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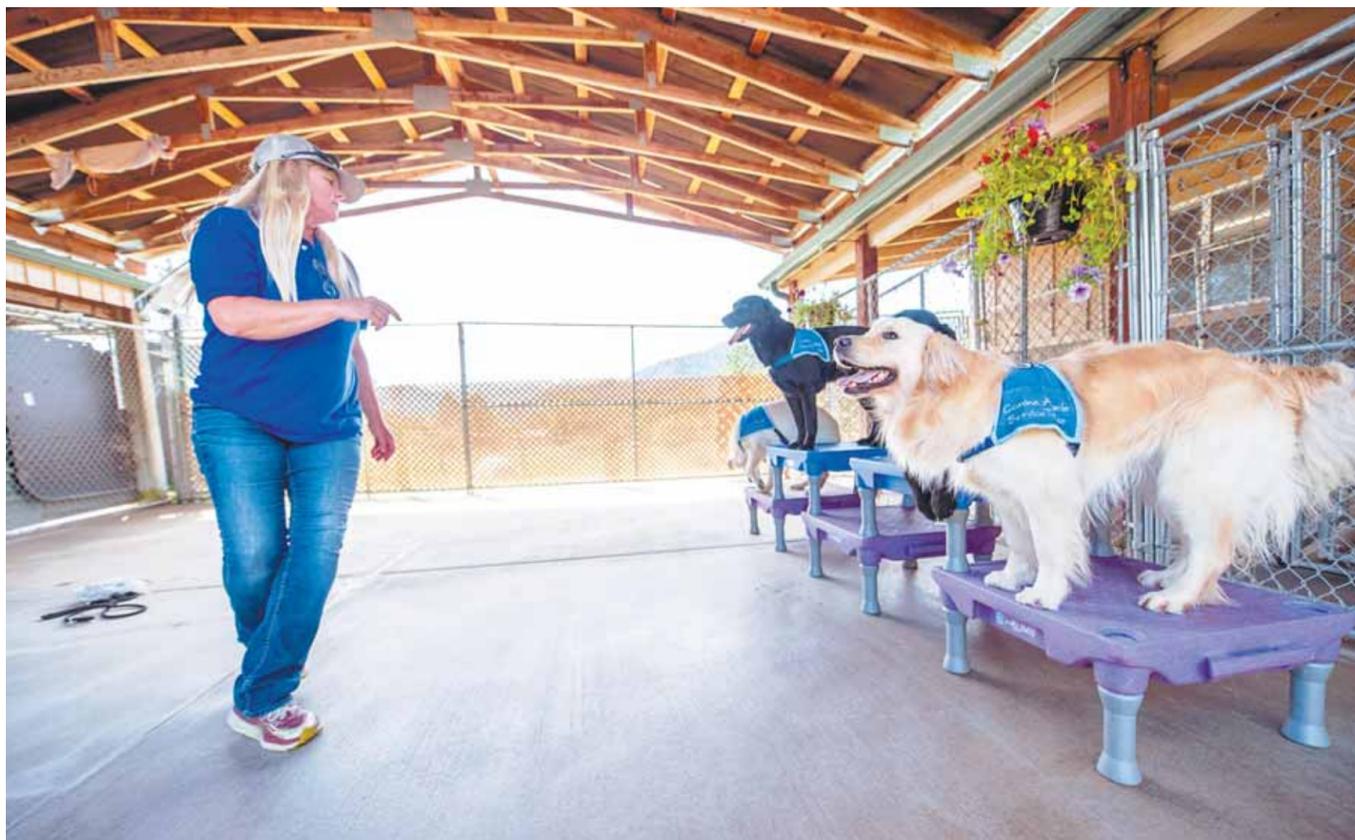
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Grants Pass

# Daily Courier

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## Foundation grant has tails waggin' at Canine Angels



Photos by JULIE ANDERSON / Daily Courier

Sandy Mays, lead trainer for Canine Angels, gives instructions to (from front) CeeZee, Iris, Aster and Gandalf at the nonprofit organization's Applegate Valley training facility. The dogs spend a year in training before spreading out across the country to work as service dogs and companions for kids, teens and young adults with special needs.

### Group one of those receiving Four Way Foundation grants

By Vickie Aldous  
of the Daily Courier

At a training center tucked in the hills of the Applegate Valley, the dogs of Canine Angels spend their days playing with each other and learning all the skills needed to become service animals.

The nonprofit organization specializes in preparing dogs to help kids, teens and young adults from ages 5 to 26.

