



What's happening in Linn County, Oregon

September 2021

We are all in this together

It's hard to believe that September is here and autumn is just weeks away.

It's even harder to believe after all we've been through over the last 18 months that we are still in the grip of a global pandemic. The latest executive orders from the governor of Oregon and the fact that kids will be returning to school very soon have stirred up a host of emotions among employees and families across Linn County.



**Darrin
Lane**

Administrative Officer

Families are concerned about in-person learning, childcare, their health and safety and everything else families struggle with even without COVID-19.

Businesses are struggling to stay open and concerned about another round of shutdowns. Employees are concerned about their jobs, vaccine mandates, mask mandates, their own health and safety and the safety of their co-workers.

Given the circumstances we face each day, I understand why people get discouraged and stressed.

One thing I know is certain, Linn County employees will continue to show up every day and serve our citizenry with honor and respect. Linn County employees from accounting to veterans services, and every department and office in between, will continue to persevere.

Another thing I know that's certain is that our elected officials have our backs.

So if you are stressing over the latest news about this mandate or that mandate, you should keep one thing in mind — we are a team and we will get through this together.

Each and every employee is a valued member of our Linn County family and we aren't going to leave anyone behind, period.



The Linn County Reporter is digitally published monthly by the Linn County Board of Commissioners.

Would you like to receive the newsletter?

Please send your email address to Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, apaul@co.linn.or.us or call 541-967-3825.



Linn County Law Librarian Amber Boedigheimer gets ready to be interviewed by Olivia Young of KVAL/KMTR.

Linn Law Library a vital resource

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

Amber Boedigheimer likes helping people and as the librarian for the Linn County Law Library, she gets to do that nearly every day of the week from her office at 304 Broadalbin, Albany.

Boedigheimer, 48, has been the local law librarian for five years and held a similar position in Marion County and at ATI Wah Chang before that.

"When I can help someone find information that can help them, it makes me feel good," the Corvallis native said.

Boedigheimer earned a degree in history from Oregon State in 1996 and a master's degree in library science from Emporia State University in 2004.

"I really enjoy exploring information that helps people," Boedigheimer said.

Boedigheimer said she learned about the local law library job from former librarian Peggy Schultz.

"I was the Marion County law library librarian and I knew Peggy," she said. "Law libraries are important because they help ensure fairness in the justice system."

Boedigheimer said the law library is used by the general public and local attorneys. The Linn-Benton Housing Authority also uses the conference room on a regular basis.

Boedigheimer said the law library has about 2,556 books and gets regular updates from publishers.

"People look up a lot of information about eviction issues, family law, criminal law and



The Linn County Law Library has more than 2,500 books, according to librarian Amber Boedigheimer.

state statutes," she said. "We have regulars who use the copy machine and computers to create legal documents."

Boedigheimer said that because the law library has one key focus, the county can provide information that usually can't be found at a community library.

Grant funds eviction prevention clinics

ALBANY — Linn County residents who may be facing eviction now have a free local resource that can help them avoid the process, thanks to Linn County Eviction Prevention Clinic, sponsored through the Linn County Law Library.

Linn County Law Librarian Amber Boedigheimer secured a \$41,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant to support the clinics that will be

Boedigheimer said she serves about 1,000 clients per year.

The Linn County Law Library is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and every other Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information, call 541-924-6902.

held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every other Friday which began Aug. 6 at the Law Library, 304 Broadalbin SW, Albany.

The clinics come as state and federal eviction moratoriums end.

"I will be glad to work with someone one-on-one or in groups," Boedigheimer said.

She said the clinic is designed primarily for low-

Eviction Clinics ... See P. 2

Ric Lentz is new LCSO emergency services director

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

ALBANY — Ric Lentz has packed a lot of incident command and search and rescue experience into his 28 years of life.

It was enough to impress Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon to offer him the position of Emergency Services Manager, succeeding Joe Larson, who held the post for many years.

“I have always been interested in law enforcement and helping people,” Lentz said.

Lentz grew up in southern Florida, but his career path has taken him a long way from Palm Beach County north of Miami.

He has worked at Golden Gate Canyon State Park near Golden, Colorado, and for the last two years as a ranger at Crater Lake National Park.

Lentz said he was always interested in law enforcement, which led him to a double major in criminal justice and history at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida, graduating in 2016. In Colorado, he was involved in numer-



Ric Lentz is the Linn County Sheriff's Office emergency services manager succeeding Joe Larsen.

ous search and rescue operations, as well as incident command situations involving wildfires.

