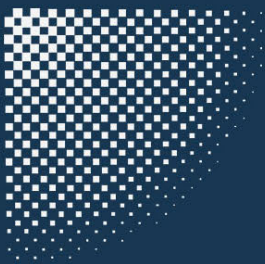


2024 IMPACT REPORT



Ashland.news
Community-supported Nonprofit News



All Photo Credits: Bob Palermini
(All photos from Ashland.news articles)



Our Community • Our News
Published 2025



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AN OVERVIEW OF ASHLAND.NEWS

WHO WE ARE

Ashland.news is an independent, professional nonprofit news service that is community-supported by and serving residents of Ashland, Oregon, and nearby areas. Ashland.news gathers, verifies, and distributes reliable, trustworthy, and timely Ashland community news and information via its website and email newsletters.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Ashland.news is to provide a sustainable news service that will inform the civic dialogue and promote cultural engagement by providing accurate, trustworthy, and timely local and useful news and information about Ashland and surrounding areas.

OUR VISION

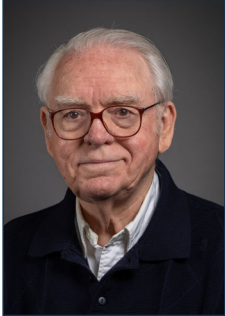
Residents of Ashland and adjacent communities engaged in informed conversation and effective collaboration, representing diverse points of view seeking a shared understanding and a common way forward.

OUR VALUES

As an organization, we value the following principles and endeavor to adhere to them in all our activities.

- **Honesty and Integrity**
- **Independence and Objectivity** We report the news without bias or agenda.
- **Community Ownership** We are a hyper-local news service, published by, for, and about the residents of Ashland. We amplify and respond to community voices and community needs.
- **Inclusion and Diversity** We believe hearing diverse voices improves our common future.
- **Accessibility** We believe that high-quality news and current information should be accessible to everyone.
- **Enterprise** We value enterprise and innovation in the community and in our organization.
- **Culture** We celebrate the cultural vibrancy of our community.
- **Engagement and Collaboration** We seek to reflect the best of professional journalism by publishing accurate, well-crafted, compelling, relevant, and visually memorable content for and from our community.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR



In spring 2021, a handful of concerned Ashland residents initiated a plan to create a reliable news service for our community. We needed this because our legacy newspaper, The Daily Tidings – founded in 1876 – had gone out of business. On January 14, 2022, Ashland.news was born.

Since the beginning, our digital community news service has been delivered free to anyone who wished to subscribe. Now, in 2025, we have 5,200+ subscribers, and we're still growing.

Our goal was to assemble a professional, full time reporting staff and seasoned freelancers to produce an accurate flow of news and information about our community.

We started with a veteran editor, Bert Etling. He hired two trained reporters and found a dozen or so experienced freelancers who have demonstrated their competence to fulfill this goal. We created a website – www.Ashland.news – as a repository for all our reporting and began delivering digital newsletters, three times a week, to anyone who wanted accurate news about Ashland.

Using this approach, we've built a digital news and information service that seeks to fulfill an ambitious goal: "Connecting Ashland Through Trustworthy Journalism."

The final and most enduring ingredient needed for the success of this enterprise has been the 1,200 or so who have supported Ashland.news with annual donations or monthly contributions as Ashland.news "sustainers."

Please continue this personal investment you have made to enable Ashland.news to fulfill its mission. We need you to maintain your generous support as the years go by.

For this commitment, we at Ashland.news, and the members of our community who use this vital service, thank you. A free press is a key link to maintaining a free, democratic society, and you have been an essential ingredient in keeping Ashland.news alive and flourishing.

---Paul Steinle, 2024 President



Ashland.news served its key function of informing the civic conversation through its continuing coverage of daily life in Ashland and key civic issues. For example, its coverage of candidates and issues on the 2024 ballot such as the deposition of the city's waste-water treatment plan, augmented by Ashland.news-hosted community events, offered Ashland voters the chance to drill down deeper as they sought to make informed voting decisions.

