### **Grants Pass**

# Daily Courier \$1.50 tuesday DECEMBER 2, 2025

## **Phoenix** council approves tripling of public safety fee

Increase to \$10 per month will be phased in over the next 2 years

By Emma Maple of the Daily Courier

PHOENIX — The city of Phoenix's public safety fee is going to more than triple over the next two years after the Phoenix City Council voted 5-1 in favor of the increase Monday.

The increase from \$3 to \$10 a month will be used to pay for more police officers to staff the city as it grows due to annexations and residential resettlement after 2020's Almeda Fire, city officials say.

By 2027, largely due to annexation, the city is anticipating it will have 75% more units inside its city limits than it has now,

according to Finance Director
Alana Valencia.

The public safety fee, a
monthly charge tacked onto
utility bills, will increase in two
increments: from \$3 to \$6 start-\$10 starting in 2027.

Previously, residential utility customers in Phoenix paid a

total of \$5 in fees per bill — \$3 for public safety and \$2 for parks maintenance. Even with the increase,

Valencia said Phoenix's public safety fee will be less than many other local cities. Other Rogue Valley public safety or police fees include:

- Jacksonville: \$35. • Shady Cove: \$29.
- Medford: \$16.07. • Eagle Point: \$10.
- Rogue River: \$10. • Central Point: \$3.
- Grants Pass: \$12.36 (typical single-family household; businesses pay on a sliding scale starting at \$41.17).

Phoenix City Councilor Angie Vermillion, who voted against the fee increase, said she thought the city needed to find a way to make it work without raising utility bill fees.

"Cities used to make it work without dipping into people's pocketbooks," she said, adding that she was especially concerned about the impact it might have on low-income residents and how the fee might continue to increase in the

"It's not stopping here," she said. "In a few years, it will come back."

Other councilors also expressed concern about the impact the fee might have on residents, but ultimately voted for the increase.

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2013 • 2017 • 2022 • 2023 • **2025** 

# **CHAMPS AGAIN!**

Cascade Christian defeats Burns 35-28 for school's 6th football state title



SCOTT STODDARD / Daily Courie

**★** ascade Christian senior quarterback Deryk Farmer (center) celebrates with his teammates after the Challengers defeated Burns 35-28 in the Class 3A football state championship game Saturday night at Summit High School in Bend. The victory gave Cascade Christian its third state title in four years, and its sixth since 2006. The Challengers have rolled up a remarkable 46-4 record over the past four seasons, and this season they outscored opponents by a combined score of 682-75. The Challengers are slated to move up one classification to Class 4A next season. On Saturday night in Bend, Farmer piloted the Cascade Christian offense, completing 14 of 25 passes for 205 yards and two touchdowns. He also rushed for 34 yards and a touchdown on 17 carries. Bryson Walker had a night to remember, opening the scoring with a pick-six just minutes into the game, and he ultimately provided the Challengers with their margin of victory by rushing for a 3-yard touchdown with 1:25 left in the game. Walker, a junior, also led the defense with eight tackles. Senior Alex Fiannaca was named Cascade Christian's player of the game after he caught two touchdown passes on offense and recorded seven tackles on the defensive side of the ball. DETAILS IN SPORTS, 1B

### SIX-SATIONAL

Cascade Christian has won six state football championship games:

**2006** (11-2) Class 2A Final

Challengers 27, Bonanza 18 2013 (12-2)

Class 3A Final Challengers 41, Nyssa 6

> **2017** (12-1) Class 3A Final

Challengers 28, Santiam Christian 21

**2022** (13-0) Class 3A Final Challengers 41, Kennedy 6

**2023** (13-0) Class 3A Final

Challengers 34, Banks 24

**2025** (13-0) Class 3A Final Challengers 35, Burns 28

Source: Oregon School Activities

Association

## Golden running for 3rd term in **Oregon Senate**

Ashland Democrat has represented district since 2019

By Chris Bristol of the Daily Courier

State Sen. Jeff Golden announced Monday he is concerned about the effect of Donald Trump's second term on Oregon and is seeking a third

term of his own as a result. First elected in 2018 and reelected in 2022, the Jackson County Democrat said in an interview with the Daily Courier that at age 75 he had been thinking about hanging it up when his



**GOLDEN** current term expires at the end

of next year.

But he said Republican support for the president's agenda in the state Legislature — National Guard troops in Portland and cuts to food benefits and health care subsidies — has caused him to reassess his position.

"They say, 'It's fine,'" he said. "I disagree with that about as strongly as one can disagree. It's just not time to walk away."

Unlikely to face a serious challenger for the Democratic nomination, Golden already has at least one opponent lined up on the Republican side of the ledger next year: former Chamber of Medford & Jackson County CEO Brad Hicks, who announced his candidacy in September.

Republicans for some time have been hammering a message that Oregon is in a downward spiral economically thanks to years of Democratic dominance that has resulted in job loss and an anti-business climate.

In addition, Hicks has already made it clear he plans to make an issue of Golden's support for Senate Bill 762 and its now-withdrawn wildfire hazard map.

Golden voted for the map in 2021, and voted for its repeal earlier this year. He said at the time that it needed to go because it had become a distraction that undercut other parts of SB 762, which also included grants for forest health, an expansion of smoke detection cameras and money for new fire engines and other firefighting apparatus.

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## No bidders for Prospect Hotel, so it's now owned by lenders



SCOTT STODDARD / Daily Courier

The historic Prospect Hotel in the Jackson County town of Prospect has been closed since July 14, but its owners say it will once again welcome guests soon.

By Emma Maple of the Daily Courier

MEDFORD — The auction block was silent Monday after nobody made a bid for Jackson County's historic Prospect Hotel.

Within 10 minutes of the 1 p.m. start time, the verdict was clear — no one in the small crowd gathered on the steps of the Jackson County Courthouse was there to bid on the 5.6-acre property at 391 Mill Creek Drive in Prospect.

Without any bids that could meet the \$1.7 million asking price, ThorMar's attorney Alison Hohengarten declared the land and the Victorian-era landmark reverted as collateral to lender ThorMar LLC.

ThorMar is a partnership of Randy Thornton and Rob

Marken. Thornton, who was present for the auction, described himself and his business partner as investors in the property when they helped another LLC named Prospect

Collective buy the hotel in 2024. With Prospect Collective having defaulted on the loan last summer, and the property being in foreclosure, ThorMar now owns the property.

Thornton said he and his partner are "just investors, we're not operators." To help attract buyers, the Prospect Hotel will reopen within days, he said. It will immediately begin accepting reservations,

The hotel has been closed since July 14, after Prospect

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Attorney Alison Hohengarten (left) and Randy Thornton of ThorMar LLC were on hand at the Jackson County Courthouse for the Prospect Hotel foreclosure auction.



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