“I loved it,” Lentz said.

A seasonal job, Lentz spent his winters back in Florida, where he worked at Palm Beach Atlantic University as a field training officer and helped develop incident command policies.

In 2018, Lentz completed a park ranger law enforcement program at Skagit Valley College in Mt. Vernon, Washington, and then was assigned to Arches National Park in Utah.

“It is the busiest park in Utah in terms of search and rescue calls,” Lentz said. “In six months, I worked on 30 rescues, everything from someone rolling an ankle to full bore highly technical res-

cues. The rock is slick, there are lots of visitors and it can get very hot.”

In 2019, Lentz transferred to Crater Lake National Park, where he gained even more search and rescue experience.

“We had one incident in which a man fell 1,200 feet and a Coast Guard helicopter was called in,” Lentz said.

Lentz said all of that experience will be invaluable in his new Linn County job.

“This job combines everything I enjoy from law enforcement to EMT work and search and rescue,” Lentz said. “Also, Linn County’s location is ideal. I used to be 90 miles from a major grocery store. Now, I can be at the coast or in the mountains in no time at all.”

Lentz said his girlfriend works on Mt. Rainier, so they see each other on weekends. He enjoys hiking, kayaking, rock climbing and working out.

“My main goal is to help this department and our communities grow,” Lentz said. “Working at our national parks means living and working in remote areas. We had to learn to be self-sufficient and do everything ourselves.”

Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon has high praise for his new employee.

“Ric is young, but he has the work experience of someone much older,” Sheriff Jim Yon said. “He loves the outdoors and the community. We are looking forward to him helping step up our game in terms of emergency management county-wide.”

Linn County Board of Commissioners

Roger Nyquist



Sherrie Sprenger



Will Tucker



Call 541-967-3825

Eviction prevention clinics ... From P. 1

income families that are facing eviction.

“We will provide court forms, guidance about how to apply for the Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program and the like,” Boedigheimer said.

She said program participants will need to provide some basic income and job status information, as well as outline their public assistance needs and how much rent is past due.

“Our goal is to provide early intervention and if possible, avert the eviction process all together,” Boedigheimer said. “We hope to reduce the overall number of evictions in the county and to reduce housing instability issues.”

The Linn County Law Library’s Eviction Prevention Clinic receives support from Community Services Consortium, Legal Aid, the Linn-Benton Housing Authority, N2N and the Albany Public Library.

To register, call 541-924-6902 or email: aboedigheimer@co.linn.or.us or linncountylawlibrary@gmail.com.

To learn more about the law library, visit <http://www.co.linn.or.us/law%20library/>.



County makes offer on former US Bank

ALBANY — Linn County has agreed to purchase the former US Bank building at 205 Ellsworth St. for \$1.3 million. Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist, Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker unanimously agreed to the deal. The 12,054-square-foot building was constructed in 1957 and was always housed a bank, until US Bank closed what it called its “community branch” location on January 2, 2021. The building is primarily made of brick and includes a partial second story. According to records at the Linn County Assessor’s Office, the building is valued at about \$1.2 million. It is owned by Mittleman Properties of Portland. Linn County has been looking for additional office space for some time and tried without success to purchase the former Wells Fargo bank building at First and Broadalbin.

WIC event celebrates breastfeeding benefits



Ashley Biller and Louisa Shelby of Samaritan Lactation Services.

By Megan Dunn

Linn County Lactation Consultant/
Breastfeeding Coordinator

August 7 the WIC Breastfeeding program hosted a very successful event for World Breastfeeding Week and National Breastfeeding Month.

More than 100 families joined us to celebrate the important health and bonding benefits of breastfeeding.

This outreach event brought together community partners with a vested interest in public health and breastfeeding.

The event was set up to allow families to connect with community partners who offer services which support breastfeeding and lifelong health.

The annual theme of “A Shared Re-

sponsibility” was evident as families worked through the event starting with pregnancy support then to birth services and into the postpartum period and finally wrapping up with early childhood. The first of what will be an annual Breast-

feeding Celebration linked together the many ways we can encourage and support breastfeeding success. Partners included the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling



Juana Lopez Gonzales of Breastfeeding Peer Counseling.

program, Maternal Child Health Nursing, Samaritan Lactation Services, Linn Benton Lincoln Breastfeeding Coalition, La Leche League, Midvalley Doula, Capitol Dental Care, Head Start, SNAP and Pollywog.

