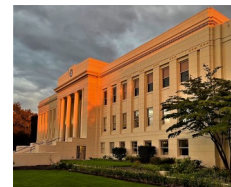




**Linn  
County**

# NEWS



Contact: Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, 541-967-3825 or email: [apaul@co.linn.or.us](mailto:apaul@co.linn.or.us)

## Commissioners learn about A & D efforts

ALBANY — Linn County's Alcohol & Drug Department provided services to more than 1,151 individuals last year, director Justin Thomas told the Linn County Board of Commissioners Tuesday morning.

And, he said, his staff provided more than 30,000 services, up more than 4,000 services over the prior year. Those services come through group and individual therapy sessions.

Thomas said part of the uptick in services provided is improved outreach by staff.

"The county has provided transportation options for clients in more rural parts of the county, including pickups in county vans," Thomas said.

Opioids deaths have increased significantly in recent years, from eight deaths in 2018 to 30 deaths in 2023, he said.

Thomas said his team provided more than 500 assessments and in 78 of those cases, assessed their needs to be higher than our intensive outpatient program can provide.

"Getting clients to those higher levels of care, most of which are out of county, causes some logistical barriers," he explained after the meeting.

A & D completed 7,500 urine drug screenings and for 283 clients, marijuana was a key issue. Alcohol was a major issue for 239 clients and opioids doubled to 113 clients.

Clients served by community were 615 from Albany, 179 from Lebanon, 100 from Sweet Home, 20 from Jefferson, 17 from Brownsville and 13 from the north canyon area.



**Justin Thomas**

Thomas said opiates are most addictive — alone or mixed with other drugs — in part because they "numb emotional pain."

Community members recently asked the commissioners to establish a "detox/sobriety center". Board Chairman Roger Nyquist said Portland has plans to develop such a facility, with an estimated annual cost of about \$7 million.

Linn County dedicates all of the funds it receives from the Oregon Liquor Control Commission are dedicated to the Alcohol & Drug programs. Nyquist asked if Thomas would pull money from the A & D budget to fund a detox/sobriety center.

Thomas suggested a detox/sobriety center might best be funded cooperatively by community partners — such as local hospitals that often find people sobering up in their emergency departments, which is not an ideal situation and expensive — that would benefit from such a center, before pulling money from the A & D budget alone.

Nyquist asked Thomas if clients are referred to 12-step programs. Thomas said staff refer clients to those programs as well as other community-based support programs.

Thomas said he believes there are times when people who don't want to be helped are helped and beyond legal issues, there are important quality of life issues that his staff can help people address, such as mental and physical health support.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Ratified a declaration of emergency signed by vice-chairman Will Tucker last week. Governor Tina Kotek declared a state of emergency for all 36 counties on Thursday. The declarations help counties access funding streams for damage repair costs.
- Were told by Fair & Expo Center Director Kris Barnes that December was a busy month, with more than \$71,000 in income and January and February are shaping up to be busy as well. Barnes

said a water pipe in the RV area broke during last week's freezing weather as did a water line in the warm-up arena. He estimated more than 100,000 gallons of water turned the ground into mud and it is going to take some time to dry out.

- Were told by Dr. Adam Brady via telephone that there were 101 deaths and 51 births in December, 31 females and 20 males. There were two suicides.
- Approved a 150-foot no parking zone designation at the intersection of Crabtree Drive and Cold Springs Road.
- Approved a lease termination for Lazarus 3D Inc., Suite 1100 in the Wheelhouse Building.
- Were informed by Juvenile Director Torri Lynn there were 27 referrals in December and there are 191 young people in the Probation Unit and 89 in the Community Programs Unit.
- Accepted a \$1,770,740 grant from the Criminal Justice Commission Justice Reinvestment Program for the Yellow Line mental health treatment program, drug court participation support and re-entry.
- Approved a Communications Use Lease from the U.S. Forest Service for property on which the Cougar Rock Radio Communication Site is located in east Linn County. The new agreements will run through September 25, 2040.
- Were informed by Planning & Building Department Director Steve Wills there were 30 land use permits and 196 total permits issued last month. There were 13 new code enforcement cases opened and 21 closed.

**Media contact:** Alex Paul, Linn County Communications Officer, 541-967-3825 or email [apaul@co.linn.or.us](mailto:apaul@co.linn.or.us).