Ashland.news also grew in 2024 by adding fun, vital community information, and stories of diverse communities. New columnists included Ask Strider, Catty Corner, and Real Estate Corner, while Ashland.news' Unheard Voices project continued to cast light on stories that need telling with features on Native American, Black and LGBTQ+ people in our community.

All in all, an increasing flow of more published stories, an expanding community calendar, free obituaries, and greater exposure through unique public events kept the staff and volunteers of Ashland.news engaged in community life and serving some of its key information needs.

---Bert Etling, Executive Editor



2024 OPERATIONAL PLANS AND OUTCOMES

In 2024, our third year of operation, Ashland.news continued to expand our reach into our community and increase our news coverage.

Our key metrics demonstrated growth in every aspect:

- **Number of subscribers – 4921 – increased by 37%.**
- **Number of sustainers who support us monthly – 504 – increased 28%.**
- **Email Newsletter open rate averaged 78% (a high percentage by internet standards).**
- **Email Newsletter click rate averaged 27%.**
- **Facebook followers grew by 77%.**
- **Instagram followers grew by 300%.**
- **Website monthly page views grew by 179% to an average of 142,644 per month; 1.7 million for the year.**
- **Website monthly users grew by 32% to 71,244.**
- **Website number of stories posted monthly had an average of 112 per month.**



Also, according to our readers, Ashland.news positively affected life in the community by stimulating positive changes:

- A record number of volunteers signed up to help local cancer survivors.
- A donation of more than 600,000 frequent-flyer miles was given to a group helping Ukrainian refugees living in the Ashland area.
- More than \$3,000 in donations were made to support the high school robotics club.
- After publication of a story about people in Southern Oregon recounting memories of being interned during World War II due to their ethnicity, many notes to Ashland.news recounted memories of that time and regrets about what happened, creating new connections among disparate groups spanning the decades.
- Accelerated repairs of an immobilized elevator trapping mobility-impaired seniors on upper floors of a housing complex.
- Doubling the response rate to a city live-ability survey that assisted city planners.
- Creation of an online map showing best routes to tour local holiday lights after Ashland.news published photos of a reader-sourced best lights list.
- A surge in volunteers to serve at the homeless shelter, and
- Widespread appreciation for a reporter who spent the night at a local homeless shelter, answering the simple question: What's that like?

Ashland.news also joined a statewide organization, the Oregon Media Collaborative, coordinated by the University of Oregon School of Journalism to facilitate conversations on strengthening local news throughout Oregon, and the Oregon Journalism Project which distributes investigative reports on topics from throughout Oregon.

And the quality of Ashland.news reporting boosted subscriptions to the e-newsletter and drew the attention of KGW in Portland, the Oregon Business Journal, and Oregon Public Media, all of which featured Ashland.news in reports highlighting bright spots in Oregon's otherwise bleak outlook for local news reporting.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

