail began holding all individuals charged with person-to-person crimes – including instances of domestic violence – until they are released by a judge, unless bail is posted. Before this change was instituted a suspect could be booked and released before ever going to court and could easily return to the scene of the crime and the victim.

"It was a common theme that if they had been arrested on a domestic violence case, they would likely return to the place where the victim was," Jail Commander Diana Rabago said. "A lot of them would even get arrested a second time in the same evening."

Domestic violence charges account for 20 to 28 percent of all person-to-person offenses coming into the jail. By changing the process, Benton County has been able to reduce the number of violations where offenders contact the victims of the abuse. These "no contact order" violations used to be a common theme, occurring about five or six times a month. Today, there is an average of one or two arrests each month for no contact orders.

"It also provides an opportunity for the perpetrator to have some time to calm



down, process the situation and go to court the next day," Rabago said. "Once the judge releases them the next day they are usually in a better state of mind to deal with it in a better way."

Though public safety is the top priority throughout the Sheriff's Office, efficiency and being good stewards of public resources also is of utmost importance. That is why Rabago and others at the jail are looking at the current procedures around "failure to appear" cases. When suspects are released from jail they are directed to return to court a specific date and time. Often they fail to appear at their scheduled court date and a warrant is issued, which leads to another

arrest and more time in jail.

Jail employees will be working to determine when suspects have a history of failing to make court appearances and at what point those individuals should be incarcerated until their day in court. Space limitations make this difficult, but it can be costly when a suspect fails to appear in court.

"Every time someone fails to appear the courts have to issue a warrant, the guys on the street hunt down those offenders and then they are booked into the jail, which takes more deputy time and resources," Rabago said. "All of that could have been avoided if they had just shown up for their court date."



Community Corrections programming based on results



Often it takes a holistic approach to reintroduce those who have been in jail or prison back into society; the Benton County Sheriff's Office Community Corrections Division provides comprehensive services that help limit the risk of offenders committing new crimes and returning to jail.

to our clients," Benton County Sheriff's Office Community Corrections Captain Justin Carley said. "We identify the risk and need of people and address it right out of the gate. We use a risk assessment tool to evaluate offender needs and then we put together

a plan that is specific to addressing those needs."

Treatment programming is conducted on a regular basis and includes evidence-based programming for men and women, based on level of risk, and sex offender treatment. A jobs class program teaches resume writing, conduct during job interviews and following up with potential employers to increase the chance of getting a job.

Community partnerships also have yielded outstanding opportunities. Community Corrections has partnered with OSU Federal Credit Union to offer a Financial Literacy class for medium- and high-risk offenders, geared towards those who struggle with financial issues.

Facilitator Anissa Arthenayake is a certified financial counselor with OSU Federal and leads the eight-class curriculum addressing financial planning, budgeting, problem solving and basic money management skills.

"Ms. Arthenayake is exceptional in her delivery of the information and we are very fortunate that she has joined our team," Carley said. "We know we've got a lot of folks with financial issues. And as we evaluate it, we're trying to find a creative way to link the Financial Literacy to the existing jobs class program."

The evidence-based programming was selected based on research that confirms positive outcomes in reducing recidivism. All of the cognitive restructuring groups are facilitated by Parole and Probation Officers who have received specialized training in evidence-based supervision.

"I am most proud of the effort our staff is putting into our evidence-based programs," Carley said. "Learning those techniques and skills is something our Probation Officers have really bought into and that is making it even more effective."

Prepare ahead for evacuation



Headlines and news reports tell us the United States is experiencing its worst wildfire season ever. Here in Benton County we are not seeing the drought conditions that exist in many regions, but we are in the midst of fire season – a period characterized by high temperatures, no significant rainfall and vegetation that has dried to a crisp.

Plentiful rainfall during the wet months has resulted in abundant growth of fine vegetation, increasing wildfire risk considerably. One spark in tall grasses on a breezy day easily could cause a wildfire catastrophe. While some homes each year burn in wildfires, those that are prepared for the possibility of fire can survive.

Defensible Space

The first and most important step for protecting a home and property from wildfire is creating defensible space. Removing pine needles from roofs and gutters and keeping landscape within 30 feet of the home lean and green will make a difference. To learn how to create defensible space, those interested can go online to www.co.benton.or.us/cdl/cwpp/protection.

