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The **City of Redmond** announced **Stephen Lopez** as its newest Police Captain at the **Redmond Police Department**. Lopez most recently served as the Police Chief in Sunriver. He fills the vacancy created by current Captain Aaron Wells who has accepted the position of undersheriff to Sheriff-Elect Kent Vander Kamp.

Lopez will begin at Redmond PD on January 21, 2025.

Lopez holds a master's degree in public safety from the University of Virginia, is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, and brings more than 18 years of law enforcement experience to the department.

The Redmond Police Department has 70 of employees, 55 of those being sworn officers.

our community to enhance the quality of life for all who love Bend and the surrounding areas.

The two programs have long been a staple of Visit Bend's emphasis on managing the economic advantages of visitation against the maintenance of local culture and pristine natural settings, in addition to promotion of programming that takes place during the shoulder seasons. This role will help the organization address that focus so that the future of the tourism economy can be kept in balance with the natural resources that depend on it and so that promotion and programming can happen during less busy times.

Borja, born in Redmond and raised in Madras, comes to Visit Bend from the Oregon Governor's Office as the Regional Solutions Coordinator, where he advances cross-sector partnerships to address complex regional challenges in Central and South Central Oregon, connecting state, local, Tribal, and business leaders.

Borja is also the founder of Vámonos Outside, which champions outdoor opportunities and access for Latino and BIPOC communities in the Central Oregon Region. He has also held the role of Community Relations Manager at the City of Bend, where he developed and managed communication, policies and engagement strategies to increase access to city services with underrepresented communities.

He is the board president of the Latino Community Association and serves on boards and committees such as the Heart of Oregon Corps, Gray Family Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, and the Roundhouse Foundation. Additionally, he has served as an elected Board Member for the Bend Park & Recreation District.

Borja holds a degree in management and organizational leadership from George Fox University and an Outdoor Industry Leadership Certificate from Oregon State-Cascades University. His expertise lies in connecting people, organizations, and ideas that drive inclusive and innovative growth, environmental stewardship, and meaningful change.

Awbrey Glen announced that **Tim Fraley** has been awarded the designation of Master Kids Coach which honors those who have been awarded the Top 50 Kids Coach Award three times. This is his third consecutive year being awarded Top 50 Kids Coach and he will forever be considered a Master Kids Coach from now on.

Fraley has been a golf professional at Awbrey Glen for over 25 years. He was the Head Pro at the club for 15 years and for the past eight years has been Awbrey Glen's Player Development director, charged with leading the junior program and helping members grow their love for the game.



The **Central Oregon Guardian Assistance Program (COGAP)** recently hired a new executive director, **Janet Basney**. Basney has recently worked as a case manager for the Mountain View Community Development Safe Parking Program in Redmond. She was the director of Rogue Community College's TRIO program from 2017-2022, which helped low-income individuals, first-generation college students, veterans, and people with disabilities.

COGAP was established as a nonprofit organization in August of 2023 in Bend, Oregon to provide guardianship services to indigent and low-income incapacitated individuals in the tri-county Central Oregon area. The formation of the nonprofit was in response to the rapid increase of indigent and low-income incapacitated adults

having no family or other legal decision-making support cycling through the hospital and jails or unhoused in our communities and without care and housing appropriate to their needs. Following input from the Central Oregon Council on Aging, DHS, adult behavior health agencies, Mental Health agencies, Elder Law Attorneys, Judges, Trial Court Administrators, Probate Commissioner, law enforcement, professional guardians and medical professionals, the Central Oregon Guardian Assistance Program was formed.

COGAP provides pro bono and low-cost guardianship services to Central Oregonians with limited means who are incapacitated and unable to make medical, housing, and financial decisions for themselves. COGAP helps people who are unable to make decisions regarding medical treatment, housing, and nutrition due to a lack of capacity by providing pro bono guardianship services to those in need. Often these individuals may be unhoused, dealing with learning or cognitive disabilities, mental illness, acute medical needs, dementia, or Alzheimer's Disease and/or substance use disorders.

Visit Bend has announced the hiring of **Zavier Borja**, who joins the Visit Bend team as the organization's new role of Destination Stewardship director.