2024 Revenue and Expenses

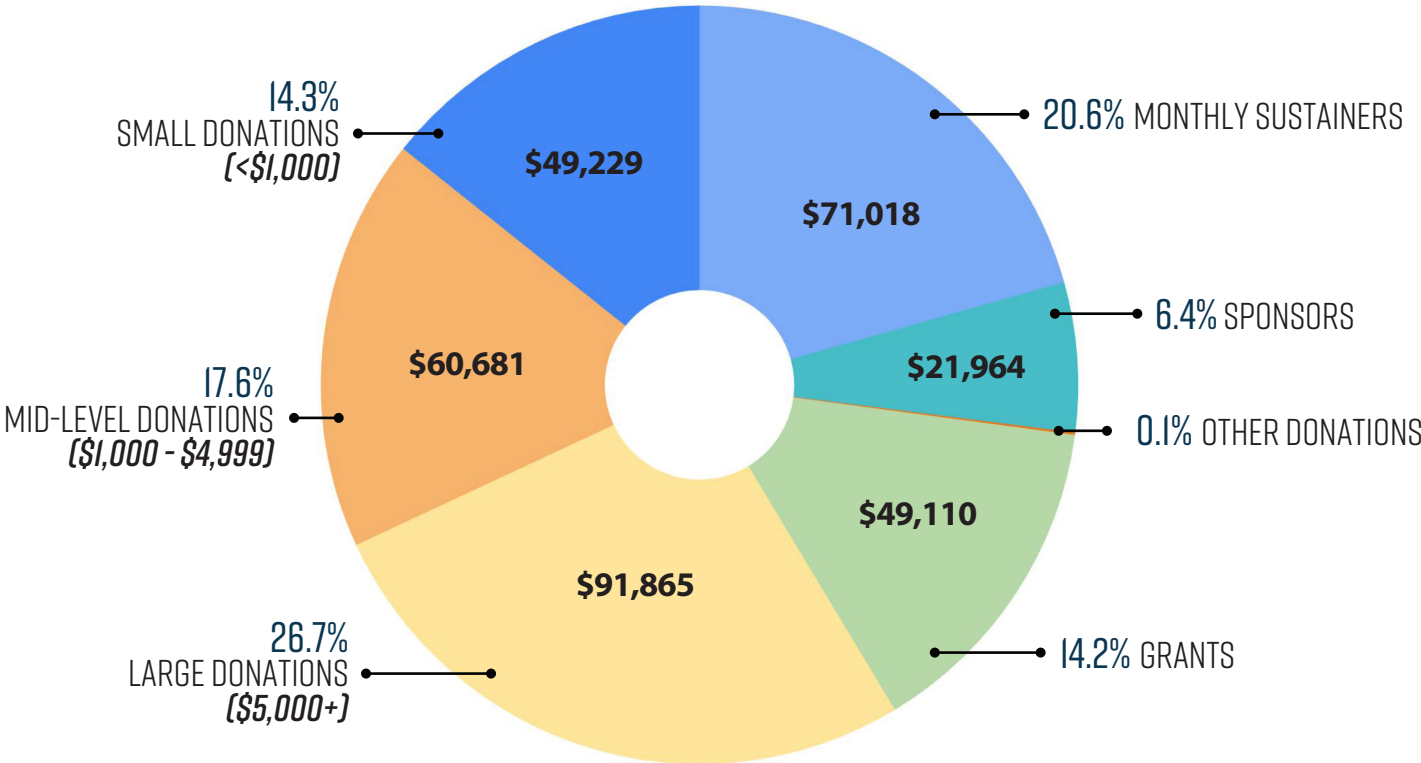
Revenue

Donors	\$201,775
Grants	49,110
Other	300
Sponsors	21,964
Sustainers	71,018
Total Revenue	\$ 344,167