Before a Wildfire

Families should plan more than one escape route from the home or subdivision by

car and foot. It also is advisable to prepare a family evacuation kit that includes:

- Three changes of clothing and a change of footwear per person;
- One blanket or sleeping bag per person and toiletries for three days;
- A three-day supply of food and water (food that won't spoil);
- A First Aid kit that includes family prescription medications;
- Emergency tools, including a battery-powered AM/FM radio;
- Flashlight, extra batteries, cell phone charger;
- Extra car keys, credit card, cash or traveler's checks;
- Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members;
- An extra pair of eyeglasses/sunglasses;
- Important family documents;
- Residents in wildfire risk areas should make a home inventory – lists, pictures or a videotape of the contents of the home. Insurance adjusters will expect people to prove what they had with either receipts or photographs;
- Make a family communication plan and pick two family meeting places. These should be a safe distance from the home, outside the neighborhood in case returning home is not possible; and
- Make temporary living arrangements for livestock and pets.

Wildfire Approaching- Prepare to Evacuate

The following steps should be taken if a wildfire threatens the area:

- Back the car into the garage or park in an open space facing the direction of escape;
- Shut doors and roll up windows, but leave the key in the ignition;
- Place evacuation kit in the car for quick departure;
- Confine pets to one room so they can be located easily; and
- Arrange temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area.

If there is time, people can take these steps to protect the home:

- Close windows, vents, doors, blinds or non-combustible window coverings;
- Shut off gas or propane and turn off pilot lights;
- Move flammable furniture into center of the home away from windows and doors;
- Turn on a light in each room to increase visibility of the home in heavy smoke;
- Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals;
- Remove gas grills from decks and patios and place propane tanks in garage;
- Place combustible patio furniture inside;
- Disconnect garage door openers so that they can be opened manually;
- Place a non-combustible ladder on house in clear view for access to roof for firefighters;
- Remove firewood or any other stored combustibles near your home;
- Leave a note or sign inside your home with contact information;
- Place fire-fighting tools – such as 100 feet of pre-connected garden hose, shovel, rake, bucket and containers filled with water – in an obvious place for firefighters; and
- Wet down shrubbery within 25 feet of the home, beginning on the downhill side.

Time to Evacuate

If advised to evacuate, people should do so immediately and safely.

- Wear protective clothing-sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothing, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, gloves and a bandanna to protect the face;
- Take the evacuation kit;
- Lock the home;
- Tie a white towel, sheet or ribbon on the front door to advise emergency responders the home has been evacuated;
- Tell someone when you left and where you are going; and
- Choose a route away from fire hazards. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.

What if You're Not at Home?

Think of ways to protect property if you're not home when the neighborhood is evacuated.

Annual Benton County Environmental Award

There are many environmental achievements by Benton County individuals and organizations, but some move to the head of the pack.

So Benton County Commissioners Jay Dixon, Annabelle Jaramillo and Linda Modrell created the Benton County Environmental Award to recognize those outstanding contributions in the community. Any individual or organization is eligible to nominate someone or apply themselves.

Winners will be those who show commitment to environmental stewardship that goes beyond compliance and regulatory requirements. Projects that enhance environmental conditions in Benton County with tangible results and provide leadership in that area are prime nominees for the award. The Environmental Issues Advisory Committee (EIAC) reviews all nominations and makes recommendations to the Benton County Board of Commissioners. The Board, then, makes

a final decision on awardees.

The award will be presented by the (EIAC) at the annual Fall Forum. The event is scheduled at 7 p.m. on Oct. 16 at the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library. The program will be "It takes a community to raze a weed."

For more information about the award, those interested can attend the Fall Forum in October, contact Laurie Starha at 541-766-6002 or go online to <http://www.co.benton.or.us>.



- Keep copies of your prescription numbers in your wallet;
- Keep your most important papers in a bank safe deposit box;
- Use fire-resistant boxes to store papers and computer disks that must stay in the home;
- Store a set of computer backup disks at work or a friend's home; and
- Exchange plans and keys with a trusted neighbor.

It Takes a Community to Raze a Weed

Tuesday, October 16, 2012 at 7 PM

Corvallis Public Library
645 NW Monroe
featuring:

2012 Benton County Sustainability Award

2013 Benton County Environmental Award

County Roadside Green Invaders

Jim Stouder/Laurie Starha
Benton County Public Works
The Plants and Partners of Marys River Natural Area:

Benton County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)

Heath Keirstead
Benton Soil & Water Conservation District

Bring your plant for identification!

This presentation is sponsored by the Benton County Environmental Issues Advisory Committee. All Benton County residents are invited to attend. Those in attendance will be invited to express their interests in environmental issues affecting Benton County. For further information, you may contact Laurie Starha at 766-6002.