County adds Bilyeu Den Park

By Alex Paul
Communications Officer

SCIO — A popular swimming hole under the Hannah Covered Bridge that was once an eyesore, has been turned into Linn County’s newest wayside park, offering locals and visitors a place to picnic, swim or just enjoy the relaxing sounds of Thomas Creek.

Bilyeu Den Park (pronounced blue den) is just about

one acre and was donated by the Bentz family, which has owned a 700-acre tree farm in the area since 1964.

Linn County Parks Director Brian Carroll said his staff has been working with the Bentz family

for several years. Although the park isn’t finished, it already features a paved parking lot, vault toilet, picnic table with more to come and sturdy stairs that allow easy access to and from the creek.

“This site has significant historical value,” Carroll said.

The area was settled by the Bilyeu family in the 1850s. Before the Hannah and Jordan bridges were built, the winter rains made Thomas Creek unfordable, preventing the residents from leaving the area until late spring. This resulted in them calling the area “the Den” (like a bear’s den.)

In 1904, the Bentz family moved to the McCully Mountain area in Linn County from the sand hills of Nebraska. Randy Bentz said his Grandfather John Bentz used to tell him stories about visiting “The Den” when he was young. He also talked about a nearby sawmill that was operated by Trappist monks, some artifacts of which the family has preserved on their property.

In 1964, Bentz’s father, Ron, bought a cutover tree farm near the Hannah Covered Bridge. They have spent the last 60

years improving the farm and for many of those years, struggled with how to deal with trespassers on what is now the wayside.

“At first, it was only local folks who came down to swim on hot days,” Bentz said. “Then in the 1980s, it changed and people started showing up from all over.”

They left trash and when the family put up a fence to gain some control over their own land, it was often cut.

“I spent a lot of time fixing the fence,” Bentz said. “We also put out a lot of campfires people left

that could have easily spread up the hill into our trees.”

Bentz’s father contacted Linn County officials 40 years ago, but there wasn’t as much interest in the covered bridges as there is today.

In 2017, the family contacted Carroll with the idea of creating the wayside. Carroll said he was immediately interested and the process of creating the new park began.

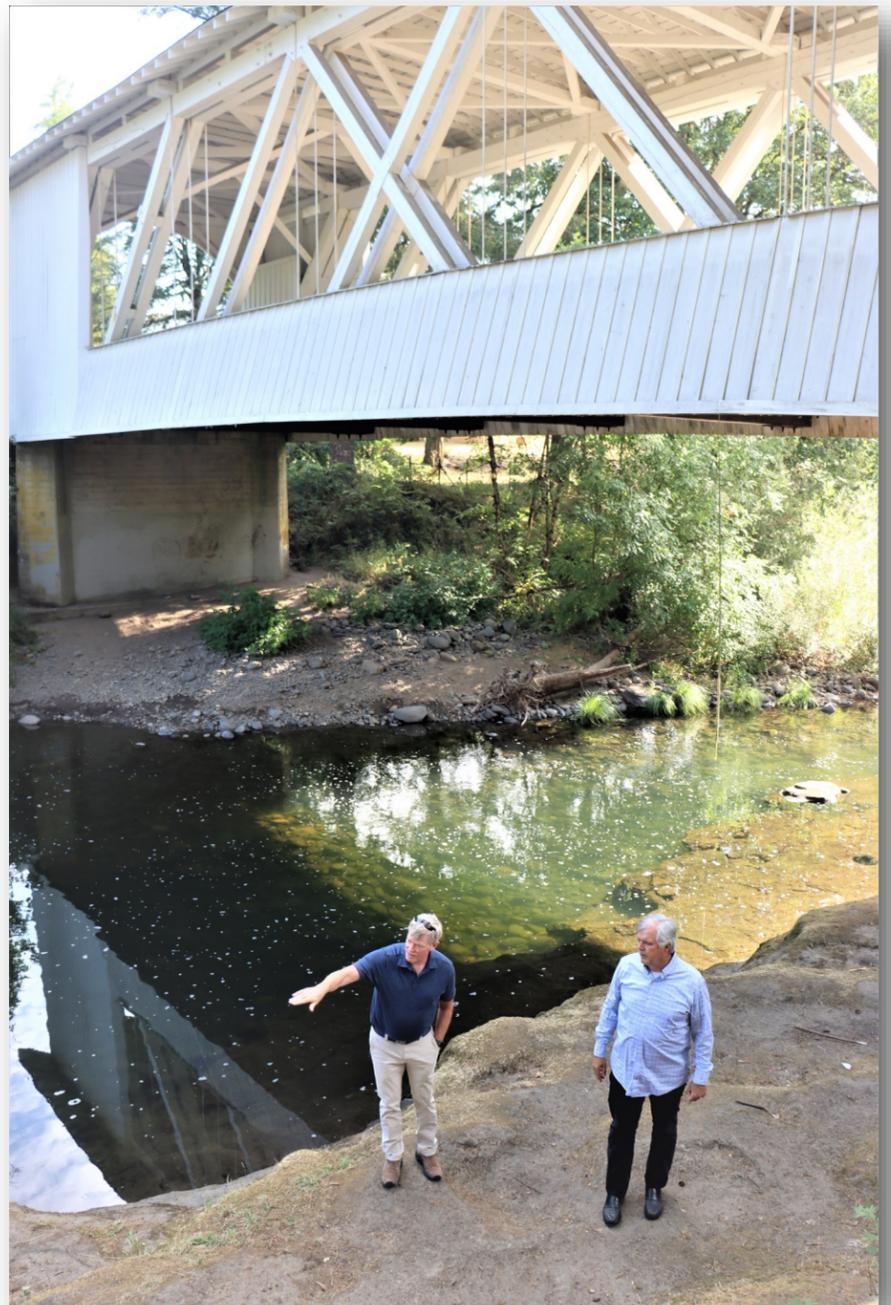
Someone seated at the picnic table in the parking lot has an excellent view of the 105-foot long Hannah Covered Bridge and can enjoy the sound of wooden planks rattling as vehicles pass by.