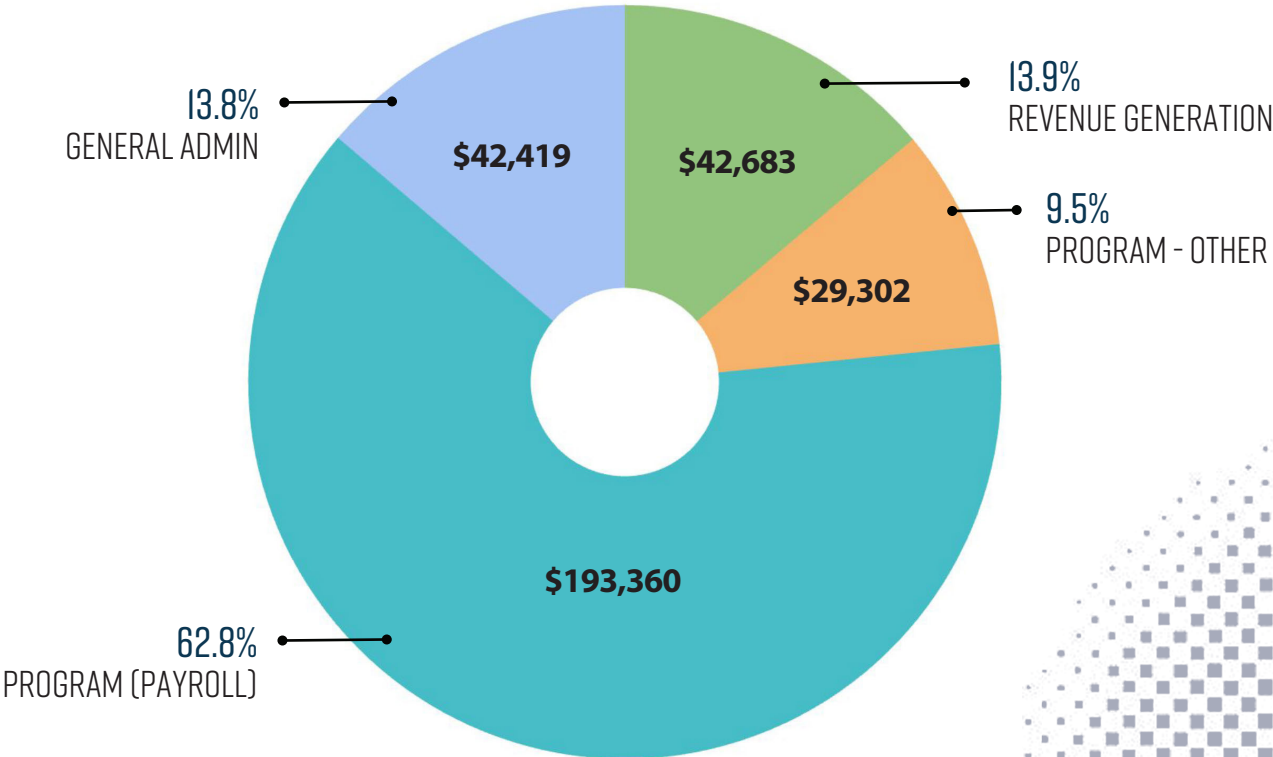
Expenses

Banking	\$716
Community Engagement	846
Computer & Software	818
Miscellaneous	11,393
Office Supplies	3,300
Promotions & Donor Events	1,688
Website/Newsletter	5,782
Insurance (Board & Libel)	4,159
Fees	6,016
Telephone	2,350
Travel and Meetings	7,080
Rent	5,400
Payroll:	
Salaries	181,181
Payroll Taxes	18,524
Employee Benefits	11,973
Contract Services:	
Accounting	8,267
Graphics	625
Photography & Video	2,895
Reporting	21,870
Marketing & Development	11,231
Freelance Spec. Topics Rept.	1,650
Total Expenses	\$307,764
Net Revenue	\$36,402

REVENUE BY SOURCE



EXPENSES BY CATEGORY





2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

Board of Directors

Paul Steinle, *President*
Lorrie Kline Kaplan, *Secretary*
Laura Simonds, *Treasurer*
Connor Babbitt
Tod Davies
Bob Palermini
D.L. Richardson
Charlie Ter Bush

Staff Members

Bert Etling, *Executive Editor*
Holly Dillemoth, *Full-time Reporter*
Morgan Rothborne, *Full-time Reporter*
Jordin Crow, *Community Outreach and
Engagement Director*
Ryan Pfeil, *Web Editor*
Tiffany Sullivan, *Sponsorship Manager*
Bob Palermini, *Chief Photographer*
Jim Coleman, *Copy Editor*

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Paul Steinle (*President*) is a journalist, documentarian and educator. From 1961-1990, Steinle was a broadcast journalist and news manager. He was the president of UPI (1988-1990) and the Financial News Network (1984-1986); TV news director, KING-TV, Seattle; and WIXT-TV, Syracuse; he reported from Saigon and Hong Kong for Group-W radio news; and he was a reporter and producer for WBZ-TV and WCVB-TV, Boston. From 1991-2001, he launched graduate journalism programs at the University of Miami and Quinnipiac University; from 2001-2010, he taught journalism and served as associate provost, Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Ore. Steinle has an M.B.A. from Harvard, an M.S. from Syracuse University and a baccalaureate from Amherst College.



