

NEWS from BENTON COUNTY

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Alsea Clinic now affiliated with Community Health Centers of Benton and Linn Counties

A new partnership with the Community Health Centers of Benton and Linn Counties is strengthening Alsea's long tradition of excellence in rural health care.

The Alsea Clinic has provided primary care and other medical services since 1981 as a rural health clinic. Based on an agreement reached in July, Alsea Rural Health Clinic will join Benton County's Federally Qualified Community Health Centers.

Affiliating with the Health Centers provides stability to maintain health services in Alsea and brings added benefits, according to Sherlyn Dahl, executive director of the Community Health Centers.

"For patients it will look and feel the same, but with even more services," Dahl said.

In addition to primary care provided in an integrated, patient-centered model, there also will be new services available to the Alsea community. They include a mail-order prescription service through the Benton Health Center pharmacy, access to an electronic health record and MyChart, a call-in triage nurse for after-hours emergencies, onsite lab services and imaging services by referral. Clinic hours and staffing will remain the same.

The Health Centers has recruited Heather Acord, Family Nurse Practitioner, who will start seeing patients in January 2016. Until then, a temporary provider will provide care through mid-December.

Dental services already provided



From left to right, Denise Gee, office manager in Alsea; Dr. Kristin Bradford, chief medical officer; and Katherine Meeker, FNP

by the Community Health Centers in Alsea will continue, including a school-based screening and sealant program, monthly adult preventive services and semi-annual dental van visits.

Alsea Clinic's mission to provide care, promote wellness and integrate medical services will not change, Dahl said. The Community Health Centers brings a model of care called a medical home, with a focus on prevention and managing chronic conditions. In addition to Alsea Clinic staff, patients also will be able to see additional specialists through the Health Centers' referral network. People can receive eligibility assistance, and a patient navigator is available to help them access additional services if

needed.

"We are dedicated to providing excellent health care to each of our patients," Dahl said.

Funding for the Alsea Rural Health Center comes from a health tax service district approved by Alsea area voters. These taxes go directly into an account to be used exclusively for the Alsea Clinic. The local Alsea Clinic Board will continue to oversee the clinic building and its assets.

At a glance

Alsea Rural Health Clinic

Address: 435 E. Alder St., Alsea

Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday; 1 to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday (closed Friday).

Appointments: Call 541-487-9116 or go online to <http://www.alseaclinic.org>

County uses blocks and jacks to protect roadway

The Benton County Public Works Department is applying an innovative solution to fix a continual flooding problem on Rickard Road.

The rural road – located in southeastern Benton County near Monroe – is used primarily for farming purposes, but washes out regularly during winter flooding. This has caused a continuous maintenance issue for the county and headaches for farmers, as gravel from the road is carried out onto their fields.

Benton County Public Works came up with a solution using a system developed by Contech Engineering Solutions. Public

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County protects roadway *From Page 1*

Works crews have cleared dense blackberry thickets from the down-flow slope to the west of the road. After clearing the vegetation, geotextile fabric and interlocking concrete blocks were placed on the slope along the low point of the road.

The concrete blocks are tied together with high-strength polyethylene cord to create a “mat” of blocks that cannot be moved by predicted flooding. “A-jacks” – another Contech product – will line the base of the block mat to reduce flood velocity and prevent the mat from being undermined. “A-jacks” are interlocking concrete pieces that when assembled look like a jack from a children’s toy set, only much larger. The jacks interlock and slow the flow of water, while allowing it to pass through.

Large boulders were placed and embedded on either side of the concrete blocks. These areas were partially backfilled with native soil and seeded with native grasses to further protect the road from scouring.

It took approximately 4,000, 30-pound concrete blocks and 128 jacks to reinforce the downstream slope and protect it. The estimate for the Rickard Road project is \$75,000 to do the work. Repairs in the past have cost around \$10,000 each time over a series of years. So in the long run, this move is anticipated to save the county money on repairing that section of road. Rickard Road still will flood regularly, but will be more durable. Work was performed in September and is now complete.

Public Works wins award for innovative solution

Benton County Public Works has been recognized by the American Public Works Association for an innovative solution to solve frequent slide problems on a county road.

The APWA Oregon Chapter has awarded Benton County Public Works the 2015 Project of the Year Award in the category of Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair in the less than \$5 million cost category for the reconstruction of Decker Road after substantial slides caused by a major storm event.

A section of Decker Road about one mile south of Decker Ridge and near Neumann Road/Beaver Creek experienced slides caused by wet weather in the winter of 2012. Landslides have been a historic problem along that section of road.