Thomas Creek and Bilyeu Creek converge nearby.

Carroll said the county will soon install a new sign and he is working with the Bentz family to develop an interpretive sign that denotes the site’s historical values.

Bentz said the new park is being very well received.

“It’s great. We haven’t noticed any real problems. We knew the county would



Above: Parks Director Brian Carroll and Randy Bentz talk about future development ideas for the Bilyeu Den Park near Scio. Left: Parks employees build steps down to Thomas Creek.

put in a good park and they have,” Bentz said. “Usually every day someone from the county stops by, whether that is someone from parks or the Road Department, or the Sheriff’s Office.” Bentz said the park’s development also

heralds a recognition that a natural asset of this magnitude should not be fenced off, but should be developed and responsibly enjoyed by all. A dedication ceremony is being planned for sometime this fall.

Linn County will support “Signs of Hope” on September 9

ALBANY — September 9, Linn County Mental Health staff members will be joined by other health professionals in the mid-valley holding “Signs of Hope” to encourage those who may be contemplating suicide.

They will gather from 10-11 a.m. at the corner of 4th and Ellsworth.

Linn County averages 24 suicides per year, according to Justin Thomas, manager of the Linn County Crisis Team.

“For several years, Oregon has focused on the issue of teen suicide and now we are focusing on the entire age spectrum for suicide awareness,” Thomas said.

Thomas said similar events will be held in counties across Oregon.

Thomas said mental health crisis support is provided 24/7 in Linn County.

“People can call 541-967-3866 24/7 or walk-ins are always welcome at 445 3rd Ave., Albany during business hours,” Thomas said.

Thomas said that in addition to Linn County, mental health assistance is also available from



Justin Thomas

private providers and Samaritan Health Services.

He said Linn County can help people enroll in the Oregon Health Plan to pay for services.

“We really hope to make people aware that they matter,” Thomas said.

In 2019, there were 906 deaths by suicide in Oregon, up from 844 deaths by suicide in 2018.

Linn County is one of numerous Regional Suicide Prevention Coalitions that will participate as a visual reminder to people they are not alone, that communities are here to help and they can reach out for help.

Partners in this effort are the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide, regional suicide prevention coalitions, Lines for Life, and the Oregon chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

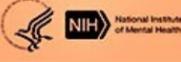
“The Signs for Hope campaign helps people to remember that it is normal to struggle, that they are part of a community that cares,” said Annette Marcus of the Oregon Alliance to Prevent Suicide.

Facts about suicide in Linn County:

- From 2017-2020 Linn County has averaged approximately 24 deaths by suicide each year.
- Of those lost to suicide, men make up approximately 78% of the deaths by

5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain

 ASK “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”	 KEEP THEM SAFE Reduce access to lethal items or places.	 BE THERE Listen carefully and acknowledge their feelings.	 HELP THEM CONNECT Save the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number 1-800-273-8255.	 STAY CONNECTED Follow up and stay in touch after a crisis.
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 www.nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

suicide in Linn County.