Lorrie Kline Kaplan (*Vice President*) worked in healthcare communications, editorial management, and nonprofit leadership roles in the Washington, D.C. area. She was Executive Director, National Home Infusion Association, 1997-2007; and CEO, American College of Nurse-Midwives, 2007- 2016. Since moving to Ashland, she has provided pro bono consulting services to nonprofit organizations; she chairs the Ashland Climate Action Project, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now; serves as treasurer, Rogue World Music; and is a member of the Bee City USA-Ashland Committee. Lorrie earned a BA, cum laude, economics and English, U. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and served in the Peace Corps in Paraguay.



Linda Anderson (*Treasurer*) Linda's career began as an Assembly Language coder. After raising a family as a stay-at-home mom, she got her MBA and worked in Silicon Valley as a Data Analyst. Retired life has few needs for large data sets and Excel, so she was drawn to volunteering as a Treasurer: at OLLI, at Soroptimist, at her church, at Camelot Theatre, and now at Ashland.news. Linda seeks to understand the structure of data and trends and help the Board to understand its financial position. While not a journalist, Linda comes from a publishing family, her grandparents having founded "Highlights for Children," a children's publishing company, in 1947. She has served on the HFC Board and been involved in the Myers Family Council. Linda is happy to support Ashland.news in its mission to provide accurate, trustworthy, and timely news in our area.



Kristin Anderson (*Secretary*) has served as the Branch Manager of the Ashland Branch of the Jackson County Library District since June 2017 and has over 20 years of experience working in public libraries. She has a passion for public service, readers' advisory, serving under-served populations, and providing equitable access to community resources. She loves living and working in Ashland. The time she has spent serving the Ashland community has made it clear to her that reliable and trustworthy news that is accessible to the entire community is key to her ability to connect Ashland residents to community information, ideas, and each other. She has degrees from Scripps College (BA), University of Texas at Austin (MBA), and Kent State University (MLIS).



Connor Babbitt has presented at the National Undergraduate Conference of Literature, prepared academic articles for publication, and planned community-centered events alongside his peers. He is currently studying to receive several professional certificates concurrently with bachelor's degrees in English and in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from Southern Oregon University. Connor has worked in both private and public health settings on the frontlines against COVID-19. He is determined to create a healthier community through his advocacy for worker's rights and fair labor practices, as demonstrated by his union-organizing efforts in Rogue Valley.

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Tara Houston is a scenic designer, educator, facilitator, and advocate. She currently serves as Community and Engagement Manager for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival — a position which takes advantage of her theater skills alongside facilitating and community building. Previously, Tara worked in higher education and, in December 2022, she finished her final semester as Assistant Professor of Scenic Design at Louisiana State University, a role she held alongside that of Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the College of Music and Dramatic Arts. While her work is centered in the performing arts, she holds humanity's ability to create connection in any circumstance as central to all work that she does, inside and out of performance spaces.



Hillary Larson grew up in Medford. She left Southern Oregon to pursue a career in radio, first by attaining a bachelor's degree in Communications, which included studying at BBC TV, the Royal College of Art and BBC Radio 4 in London. From there, she worked as a reporter for Broadcast Week before going on to produce nationally syndicated radio shows in New York City. Hillary has been committed to racial and social equity since the early '90s, initially centering her focus on education by serving the African American community in Portland. She values the idea that human beings can accomplish great things when they come together in the name of inclusion and collaboration and that reliable community news is one of the essential pillars in facilitating that possibility.



