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Contentious crowd attends Mossy school board meeting

By Buddy Rose
The East County Journal

Dissension reigned at the regular Mossyrock School Board meeting on Oct. 19. A hundred or more people showed up at the meeting, overwhelming the capacity of the small Junior High library room where board meetings are held. Those attending included parents, school staff and other school employees and concerned members of the community. In addition to the extremely overcrowded library room, as many or more people remained outside in the hallway where it was difficult or even impossible to hear board proceedings taking place in the meeting room.

The primary concern of those attending was the recent placement of two administrative staff members at the elementary school on administrative leave by Superintendent Effie Dean.

That decision had been more or less publicly announced within a lengthy message on the Mossyrock School District Facebook page posted on Oct. 14 and reposted on Oct. 15 that included this statement:

"On Oct. 9, two employees of the Mossyrock School District were placed on standard non-disciplinary paid administrative leave." No further details were provided about any misconduct or allegations regarding the two employees, who were not identified. The end of the Facebook message stated it was submitted by the "Mossyrock School Board of Directors."

Prior to the Facebook message, the most recent meeting of the board took place on Sept. 21. Since that date, there had been no opportunity for the board to meet and arrive at a consensus, so it would appear the Facebook message falsely represented a collaborative communication by the entire board.

The other problem is that, under most circumstances, any potential disciplinary action such as administrative leave is usually kept as confidential as possible in order to protect the persons involved and to allow any internal investigation to proceed, unimpeded by unanswered questions and rumors from the outside.

The Facebook message opened the entire process up to public scrutiny, which has led to the current anger and mistrust of the board and school administration, particularly Superintendent Dean, who was hired as the new Mossyrock superintendent on July 1 of this year under a one-year contract that expires June 30, 2027.

Once the process was made public, the likely identities of the two employees, Elementary Principal Angela Bacon and

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Forest Industry history brings people and business to East Lewis County

The Morton Historical Museum's newest exhibit features the history of the forest industry in the local area.

By Amber Brown
The East County Journal

The forest industry has played a large part, maybe even THE largest part, of the economics of East Lewis County for well over 100 years.

The Morton Historical Museum has taken on the challenge of documenting the history of the logging industry. The exhibit opened on Saturday, Oct. 24 and the entire room is filled with different logging, trucking and mill companies that have or do exist in the area.

"I had a run in with someone years ago and they referred to one of the men working at the mill as 'just a mill worker' in such a derisive tone. They are our boys, the backbone of our society. I knew then that I wanted to put together a museum exhibit about them," creator of the exhibit Rebecca Starr-Justice said.



Photo by Amber Brown / The East County Journal

Right, Dianne Harper's father John Moore was the founder of the Cowlitz Stud mill which eventually had sites in Packwood, Morton and Randle. Harper is with Rebecca Starr-Justice on Saturday, Oct. 24 at the Morton Historical Museum's opening of the exhibit.

In the pamphlet about the museum, put together by Starr-Justice, it reads, "Timber is the boon of the local economy. According to documents obtained, these companies

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Halloween fun in every community

By Amber Brown
The East County Journal

Whether child or adult, there is a Halloween event in every East Lewis County community. Check out the list below and join in the celebration of friends, laughter and treats. Many of these events are still looking for volunteers. Create your own diorama in your trunk and join a trunk or treat.

Packwood

A Packwood Halloween, 2 to 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31, Packwood Schoolhouse, 12990 U.S. Highway 12. Trunk or Treat, games, Witchy Ride, costume contest and music. Sponsored by Packwood Schoolhouse, Historic Hotel Packwood, Livable Packwood and local Packwood grandmas.

Witchy Ride, 4 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31. Historic Hotel Packwood, at the intersection of Main Street and Smith Road. Grab your cape, decorate your bike and join us for a family friendly bike ride around town.

Longmire Springs Brewing Bell Bottoms and Bad Omens 70s Halloween Party, 6 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31, Longmire Springs Brewing, 112 Norman Way. Dust off the bell bottoms, tease up the hair and get ready to party like its 1975 with a Halloween twist. The Backfire Band is bringing a night of classic rock to a 1970s-themed Halloween costume party.

Randle

White Pass Junior Class Halloween Movie Night, 3:30 to 6 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 29, High school commons, 516 Silverbrook Road. Movie is Halloweentown and ticket prices are $5 for adults, $3 for students, under 10 is free. Halloween raffle, $2 per ticket, win a Halloween basket. Donation are for the Junior Class.

White Pass 2026 BooFest, 3 to 6 p.m., Friday, Oct. 30, White Pass High School 516 Silverbrook Road. Theater is performing the Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde at 4 p.m. Haunted house, games and fun. PTO fundraiser, Hot Dog dinner basket $5 cash, Gift Basket raffle tickets $1 each.

