



Jump River Truck Pull tradition continues PAGE 13



BRIAN WILSON/THE STAR NEWS

At 12:36 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 4, firefighters from the Medford Area Fire Department responded to a structure fire at the Brunner Well Drilling building located at 303 S. Eighth St. (Hwy 13) in Medford. Firefighters broke open the upstairs office windows to vent the black smoke and cut an opening into the garage bay doors in order to get the fire put out.

Dassow to step down from school board

BY BRIAN WILSON
NEWS EDITOR

There will soon be a vacancy on the Medford School Board.
Board member Corey Dassow has announced his intention to resign from his school board seat after the September 28 board meeting. Dassow was elected to the Medford School Board in 2022 and reelected by a comfortable margin in 2025.
In January 2025, Dassow was appointed as Taylor County Sheriff to replace Sheriff Larry Woebeking who retired. Dassow is up for reelection as sheriff in November.
In his letter announcing his intent to resign from the

school board, Dassow states:
“Given my role as a husband and father, my role at the Taylor County Sheriff’s Office, and other responsibilities, I simply cannot keep going at the current pace. I am learning to say no to good things (this is a new concept for me and truth be told, I feel a little bit like a quitter). It was my hope that I could continue to balance all the above responsibilities and do them well, even after coming into the role of Sheriff but I feel the need to step down as a board member.”
“It has been an honor and privilege to serve alongside some of the best in the business and community. I appreciate the diversity and the different views of the board
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By the numbers

County forestry department comes in with reduced operational expenses in projected 2027 budget

BY BRIAN WILSON
NEWS EDITOR

Total projected expenses for the Taylor County Forestry and Recreation department are set to be down 2.2% in 2027 under a preliminary budget approved by committee members on September 4.
The departmental budget goes next to the county’s finance committee, which looks at it in relation to all the other department budgets. This is the first year of a significant change in the budgeting process. County forest administrator Alex Solawetz noted that while he is new to budgeting as a department head, given the changes in the county’s processes this year, he is not alone in the learning curve.
A major change this year was the elimination of most departmental carryover accounts. In the past, each department would have its own reserve accounts with money being put away for future projects or for things such as equipment or vehicle purchases.
Within the forestry department, this was reflected in the money that had been set aside for vehicle replacement being put into the county’s general reserves. While Solawetz said the county will not need to replace the department’s vehicle this year, within the next few years they will need to look at replacing the 2019 F350 used by the department. He noted it has between 45,000 and 50,000 miles on it and they want to stay ahead to prevent downtime and costly repairs. He noted that the department had saved up about \$40,000 for the eventual replacement of the Skidsteer used to maintain trails in the county forests. That money is also now in the county’s general fund.
In the past, the forestry committee could spend money from the department reserves for purchases below a set dollar amount. Now, however, any capital requests such as for new vehicles will go to the county finance committee for authorization and approval.
“I don’t want you to think that stuff isn’t going to get approved but because it does,” said committee chairman Scott Mildbrand, addressing the concern that many department heads in the county have — that capital project requests will be turned down by the finance committee. Mildbrand gave the example of recent requests approved
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