

NEWSBERG



SEDCOR's Abisha Romano (left) and Oregon State Representative Anna Scharf (right) cut the ribbon for Newberg's HIVE housing project on June 1, 2026. (Branden Andersen / Newsberg)

‘The End of the Beginning’: Newberg Breaks Ground on Workforce Housing Village

After years of planning, the 10-unit HIVE cottage cluster on North College Street moves into construction.

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — Local business and community leaders, city councilors, county commissioners, and a state representative gathered Monday for a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the launch of a new housing project in north Newberg, with ground scheduled to break Tuesday.

HIVE, an acronym for Housing Innovation Village Experience, is breaking ground at 3509 N. College St., launching a project years in the making that developers hope will have doors open to buyers within a few months.

“This is the end of the beginning,” said Missing Middle Housing Fund co-founder and CEO Nathan Wildfire. “It’s been the culmination of lots and lots of work.”

The project began in 2019 as a response to rising housing costs in the state. While multiple organizations were working to address affordable housing — defined as housing for those earning less than 80% of the area median income — there was little emphasis on building homes for workers earning between 80% and 120% of AMI. The average median household income in Newberg is \$93,232 according to census data.

Wildfire said the team chose Newberg to test the concept because of the community’s strong employment base — including George Fox University, A-dec, Providence, and Friendsview — all of which identified middle housing as a significant barrier to recruitment and retention.

“When we started this project, it came down to asking a question of, ‘what would it take to keep these people here,’” said MMHF board member and SEDCOR’s Yamhill County Business Retention & Expansion Manager Abisha Romano. “It always came down to workforce housing.”

HIVE’s stated goal is to address that directly. The MMHF purchased the flag

lot on College Street, which will have 10 homes built facing the center of the lot, two off-street parking spaces per home, and a central community hub.

The homes will range from 800 to 1,470 square feet with two to three bedrooms. They will be built using modular techniques intended to reduce time to occupancy and lower construction costs, and will feature sustainable building materials including cross-laminated timber and carbon-negative concrete.

The development is designed around a village living concept. The homes are situated in close proximity, many with little or no setback, meaning residents will interact more than the average homeowner. They will share a parking lot and, without individual yards, spend time communally in the central hub. A homeowners’ association will operate within the community.

“The other point of HIVE is to create a micro village,” said Ryan Olsen, HIVE project lead and manager of Elemental Urban Living, in a February 2026 interview with Newsberg. “The community is a welcoming, nonthreatening space that’s got a fire pit, rooftop deck, community gardens — plenty of places for people to spread out and be alone if they want, but with the option for community connection when they need it.”

Olsen used a metaphor to explain how the HIVE model could make housing more affordable.

“Think about the clothes you’re wearing,” he said. “Do you know how expensive it would be if each item were handmade? Now scale that up to a home — each home is handmade. Just like we industrialize most industries, we need to industrialize home building.”



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After 45 Years of Sparking Young Musicians, Aletha McKennon is Ready for Her Next Chapter

The Mabel Rush music teacher spent four decades teaching Newberg’s children to find their voice through music — now she’s ready to find some time for her own

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — For 44 years, Aletha McKennon has walked into the same building at Mabel Rush Elementary School and done the same thing: handed a child an instrument, watched their eyes light up, and started a spark.

At the end of this school year, after 45 years total with Newberg-Dundee Public Schools, McKennon is retiring — the last chapter in a career that began in 1981 and touched, by her own estimation, multiple generations of Newberg families.

“I’ve taught the parents,” McKennon said. “I’ve taught maybe even a grandparent. There’s just so many that I’ve had the privilege of seeing their music start.”

McKennon’s path to Mabel Rush was a short one geographically but a full one professionally. A graduate of George Fox University — then one of seven music education majors in her cohort — she was the only one hired into Newberg Schools. Her first year, in 1981, split her between Ewing Young Elementary and Newberg High School, where she served half-time as a choral teacher.



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OTHER HEADLINES

Jacob Jolliff and Michael Daves Duo Comes to Newberg

Disappointed by Levy Failure, School Board Acknowledges Long Road Ahead, Adopts Budget

Newberg Pays Off Communications Tower Debt Two Years Early

Tapia Named West Region Track Athlete of the Year

‘Exquisite Creatures’ Brings Natural World to Chehalem Cultural Center

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Support

CPRD’s Proposed Landfill-Turned-Recreation Area Faces Budget and Environmental Concerns

Board discusses converting landfill site into public recreation area, tables rural heritage park ordinance, and hears continued Rilee Park pushback.

By Audrey Grice
Newsberg Contributor

NEWBERG, Ore. — At its May 28, 2026, board meeting, Chehalem Parks and Recreation District Superintendent Clay Downing presented estimated costs and an informational report on converting a former Newberg landfill into a recreational area.

Downing met with Department of Environmental Quality officials on May 6, along with directors Matt Smith and Nick Konen, to discuss feasibility and environmental concerns. DEQ issued a positive assessment, but board members expressed hesitancy to move forward with the proposal due to the scope of the project and sustainability concerns.