After an engineering analysis was completed and a plan developed, road crews dug out the slide area, installing perforated pipe to drain water from the hillside and placed light-weight Styrofoam blocks as

backfill to reduce the weight of the road section. Then they reconstructed the road on top of the block structure. Each block weighs 150 pounds and measures 4 feet by 4 feet by 8 feet.

The work was completed in phases over the course of two years and was finished in September 2014. Since completion, that section of road has held up to weather conditions with no slides in the area where the Styrofoam blocks have been used. Decker Road is a major truck route often used by heavy and oversized vehicles such as those utilized for logging operations.

Benton County is listed as the agency and contractor for the award. Benton County Public Works officially received the trophy at an award banquet on Oct. 21 in Canyonville.

More information about the project – along with other award winners by category – is available online at <http://oregon.apwa.net/PageDetails/6273>.



Community artists contribute to county mural

The Benton County Board of Commissioners harnessed the power of art to create interaction between the county and community while sprucing up a plain white wall downtown.

In September, commissioners chose Eugene-area artist Esteban Camacho Steffenson to paint a giant Chinook salmon on the southern wall of the Board of Commissioners Office building. The artwork – on the wall facing Jackson Street and the Benton County jail, – is much more than the fish outline upon further inspection.

Miniature images that include depictions of Benton County’s historic and natural attributes are featured throughout the mural. It shows lumber mills, agriculture, covered bridges, mountains, forests, rivers, the endangered Fender’s blue butterfly and more. It also includes an element of environmental protection, showing subtle reminders of how human beings, civilization and activities in our daily lives impact the natural environment. The image is approximately 13 feet by 45 feet.

Camacho Steffenson was one of several individuals or groups who submitted proposals to the

county in an open process. His was selected because of the quality of his proposal and interactions between community and the environment. His proposal included bringing in several community volunteers to assist with painting the mural. Camacho Steffenson has local ties, as his mother and her family live in Corvallis.

In all, between 15 and 20 community members spanning the ages from small children to senior citizens participated in creating the mural. The work was completed from late August through early September.

“The really nice thing is we were able to help build connections with individuals we might not otherwise have the opportunity to,” Benton County Board of Commissioners Administrative Manager Kevin Perkins said. “We really had a lot of people from all ages and walks of life come down and participate. Some even stopped in the middle of other errands to help paint for a few minutes. This project was about creating something artistic the community could be proud of, but the biggest goal was to build new relationships in the community.”

Sheriff assembles Honor Guard

Law enforcement is dangerous work and many men and women give their lives on duty in service to their communities. In light of these tragic realities, Benton County Sheriff Scott Jackson formed the Benton County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard to pay tribute to fallen officers.

Formed in 2015, the Honor Guard performs ceremonial duties at events that include law enforcement funerals, memorial ceremonies, color (flag) presentations, parades and other special events. In their inaugural appearance, the Honor Guard posted the colors to open The 2015 BCSO Chili Cook-Off.

"An honor guard is a ceremonial unit that represents Benton County and the Sheriff's Office, and the intent is to use it to honor local law enforcement professionals who have paid the ultimate price, as well as dignitaries and special events," Jackson said. "I believe it is an incredible honor to show the fallen the respect they and their families have earned as well as the honor and dignity they deserve."

Sgt. Melissa Werdell works in the Benton County Jail and jumped at the

chance to represent her agency on the Honor Guard.

"I actually participated in a color guard at the academy back in 2009 and had a lot of fun doing that," she said. "When the Sheriff announced that he was going to form an honor guard, I sent a letter of interest. I am enjoying it. We just attended training in Tacoma and it went over all the basics of what we would do at a funeral service, marching basics, posting of the colors, flag folding, rifle drills and family escort."

The group plans to participate in a number of community events such as parades and other functions, but the group remembers it was formed for a core purpose to honor law enforcement personnel.

"When there is an officer's death in the line of duty, we participate in the funeral and when somebody passes away who is retired law enforcement, we would be there to honor them, as well," Werdell said. "Other members of our team have participated in other funerals that have happened lately for law enforcement personnel with other agencies."



Honor Guard members are sworn deputies specially chosen for the duty. Honor Guard members take great pride in representing the dedicated men and women of the Benton County Sheriff's Office and consider it an honor to participate in ceremonial events. The group currently has eight members. The Honor Guard in Benton County is dedicated to two Sheriff's Office employees killed in

the line of duty – James W. Dunn II, deputy sheriff, 1904, and James R. Appelgate, deputy sheriff, 1955. The idea of an Honor Guard had been discussed within the Sheriff's Office for a while.

"I implemented plans to create the Honor Guard this year, as I always have valued this," Jackson said. "We have a great team of deputies who are absolutely committed."

County seeks residents' voices on committees

The Benton County Board of Commissioners is recruiting volunteers for vacancies on various advisory boards and committees.