"With most service dog programs, you have to be an adult to get a service dog," said Sandy Mays, vice president, lead trainer and one of the founders of Canine Angels.

The organization fills that hole, helping young people with disabilities and their families.

"The dog can open the door, turn on a light and retrieve things. They can do tasks to help kids be more independent," Mays said.

Canine Angels has noticed the program also helps parents.

"It really does help the parents relax, too. It gives peace-of-mind to let parents give space to



In training to become a service dog, Aster sits on a platform at Canine Angels kennel.

kids," Mays said.

Now Canine Angels is getting some much-needed peace-of-mind, too, with a \$10,000 grant from the Four Way Community Foundation to buy a backup generator for its Applegate Valley training

center and kennels. When the electricity goes out in the rural area, the lights, air conditioning, heating, and water will keep working.

The grant is one of more than 60 totalling \$517,000 provided by the Four Way Community Foundation to groups across Josephine County and western Jackson County this year.

Canine Angels usually crosses Labrador retrievers and golden retrievers to create the ideal service dog for kids.

"It's a mix of love-on-me, I-don't-want-to-do anything golden retrievers and workaholic labs," said Sheila Kolby, Canine Angels president and another co-founder of the organization, which got its start almost 20 years ago and has trained more than 120 dogs.

The group tried using rescue dogs originally, but found they needed puppies with the right temperament that could be correctly trained from the start.

Prospective service dogs spend their first year of life living in the homes of puppy raisers, who socialize them, take them out into community settings and teach them the basics of living in a home.

Turn to TAILS, Page 10A

## Dozens of new state laws took effect on Friday

By Shaanth Nanguneri  
Oregon Capital Chronicle

Oregon lawmakers passed more than 50 new laws during the legislative session earlier this year which went into effect on Friday.

Many focus on codifying state and local powers to respond to President Donald Trump's directives, as well as addressing cost-of-living issues.

Democratic leaders in both the Oregon House and Senate explained in a recent news release that the laws are intended to "shield Oregonians from the Trump administration's brutality and to keep more money in working families' wallets."

Among the new statutes is one that will disconnect Oregon from some federal tax cuts passed under the GOP's 2025 federal tax and spending law, which survived a failed Republican-led referendum attempt.

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## Hegseth invokes immigration 'invasion' during D-Day speech

Associated Press

PARIS — U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth used a D-Day anniversary speech on Saturday to appear to link immigration by sea to the wartime liberation of Europe, warning that the freedom won by Allied troops could prove temporary if leaders failed to defend it.

Hegseth, speaking at the Normandy American Cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer in northwestern France during commemorations for the 82nd anniversary of the June 6, 1944, landings, said that today, "different European beaches are stormed by different dangerous ideologies."

"Beaches in Spain and Italy and Greece and Bulgaria. Boats and men arrive," he said.

"When will European capitals do something about that invasion? Or is it too late?" he added. "I pray not, and I believe not."

Turn to SPEECH, Page 10A

## Phoenix High senior uses her struggles to share kindness

Valedictorian and Pear Blossom Queen saw home destroyed by Almeda Fire

By Emma Maple  
of the Daily Courier

PHOENIX — As Phoenix High School senior Abby Corona walks across the graduation stage today, her list of accomplishments runs long.

A valedictorian, the student body president, the 2026 Pear Blossom Queen, a member of the Latino Student Union and the captain of most sports teams she's been on, Corona has made the most of her high school experience.

But, as Corona dons her graduation robe and accepts her diploma on Saturday, what most people won't see are the challenges she's faced, the experiences that have refined her outlook on life and taught her to prioritize kindness over everything.

"It really goes to show that not everything you see on the outside is what is going on in the inside," Corona told the Daily Courier in the runup to today's commencement ceremonies. "I have struggled so much."

Six years ago, Corona's family was one of thousands who saw their house destroyed in the devastating Almeda Fire, which claimed more than 2,500 homes and 600 businesses in Talent,

Phoenix and unincorporated parts of Jackson County between Medford and Ashland.

"It kind of changed the whole trajectory of my life," she said. "I was really comfortable with being just closed in and happy in my space."

Before the fire, Corona lived in a trailer park in Talent with her parents Carlos and Jocksana, and her older brother, Nathan.

She thought she would graduate, stay in the area, and probably go to Southern Oregon University.

"After the fire, a lot changed," she said. "Not just in my life, but in the world."

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JULIE ANDERSON / Daily Courier

Phoenix High School graduating senior and student body president Abby Corona lost her home in the 2020 Almeda Fire, but the experience pushed her to do more with her life.



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