“I don’t think we would be able to develop the site in the short term,” Downing said. “We’re already overcommitted on things that have timelines associated with them because they’re under grants. That’s

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one of my biggest worries.”
The landfill property is located just west of Rogers Landing on the Willamette River and covers 38.75 acres in unincorporated Yamhill County. It borders residential, vacant/industrial, and agricultural land, according to the report Downing presented.

The landfill stopped accepting solid waste in 1984, and the owners transferred the property to Yamhill County in 1985, according to a Yamhill County document. The waterfront property features a soil cap over the landfill but does not have a liner, which would prevent contaminants from seeping into soil or groundwater.

A 2019 Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment found methane levels high enough to warrant additional gas monitoring. The Newberg Landfill is currently tested quarterly for gas, at a cost of approximately \$92,365 annually to Yamhill County, Downing said.

“The three-foot soil cap is some-

thing that would have to be maintained,” Downing said. “The big thing we’re trying to do is make sure there’s no incidental contact. You don’t want the contaminants and the people touching, right? We have to be wary of those sorts of things.”

Preventing accidental contact would include restricting access to parts of the property routinely tested for methane. Because of the soil cap, the ground cannot be excavated, and no shrubs or trees can be planted.

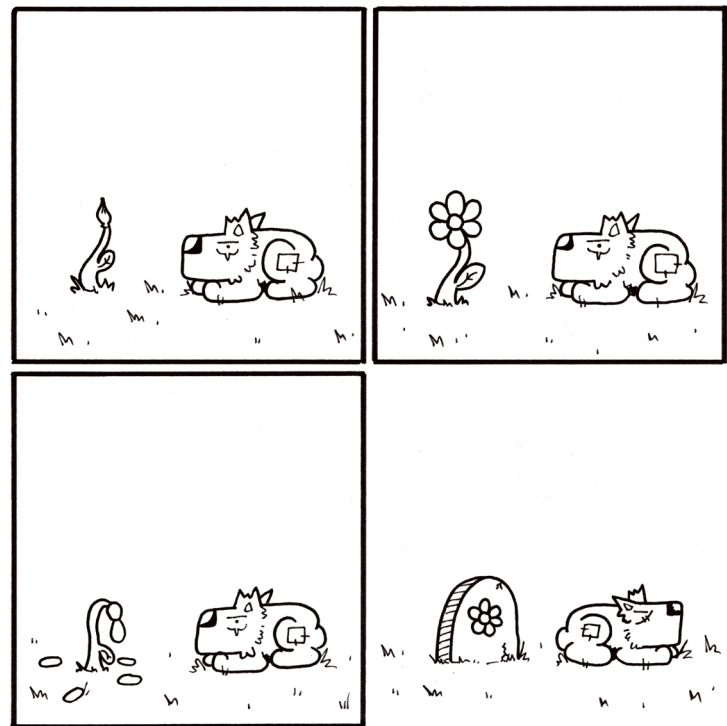
“There’s methane migration concerns that I wanted answered to move forward on this for me personally, which won’t get answered unless there’s an environmental study done,” said director Brandon Slyter. “I’m not interested in pursuing this. I think the county should do it.”



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Melon Collie Ep. 90

Created by Joseph Hampton



UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

JUNE 3

- 4 p.m. — Newberg Wednesday Market**
Downtown Newberg, 116 S College St
- 4:30 p.m. — Fireside Chat with Belle Pente Winery**
The Allison, 2525 NE Allison Ln.
- 5:40 p.m. — Global Running Day Trail Run**
Bob & Crystal Rilee Park, 10500 NE Parrett Mountain Rd.

7 p.m. — The Logoff
Domaine Lumineux, 115 N Washington Street

JUNE 4

- 4 p.m. — Chamber After Hours: Levin and Levine at Dobbles Winery**
Dobbles Family Winery, 240 SE 5th St, Dundee

JUNE 5

- 8 a.m. — Friday Morning Greeters: The Giving Town Podcast**
The Joyful Roberts Group, 700 Debrah Street #200
- 10 a.m. — Flash Tats + Donuts + Wine**
Artist Block Wine, 9650 NE Fox Ln, Dundee

- 5 p.m. — First Friday Art Walk**
Downtown Newberg
- 7 p.m. — Jacob Jolliff & Michael Daves**
Chehalem Cultural Center, 415 E Sheridan St.

JUNE 6

- 11 a.m. — Pet Adoption Event**
Coldwell Banker Newberg Office, 616 E First Street
- 12 p.m. — Exquisite Creatures Open House**
Chehalem Cultural Center, 415 E Sheridan Street

6 p.m. — Salt & Honey Dinner with Jacobsen Salt
LucidWild, 9380 NE Worden Hill Rd, Dundee

JUNE 7

- 10 a.m. — Yoga in the Garden**
The Allison Spa, 2525 NE Allison Lane



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The Logoff

A Phone Free Hangout
Wednesday, June 3 / 7 - 9 p.m.
Puzzles, Games, Music, Wine, Food



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