The Destination Stewardship director will oversee Visit Bend's grant programs, the Bend Sustainability Fund and the Bend Cultural Tourism Fund, in addition to other Visit Bend stewardship partnerships like the one with Leave No Trace. The grant programs reinvest room tax revenue, generated by visitors, back into



COUNTY COMMISSIONER PHIL CHANG AND SHERIFF KENT VAN DER KAMP, FOLLOWING THE JAN. 6 SWEARING IN CEREMONY | PHOTO COURTESY OF DESCHUTES COUNTY

During a public ceremony on January 6, **Deschutes County** Commissioner **Phil Chang** and Sheriff **Kent van der Kamp** were sworn into office, marking the official start of their four-year terms of office.

This will be Chang's second term serving as one of three members of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). He was re-elected to his position during the May 2024 Primary Election. The BOCC is the policy making body of Deschutes County government and Commissioners serve as elected advocates for the community.

Van der Kamp has worked in a variety of positions for the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) for more than 20 years. He was elected Sheriff during the November 2024 General Election. As Sheriff, he will oversee the department's budget and manage more than 260 department employees.

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Who's Who

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Commissioner Chang serves on a number of committees beyond his work as a member of the BOCC, including the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council's (COIC) Regional Housing Council, the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, Economic development for Central Oregon, and he was recently appointed by Governor Tina Kotek to serve on the Oregon Transportation Commission.

Sheriff van der Kamp's extensive career with DCSO includes serving as a Patrol Sergeant, a Criminal Detective, an Internal Affairs Investigator and supervisor of the department's SWAT paramedic team. Prior to being elected Sheriff, van der Kamp most recently served as Sergeant of the Central Oregon Drug Enforcement Team.

The swearing-in ceremony took place in the Deschutes County Circuit Court and was administered by the Honorable Wells Ashby, Presiding Judge for the Deschutes County Circuit Court.

Partners for Affordable Housing recently announced that it has expanded its diverse coalition membership, with 20 members now united behind a mission to develop and advocate for bold solutions that increase housing supply and lower housing costs across Central Oregon.

The advocacy coalition is unique in the region, bringing together policy experts, affordable and market rate housing builders, and organizations representing people impacted by the housing crisis—sometimes devastatingly so. Through education, powerful storytelling and policy recommendations, the coalition hopes to support elected leaders to feel empowered by the community to enact bold solutions to support families across the region.

The coalition now consists of 20 organizations including unions, employers, market rate and affordable housing builders, and housing advocacy groups. All partners recognize that adequate affordable and workforce housing is critical to a strong economy and ensuring people are able to stay and thrive in

Central Oregon.

New groups include **Ashley & Vance Engineering, Bethlehem Inn, Bend Redmond Habitat for Humanity, Bliss Sequoia Insurance and Risk Advisors, CASA of Central Oregon, Katherine Austin Architect, Mountain View Community Development, Northwest Housing Alternatives, Open Concept Architecture, Roost Development and Thistle and Nest.**

Members already engaged in the coalition include Bend Chamber, Bend Police Association, Bend YIMBY, East Cascades Association of REALTORS, Central Oregon Builders Association, Oregon Nurses Association, and RootedHomes.

Each year, **Central Oregon SHRM** recognizes one of our members based on nominations by their peers. The award represents the HR Professional's contributions to the field of human resources through their outstanding record of involvement either through innovation, program or best practice.

We are proud to announce this year's HR Professional of the Year winner, **Cindy Bené** with Employment Transition Solutions, LLC.

Bené has contributed to the success of Central Oregon SHRM and the greater Central Oregon human resources community by tirelessly promoting the human resources field in Central Oregon through her Presidency with Central Oregon SHRM, partnership with the Bend Chamber, and serving as a board officer of the Central Oregon Employer's Council.

Recently, Secretary of State Tobias Read officially appointed **Steve Bergmann** to serve as the director of the Audits Division in the **Secretary of State's** office. Bergmann brings decades of broad audit experience in both the public and private sectors, including more than ten years working for three different State of Oregon agencies.

Bergmann is currently the business services director for the Secretary of State's office. Previously, he led audits at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Revenue. Before his time with the State of Oregon, he worked for several accounting firms serving clients in the banking, nonprofit, and government sectors.