D.L. Richardson has taught teaching and diversity training for 25-plus years. He served as Chair of the SOU Communications Department. He has served or still serves on: the Oregon Cares Fund for Black Relief and Resiliency; The Oregon African American/Black Student Success Advisory Committee; The Governor's (Oregon) Healthy Schools Re-opening Council; the Oregon Racial Justice Council's Education Recovery Committee, and the Jackson County United Way Board of Directors. He is a board member with Foundations for a Better Oregon and the Black Southern Oregon Alliance and sits on diversity, equity and inclusion committees for the OCF and JCUW. He currently serves with the SOESD as the Southern Oregon Black/African American Success Specialist.

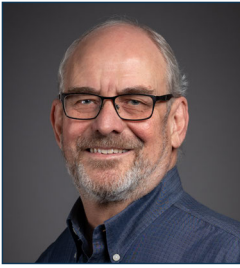


Paul Seymour, originally a Licensed Clinical Psychologist, transitioned to Organizational Psychology in 1983. He has worked as a consultant and executive coach with over 2500 executives and their teams in the US and internationally. He is currently a co-founder and strategic advisor to Green Dock Ventures (GDV), a company dedicated to environmental sustainability. Paul was a co-founder of the Xaos Group in 1995 and Work-Effects in 2019; both leadership consulting companies offering assessment, coaching, training and technology solutions. From 1983 to 2021 he was on the adjunct faculty at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). He received a B.A. in Psychology from Whittier College and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Professional-Scientific Psychology from Utah State University.



David Sommers served as the inaugural publisher of the Rogue Valley Times and Chief Revenue Officer of EO Media Group. He served as CEO of Pacific Community Media and publisher of the Long Beach Post and Long Beach Business Journal; Chief Operating Officer of a multinational private equity fund and Associate Vice President at Molina Healthcare, a Fortune 150 company. As the chief communications executive for Los Angeles County, he oversaw critical public information campaigns, managed multilingual outreach initiatives, and played a key role in managing high-stakes crises. He has a B.A., Government and Journalism, CSU, Sacramento; has completed graduate coursework in Public Administration, CSU, Northridge; and participated in the Executive Leadership Program, University of Southern California, Price School of Public Policy.

2025 STAFF MEMBERS



Bert Etling (*Executive Editor*) edited the Ashland Daily Tidings from 2014 to 2019, leading a local news revival for the paper that saw a five-fold increase in local content and 30 percent increase in circulation. He edited The Cambrian, a weekly newspaper published by the San Luis Obispo Tribune, part of the McClatchy Corp for 13 years, as the paper won numerous awards, including General Excellence, the top prize in the prestigious California Newspaper Publishers Association Better Newspapers contest, and was also runner-up for three straight years. The paper also took second place in the nationwide Inland Press Association contest for two straight years. Etling has a degree in philosophy from Stanford University.



Holly Dillemath (*Reporter*) has been a professional journalist since 2011. She covered water conflicts, agriculture, and the Klamath Tribes as well as city and county government and major corporations during her more than seven years at Herald and News in Klamath Falls. She also recently covered the water shutoff in the Klamath Basin as well as the Bootleg Fire in Klamath County for Jefferson Public Radio. She grew up in Phoenix, Oregon, and graduated from Southern Oregon University in 2010 with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Communication with a journalism emphasis. She earned her Master of Arts degree in Public Affairs Reporting (Journalism) from University of Illinois, Springfield in 2011.



Morgan Rothborne (*Reporter*) wrote for the Medford Mail Tribune and Rogue Valley Times before joining Ashland.news in August 2023. She previously coordinated research for Common Ground Magazine, studied communications at Southern Oregon University, spent a semester abroad in Morocco with the CIEE Council on International Educational Exchange, and earned a bachelor's degree in history at Portland State University Urban Honors College, where she also wrote for the Pacific Sentinel and completed an undergraduate thesis with a focus in medieval history and the history of ideas.



