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Ironworks turned makerspace inspires students, the public



Photos by JULIE ANDERSON / Daily Courier

Mike Jacobson, outreach coordinator at CraterWorks MakerSpace in Central Point, explains safety features of a table saw in the CraterWorks wood shop. The space hosts students during school hours and CraterWorks members evenings and weekends.



CraterWorks MakerSpace is at 419 North Front Street in Central Point. The former Crater Iron building has been renovated to have a wood shop, metal shop, computer lab, commercial kitchen and fabrication lab.

CraterWorks serves Central Point district and also adults

By Chryssy Ewald of the Daily Courier

CENTRAL POINT — A former ironworks in Central Point is once again humming with activity in its new life as a "makerspace."

Mike Jacobson, outreach coordinator and woodshop captain for CraterWorks MakerSpace, described the nearly 20,000-square-foot facility as a "Disneyland" of creative opportunity.

"It's Santa's workshop," he said. The makerspace, tucked between the railroad tracks and where Pacific Highway becomes Front Street, smells faintly of sawdust and has clear internal walls that display the wiring, pipes, plumbing and heating and air that make the makerspace's woodshop, metal shop, laser lab and computer lab work.

"The electrical and stuff, of course, is all new, but the shell (of the building) is

the original warehouse for Crater Iron," said Jacobson, while giving a tour of the cavernous facility during a noontime lull in activity.

Original overhead cranes from the structural steel fabrication business still decorate the ceiling. "The walls have clear panels so you can see through it to educate the kids and the adults on how construction happens: you can see the plumbing, you can see the electrical work, you can see all of that fantastic stuff that goes on behind the scenes."

A commercial kitchen is housed in a more conventionally built room behind the main building.

"We have this for culinary classes for the schools," Jacobson said. "And we also lease this place out or rent it out to clients that want to start a business, but don't want to put the money into a brick-and-mortar to see if their business will start up first."

CraterWorks is one of a growing number of "makerspaces," a term that generally

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Candidates vying for legislative seat differ at GP forum

By Vickie Aldous of the Daily Courier

Republicans Dwayne Yunker and Seth Benham are dueling for a seat in the Oregon Legislature to represent most of Josephine County, with the winner in the May primary moving on to the November general election.

On Monday night, Yunker and Benham took part in a candidate forum hosted by the Daily Courier and the Grants Pass & Josephine County Chamber of Commerce. Susan Fischer-Maki, the only Democrat in the primary election, also joined the forum.

Yunker is trying to retain his Oregon House of Representatives District 3 seat covering most of Josephine County, including Grants Pass and Cave Junction, but not communities to the north like Merlin.

Both Yunker and Benham described themselves as conservative, pro-business Republicans, with Yunker saying he would continue his combative style to fight Democratic policies, and Benham

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Josephine Position 1 candidates take questions

Position 2 forum is Wednesday

By Vickie Aldous of the Daily Courier

Recalled by voters in a 2024 special election, former Josephine County Commissioner John West is attempting a comeback amid a crowded field that includes current Commissioner Colene Martin — who was appointed to fill one of two vacancies created by a more recent recall effort.

West, Martin and Konnor Kirkpatrick fielded questions Monday night during a candidate forum hosted by the Daily Courier and the Grants Pass & Josephine County Chamber of Commerce. All three have extensive business experience and

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Bear Creek Greenway cleanup makes headway with perseverance

By Chryssy Ewald of the Daily Courier

CENTRAL POINT — Volunteers who fanned out across the Bear Creek Greenway on Saturday to clean up garbage and remove invasive plants found the path in much better shape than in previous years.

"In the past, we could fill this dumpster without hardly even getting very far in either direction," said Eugene Weir, coordinator of the Land Stewards program at the Jackson County Oregon State University Extension.

Weir was overseeing a group of around 50 volunteers, including several land stewards. HQ was a gravel day-use parking lot at Pine Street and

Peninger Road in Central Point. "I feel like the cleanups have been really successful," he said. "If you're getting to the point where you're picking up micro-trash, you're doing good."

Kathy Coyle of Medford, part of a group of about 20 volunteers from Medford's outdoor-focused Slopes and Trails social club, said she had picked up "around 600 cigarette butts," along the trail.

Members of the club have joined the cleanup for the past three years, said board secretary Shirley Lukacs. Coyle said that, compared to previous years, there was much less trash. "It's surprisingly clean," she said.

The Bear Creek Greenway is a 20-mile biking and walking path that stretches from Central Point to Ash-

land. It has been built piece by piece as funding has come in since its start in the 1970s.

The Rogue River Greenway, a similar path, is being built in pieces around Rogue River and Gold Hill. Organizers hope eventually to link the two greenways together into one trail stretching from Grants Pass to Ashland.

Along the greenway on Saturday, Gretchen King and Dan Ryan of Jacksonville were walking back after around two hours hunting for trash along a mostly flat, grassy section of the greenway.

The most interesting thing they saw wasn't trash but something furry.

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CHRISSEY EWALD / Daily Courier

Gretchen King of Jacksonville picks up a small piece of trash along the Bear Creek Greenway in Central Point on Saturday. Around 50 volunteers were at the semi-annual Bear Creek Stewardship Day.



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