Glenoma

Mead Family Market's Pumpkin Face-Off, 4 to 6 p.m., Friday, Oct. 30, Mead Family Market, 8136 U.S. Highway 12. Are you the next Pumpkin Supreme? Carve away the competition and come be a part of a great gourd off and celebrate with us. Grand prizes for Adult and Kid pumpkin supreme.

Glenoma Fire Department Trunk or Treat, 4 to 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31, Glenoma Fire Department, 8022 U.S. Highway 12. Indoor games and treats.

Morton

Heritage House Trick or Treat, 5 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31, Heritage House, 860 W. Main Ave. First 200 little monsters get a free dinner or goodie bag

Morton Community Bible Church Old Fashion Harvest Party, 4 to 7 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31, Bob Lyle Building, 700 Main Ave. Spooky free zone, Trunk or treat, carnival-style games, crafts and snacks.

Junk and Joy's Halloween Spooky Event, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31. Junk and Joy, 201 Main Ave. Come dressed in your costume and get a special discount. Get ready for a spooktacular day of shopping, treats and Halloween fun. Sweets and treats for everyone.

Ol' Moose Scaraoke, 8 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 31. The Ol'

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Tourism funding draws public eye

By Amber Brown
The East County Journal

The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) applications, presentations and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) have been completed.

Not everyone is happy with the recommendations. However, the final decision, made by the BOCC will happen sometime in November. While the BOCC usually approves the recommendations of the LTAC without question, this year the public outcry has been heard and the BOCC is really considering before making the final decision.

The presentations were made on Oct. 15. LTAC deliberated on Oct. 16 and sent their recommendations on to the BOCC.

For the 2027 year, there were 26 organizations that requested money from the LTAC board. Four of those organizations had subsets. For example, the White Pass Country Historical Society was the umbrella organization for the Packwood Visitor Center, Museum and Friends of High Rock Stewardship Program.

The 26 organizations requesting funding are the Pinchot Partners, Lewis County Historical Museum Visitor Center, Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, Chehalis-Centralia Railroad and Museum, Veterans Memorial Museum, Lewis County Public Utility District, Onalaska Alliance, Visit Rainier, Mossyrock Tourism Enhancement Project, Mossyrock Area Action League, Morton Historical Society, City of Morton, City of Vader, Fire Mountain Arts Council, Mineral Lake Lions Den, Western Forest Industries Museum, Packwood Improvement Club, Packwood Trail Project, City of Winlock, Experience Packwood, Rainier Raid Adventure Races, ELC Chamber of Commerce, White Pass Country Historical Society, Economic Alliance of Lewis County, Southwest Washington Fair and Lewis County.

There were eight organizations that LTAC recommended receive no funds. Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce requested $300,000 for their Stay Another Day event. Lewis County Public Utility District requested $75,000 for campground operations and annual kids fishing derby.

City of Mossyrock requested

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TK Trike-A-Thon raised over $1,000 for St. Jude's Hospital



Photo by Amber Brown / The East County Journal

Romina Chavez-Lua and Stella Cruz circle the track on their tricycles at the Trike-A-Thon on Wednesday, Oct. 21.

By Amber Brown
The East County Journal

Mrs. Donna Dean's (formerly Wilson) transitional kindergarten (TK) class at the Mossyrock School District participated in a St. Jude's Fundraiser that culminated in a TK Trike-A-Thon on Wednesday, Oct. 21.

Dean has been attending conventions for teachers for the past couple of years. At the latest convention she met people from St. Jude's.

The representatives from St. Jude's discussed their cause with Dean, which is to allow every family with a sick child to get the care they need and not have to worry about the financial situation.

As Dean told the TK class, "This is so the mommy's and daddies don't have to worry about money while they are caring for their sick child."

Dean realized that this was a worthy cause and brought back the idea of a fundraiser for her classroom. She spoke with the representatives and they agreed that if her class raised a certain amount of funds then they would send prizes for the kids and their families.

Dean also went to several local businesses and got sponsorships from them for the children to have immediate prizes, like ice cream.

On the day of the Trik-A-Thon, the teacher, paraprofessionals, students and some grandparents joined forces to watch the students go around the track on their tricycles. The students had to wear helmets in order to ride.

The students who did not have tricycles were able to blow bubbles and play with soccer balls that were provided.

When a few laps had been taken around the track, Dean called the students in and announced the winners. The class as a whole raised over $1,000 to donate to St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

The first-place winner was Raymundo Juarez Guerrero who raised $628. The second-place winner was Evanna Wehnau who raised $250. The third-place winner was Adalyn Vizgaudis who raised $120.

The classroom is continuing to collect funds until the end of October. For anyone wishing to contribute, go to the website fundraising.stjude.org/site/TR/Trike/Trike?pg=entry&fr_id=167356.