The board is seeking an enthusiastic and diverse group of citizens interested in becoming more involved with their local community on a variety of issues

- **Bicycle Advisory Board (1 opening);**
- **Board of Property Tax Appeals (2 openings);**
- **Disposal Site and Solid Waste (2 openings);**
- **Environmental Issues (2 openings);**
- **Fair Board (1 opening);**
- **Food Service (1 opening);**

that range from property tax appeals to the county fair.

Some openings have specific requirements relative to work background, community of residence and other factors. Opportunities currently exist on the following boards and committees:

- **Historic Resources (2 openings);**
- **Planning Commission (1 opening);**
- **Public Health Planning (5 openings);**
- **Roads (2 openings); and**
- **Special Transportation (2 openings).**

More information and applications are available online at <https://www.co.benton.or.us/boc/page/committee-vacancies>. For more information about open positions or to request an application, those interested also can contact Teresa Farley at 541-766-6890 or by email at Teresa.farley@co.benton.or.us.

Exploring land use aspects of the marijuana business

The Community Development Department is seeking input regarding appropriate zones and mitigation measures for commercial growing, processing, wholesaling and retailing of marijuana in unincorporated Benton County.

Beginning in 2016, the state will issue licenses for commercial activities related to marijuana. However, counties and cities have the ability to determine the land use zones where these activities are to be allowed. Local governments can require commercial marijuana activities to abide by setbacks from property lines or other measures to reduce impacts on neighbors.

To better understand these potential impacts, commercial marijuana activities in unincorporated Benton County initially will be allowed only in a small number of zones. These will enable Community Development staff – over the next year or two – to engage county residents and research potential impacts such as odor, chemical use, security and crime, water use and other issues.

Beginning in January 2016, Benton

County will embark on a countywide outreach effort to learn how residents would like commercial marijuana operations to be regulated. Community Development staff members will be engaging with members of the public in a variety of ways to learn more about interests and concerns. Then, county staff members will draft zoning regulations based on the public input.

This planning effort will not affect personal growing, possession and use of marijuana; it will address only the commercial growing, processing or sale of marijuana. The planning effort also will not address issues such as regulating the quality of marijuana, how it is taxed or the types of pesticide that can be used.

For more information about which activities are allowed in certain areas, to learn more about the process or to get involved, those interested can go online to <http://www.co.benton.or.us/cd/page/marijuana> or call 541-766-6819.

Local group captures county park's history in iBook

The Alliance for Recreation and Natural Areas has released a "Fort Hoskins iBook and Walking Tour" available free of charge from iTunes.

The interactive program guides history buffs and students from the founding of Fort Hoskins in 1856 to its decommissioning after the Civil War. The iBook includes interviews, narrative, historic documents and photos and video of the archaeology, restoration and activities at Benton County's Fort Hoskins Historic Park. It also allows digital and park visitors to explore the significance of the fort to the Native American residents' lives, the role it played for Oregon's political leanings during the Civil War and the later logging and farming settlements.

AFRANA commissioned the iBook through a grant from the Benton County Cultural Coalition. Produced by Mike Jager and Pioneer Publishers & Digital Storytellers Guild at Oregon State University, the iBook took two years to create. From the outset, the purpose was twofold: to utilize technology to share the fort's rich history and to provide history teachers in Benton County with a new complement to their Oregon curriculum. All middle school students in the Corvallis School District receive iPads and the Fort Hoskins iBook is a tool that can be updated and revised as new information is revealed through ongoing research.

Fort Hoskins Historic Park is located 16 miles northwest of Corvallis near Kings Valley. Built by the United States Army in 1856, it is one of three forts – Hoskins, Yamhill and Umpqua – established to maintain peace between Native Americans and settlers and later to quell anti-Union Southern sympathizers. Today, an effort of another sort is bringing people together to raise awareness and funding for the



restoration of the Commanders' House. This original fort building will serve as a gathering place and educational center to ensure the legacy and lore of historic Fort Hoskins endures for generations to come.

The book is available for Apple products on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/fort-hoskins/id1018537074?mt=11>. AFRANA is working to make the iBook available on other brands of mobile devices

Want to become a Master Gardener? Here's your chance

Love to be in the garden – any garden? Do you notice the plantings around you? Want to know what those plants are and how they came to be growing so well (or poorly)? Like sharing what you know and learning more? Believe in giving back to your community?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, consider becoming a Benton County Master Gardener. Registration is in progress and ends Dec. 1 for the 2016 classroom course. The course will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursdays from Jan. 7 through March 17 in Tangent. For more information, those interested can contact:

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Or use the on-line form available at:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/benton/mginterest>