Bergmann began serving in his new role on January 13, 2025.

Diversity in Science Initiative at COCC Awarded Funds from Three Sources

by **MARK RUSSELL JOHNSON, Staff Writer, Marketing and Public Relations — Central Oregon Community College**

An initiative to encourage student diversity in science programs at Central Oregon Community College (COCC), and to promote broader representation in scientific fields in general, has gained new momentum thanks to grant awards from the Bloomfield Family Foundation, the Randall Charitable Trust and the Central Oregon Health Council.

Support comes from a \$10,000 grant from the Bloomfield Family Foundation, the second such award from the Portland-based organization, a \$10,000 grant from the Randall Charitable Trust and \$20,000 in aid from the Central Oregon Health Council.

A portion of the funding is being allocated for an outreach program that COCC has developed with a number of Central Oregon rural middle schools, in partnership with the Central Oregon STEM Hub, to bring underrepresented students to the college three times per year for hands-on science learning sessions. Another portion of the funding will support a one-week summer "bridge" program for incoming college freshman, to build confidence and connection around science-based programs.

Small stipends will be allocated to faculty who participate in the bridge program or middle school outreach activities, and also to Teresa DeShow, coordinator of the program.

"We're trying to get students to see, early on, that they can be a scientist," said DeShow, an assistant professor of biology at COCC. "We looked at the available research to determine best practices for supporting underrepresented students in the sciences, then developed a program tailored for Central Oregon based off of what we found." COCC's long-running summer high school symposiums, designed for district Latinx, Native American and Black students, which all incorporate academic samplers, have helped serve as a model.

According to a 2021 report from the Pew Research Center, there are significant gaps in workforce diversity when it comes to the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math. For instance, the study found that Hispanic workers make



THE FUNDING WILL HELP SUPPORT A ONE-WEEK, SCIENCE-FOCUSED SUMMER "BRIDGE" PROGRAM AT COCC FOR INCOMING COLLEGE FRESHMAN | PHOTO COURTESY OF COCC

up 17% of total employment across all occupations, but just 8% of all STEM workers.

For more information, contact Zak Boone, COCC's vice president of college advancement and executive director of the COCC Foundation, at zboone@cocc.edu or 541-383-7212.

cocc.edu

Council on Accreditation Once Again Recognizes J Bar J Youth Services for Exceptional Work

by **JONATHAN BAKER, Director of Development — J Bar J Youth Services**

J Bar J Youth Services announced its reaccreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA), an esteemed international accrediting body dedicated to ensuring the highest standards of service in the social and human services sector.

Reaccreditation affirms J Bar J Youth Services' commitment to providing high-quality, effective programs that improve the lives of youth and families throughout Central Oregon. COA's rigorous accreditation process involves an in-depth review of organizational practices, policies, and service outcomes, ensuring that agencies meet or exceed

industry benchmarks. J Bar J is the only COA accredited Oregon program east of the Cascades.

"This reaccreditation underscores our dedication to best practices and continuous improvement," said Stephanie Alvstad, co-CEO of J Bar J Youth Services. "It reflects the hard work and professionalism of our entire team, as well as our ongoing commitment to serving vulnerable youth and families with integrity and compassion."

COA accreditation is a significant achievement that demonstrates operational excellence and a commitment to accountability and

quality service delivery. Organizations pursuing accreditation must meet hundreds of standards and undergo a rigorous evaluation, including site visits and assessments from industry experts. Beyond the achievement of being reaccredited, J Bar J's accreditation was expedited because they did not receive any out-of-compliance ratings in any of the fundamental practice standards which is a rare and significant accomplishment.

"The COA process pushes us to remain accountable and innovative," Alvstad added. "We are honored to be recognized and remain focused on strengthening

our programs to create positive, lasting change in our community."

"COA's program of quality improvement is designed to identify providers that have met high performance standards and have made a commitment to their stakeholders to deliver the very best quality services. COA is proud to recognize J Bar J Youth Services, Inc. as one of these outstanding providers, and we wish them the very best in their continuing work with the individuals they serve" states President and CEO of Council on Accreditation Jody Levison-Johnson.

jbarj.org