Jordin Crow (*Community Outreach & Engagement Director*) moved to Ashland after graduating from Arkansas State University in 2016 with a degree in communications and is now pursuing his master's degree. He has been actively involved in the local community, starting a group called Engage at SOU, created National Treasure (a city-wide treasure hunt every fall to connect the college to the community), volunteered in local elementary school programs, raised funds for local nonprofits, and serves in his local church (Living Hope). His desire is to cultivate healthy connections within the community to make it stronger. He believes that everyone wins when the community wins.

“ WHAT A FABULOUS JOB OF TAKING A DISJOINTED MEETING AND WRITING IT UP IN A COHERENT MANNER. KUDOS!

– Adrienne Simmons

2025 STAFF MEMBERS



Bob Palermini (*Chief Photographer, volunteer*) has more than 35 years' experience across a range of newspapers. He started as a photographer and reporter, and later publisher, at weekly newspapers in northern Illinois. He moved into leading technology, production and project management for small dailies, then at Tribune Company newspapers. He was named Sr. VP and Chief Technology Officer, LA Times, in 2000. In 2005 he was named Sr. VP Production Technology, for all Tribune newspapers. In Ashland, he has been a photographer for Ashland.news, SOU athletics, OSF, Ashland Parks and Recreation and other local organizations.



Tiffany Sullivan (*Sponsorship Manager*) worked as an account executive at The Oregonian for 20 years, where she handled the events category, helped create the sponsorship program and assisted with the production of several custom publications. A Portland native, Sullivan studied advertising and marketing management at Portland State University and the University of Oregon. She currently owns Blue Sprocket Brokerage, an agency that handles digital and print advertising, creative, and custom publications for Ashland.news, Oregon ArtsWatch, YachatsNews, Salem Reporter and others.



Ryan Pfeil (*Web Editor*) has worked in journalism nearly half his life, starting at the Colorado Springs weekly The Woodmen Edition in 2005. He worked at the Klamath Falls Herald & News from 2007-2011 as a videographer, general assignment reporter, and an education and features reporter. He worked at the Medford Mail Tribune as a reporter and web editor from 2011-2021. He has won multiple first place awards for writing and video from the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, Society of Professional Journalists, and C.B. Blethen Memorial Awards. He currently works for the Jackson County Library District's marketing department, where he produces videos. He began his part-time editing post at Ashland.news in 2022.



Cameron Aalto (*Intern*) is a graduating senior at Southern Oregon University working towards a degree in English. He is an active community member on campus, working at the Social Justice Equity Center as an office assistant for the Racial Justice Team, as well as tutoring at the Writing Center. He is a member of the school's Multicultural Coalition, Powwow Planning Committee, and the Native American Student Union, which he co-chaired from 2021-2023. He has volunteered with community organizations including the Northwest Seasonal Workers Association and the Rogue Valley Fire Relief Center, and at community events including the Queer Indigenous Gathering, SOU's annual powwow, and SOU's Black Youth Leadership Conference and Climate Justice Conference.



THANK YOU, BERT, AND ESPECIALLY FOR YOUR
PIONEERING ROLE CREATING ASHLAND.NEWS.

– Elisabeth Zinser, Former SOU President

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Y'ALL DO A GREAT JOB.

– Patricia (Trish) Bowcock



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- Anita Isser • Steve Isser • Katherine Iverson



TODAY'S ISSUE IS EXCELLENT, LED BY THE SHOCKING STORY ABOUT ASHLAND CITY RECORDER'S OFFICE. IT'S AN IMPORTANT SITUATION WE WOULDN'T KNOW ABOUT IF ASHLAND.NEWS DID NOT EXIST.

– Jim Risser, Two-time Pulitzer Prize Winner, national news



J

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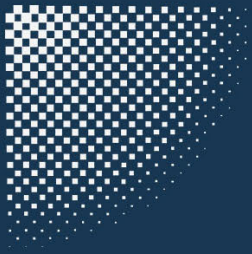
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