- 24-49 years of age makes up the largest grouping of deaths by suicide.
- Approximately 57% of all deaths by suicide in Linn County are from gunshot wounds
- It is important to know that resources are out there for support. Linn County and other agencies have mental health supports in Linn County.
- Linn County Mental Health has a walk-in crisis clinic open M-F 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at 445 Third Ave

SW, Albany and a 24-hour crisis line at 541-967-3866 extension 1.

- Safety plans work to prevent deaths by suicide. This often includes using natural supports for the individual in crisis, professional help and lethal means restriction.
- Linn County offers free trainings to community members to gain more information about all things related to mental health, this includes QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer), Mental Health First Aid, and Connect: Postvention (a training that helps agencies know the best strategies of how to respond when someone dies by suicide).

Undersheriff Paul Timm retires after 30 years with LCSO

By Alex Paul

Communications Officer

ALBANY — Paul Timm, 55, readily admits he has enjoyed his 30 years with the Linn County Sheriff’s Office, the last three as undersheriff to Sheriff Jim Yon.

Perhaps the fact that he has more than 2,800 hours of sick leave still on the books is a testament to his dedication to the task at hand.



“I’ve been sick and I’ve missed a few days, but it was usually on a weekend,”

Timm said. “I missed three days once in 2006, but I took vacation time.”

Timm isn’t a Linn County native, but he has lived here since he was four years old.

He followed his family in a long line of law enforcement duties. His father, Paul, was a long-term Oregon State Police trooper. Two brothers were in police services as are cousins in Minnesota.

Timm officially retired in June, but stayed on a couple months to help during vacation season. The end of August, he started working on projects around his home. In September he and his wife, Sandy, are headed to the Midwest on vacation. They plan to visit Yellowstone National



Above: Home projects and travel are in the immediate future for former Undersheriff Paul Timm, who has retired after 30 years service with the Linn County Sheriff’s Office. Left: Timm served aboard the USS Nimitz aircraft

Park and the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Timm graduated from West Albany High in 1984, worked at Coastal Farm & Ranch and then enlisted in the Navy in 1986.

“At that time, Oregon State Police wanted you to be at least 21,” Timm said.

Timm served aboard the aircraft carrier the USS Nimitz for three years and said he got to see numerous foreign lands.

“I’ve been to every continent except Australia and Antarctica,” Timm said. “I really enjoyed that.”

After his discharge in 1989, Timm returned to Albany and earned a degree in criminal justice from Linn-Benton Community College in 1991.

Timm was hired by Sheriff Art Martinak, the first of five sheriffs he would work with during his career. Others include Dave Burright, Tim Mueller, Bruce Riley and Jim Yon.

“I started as a marine deputy and loved it. It was so much fun,” Timm said.

But after only two months, he became a resident deputy in Harrisburg.

“It was great,” Timm said. “People would actually bring me freshly baked cookies.”

During his navy years, Timm was in aviation supply. He was responsible for thousands of parts for the jets aboard the Nimitz. It’s that attention to detail that has served him well at the LCSO.

He has served in a variety of positions at LCSO. In 1994, Timm became a courthouse deputy and in 1997, he moved into the detective division. He worked patrol — which he enjoyed — and was promoted to traffic corporal, detective sergeant in 1999 and detective captain in 2005.

Timm said he always liked working criminal investigations and in the early years, that included everything from property crimes to homicides. Now, detectives specialize in areas such as sexual abuse, homicide, property crimes and computer forensics.

He also served in hostage negotiation, was the SWAT commander and detective captain.

Although he used computers extensively in the navy, Timm said they were few and far between when he first came to the sheriff’s office. There were no cell phones, although deputies had pagers.

Timm — who has also served as rangemaster — bought his own .357 revolver and there were .30-.30 lever action rifles in the patrol cars.

“I may go to work some time later, but I’ve got plenty to do for now,” Timm said.

Timm and Sheriff Yon have worked together for 28 years and Yon said he will miss Timm’s professionalism.

“Paul is absolutely dedicated to the craft of what we do,” Yon said. “He’s dedicated to his officers and the people we serve. He always demanded excellence and he got it. We’ve worked together 28 years and I will miss my friend.”