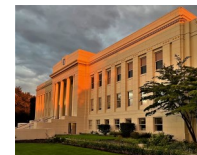




**Linn
County**

NEWS



Contact: Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, 541-967-3825 or email: apaul@co.linn.or.us

Juvenile Department seeing results of school closures

ALBANY — The closure of schools for nearly two years during the COVID-19 pandemic has had definite negative effects on young people, Linn County Juvenile Director Torri Lynn told the Board of Commissioners Tuesday morning.

Lynn said that the Juvenile Department is seeing an uptick in referrals now that schools are back in full session and many of the young people are exhibiting significant behavioral issues.

Lynn said there were 59 referrals in April, which seems to be trending as normal this year.

Lynn said the behavior issues are likely linked to the isolation of students and for many, a lack of a positive role model during the closure.

Board Chairman Roger Nyquist asked Lynn if he thought school closures were a bad idea,

Lynn said yes, “absolutely a bad idea” adding he said the same thing as closures were being proposed two years ago.

“During the COVID closures, we only saw the highest flyers,” Lynn said. “We talked about this. That we might lose kids educationally and other kids would be on the edge. We probably won’t get these kids back.”

Commissioner Sherrie Sprenger asked how the county can combat what appears to be an escalating issue.

Lynn said the key will be early interven-

tion and appropriate response, but he added, like everywhere else, it is difficult to find staffing.

Overall, in April there were 206 young people on probation or pending court appearances, with 47 assessed as high-risk.

The six-member Tier I work crew completed 115 hours of community service and the 19-member Tier II work crew completed 466 hours of community service in April.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved a request to extend a property tax exemption from its current three years to five years for ATI SAC in Millersburg, as part of the Enterprise Zone. The company plans to spend almost \$83 million for new equipment and plant modifications to double the output of one of their products. The project will add 40 jobs that pay at least 150% of the county’s average annual wage. Normally, the project would need to increase current staffing by 10%, or 80 employees. But there is an exemption for projects that cost more than \$25 million.
- Approved a request by the Linn County Sheriff’s Office to accept a “SatRunner Cell-on-Wheels” a portable communications tool. During disasters, it can be used to

provide both cell phone and Wi-Fi services. The unit is one of 11 in the state and is free. The county would only pay a fee if it is used on a non-emergency basis over 15 gigs of data.

- Gave new Linn County Parks & Recreation Director Stacey Whaley authority to sign grant and other types of project applications. Whaley pointed to two upcoming projects, a proposed rebuilding of the McCartney boat ramp on the Willamette River near Harrisburg and a new RV dump station in Sweet Home. The Parks Department is also bidding to take over maintenance and operations of 26 U.S. Forest Service campgrounds in Linn and Marion counties. Linn County already manages six Forest Service campgrounds near Cascadia and over the past 12 years, income has nearly doubled.
- Approved a request by the Linn County Sheriff’s Office to transfer \$252,000 from contingency to personal services and materials to make year-end payroll adjustments.
- Approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Judicial Department for \$11,656 for reimbursement of remodeling of Courtroom 5’s jury box by Linn County General Services staff.
-

Media contact: Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, 541-967-3825 or email apaul@co.linn.or.us.