

LINKING LOOP: Talmadge-Ash Creek Study / Dr. Vickery Departure / Internet Access

9/6/2020

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By Anne Scheck

School News From Summer

TALMADGE TEACHERS GET ASH CREEK GRANT

Thanks to a trio of Talmadge Middle School teachers, residents of Central School District may know a whole lot more this time next year about the cities' signature stream, Ash Creek. The three received \$500 grants from the Ash Creek Water Control District (ACWCD) to chronicle the waterway near the school – ranging from use of drone surveyance to creation of artistic renderings.

"We wanted a new generation to get to know the creek," said Andrea Melendy, a board member of the ACWCD. "It's alive with plant life, with animal life and it feeds so much in the area." Using special cameras, Dave Beatley, who teaches 6th grade science, is set to take photos; Dawn Watson, who teaches 7th grade science, will use drones to view the creek in ways that haven't been done before; Michele Haney, who teaches art, is planning to capture the creek's natural beauty in an art show next year.

At the middle school, this is the "creek in their back yard," noted Dan Farnworth, chair of the ACWCD. The research efforts hopefully will lead to more of the same, perhaps at Central High School, he said. Students will be involved in all the projects, according to the ACWCD.

Ash Creek, which eventually passes under Main Street in Independence, travels east through Polk County to join the Willamette River. The ACWCD was formed nearly seven decades ago to improve and preserve the channel.

DORIE VICKERY NAMED NEW SHERIDAN SUPERINTENDENT

Dorie Vickery EdD, the director of teaching and learning last year for Central School District 13J, will start this school year as the new superintendent of the Sheridan School District.

Dr. Vickery had been with the Central School District for more than 10 years, and previously served as principal at Monmouth Elementary. She left recently to briefly work for her former boss, Buzz Brazeau, in his final year as interim superintendent at the Philomath School District. (Mr. Brazeau preceded Jennifer Kubista EdD as superintendent of Central School District 13J.) After moving to Philomath, Dr. Vickery was chosen as the incoming superintendent at Sheridan.

Central School District didn't provide a comment on Dr. Vickery's departure after being asked about it this past week. However, Betty Plude, a former board member of the Central District School Board, observed that Dr. Vickery was well known and highly regarded. "Dorie will really be missed," she said.

RURAL INTERNET ACCESS COMING FROM CARES \$

A county-wide expansion that aims to put internet coverage into underserved areas – with financing from nearly a million dollars of CARES Act money – won't use technology from MINET, the municipal broadband co-owned by Independence and Monmouth. Some residents have expressed disappointment that the contract went entirely to Philomath-based *Alyrica Networks*.

Asked whether he was aware of some of this public reaction, MINET's general manager, Don Patten, said that "MINET sees no value in making comment as to how 'the county' made this decision." However, he said he's "pleased to hear that a handful of rural 'digital have not's' are at long last being promised some level of broadband service."

The move was initiated by Polk County commissioners that, as a board, have voiced concern over children and youth who are without convenient internet access for education this year. Both Commission Chair Mike Ainsworth and Commissioner Craig Pope noted this summer that school districts are providing mobile units – "hot spot" stations – but they observed that traveling to such locations is a barrier for some students.

LET'S GET READING BOOK GIVE-AWAY

Trammart News, publisher of *The Linking Loop*, is pleased to announce that this month, every Monday, a children's book will be featured in a short video on the *Trammart News* Facebook page. Tune in to see what book is featured – they all will have the same theme: hope. Ten free books are available upon request.
Begins on Labor Day! -end-