

NEWSBERG



Wolves & People owner Christian DeBenedetti (left) and employee Daisy Mathisen behind the bar at the new Wolves & People Bar on June 20, 2026. (Branden Andersen / Newsberg)

Wolves & People Downtown Bar Soft Opening June 25

The downtown bar and venue, announced in June 2025, is opening to the community with a ticketed live bluegrass show

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — A new bar and music venue is preparing to soft-open its doors in downtown Newberg with a ticketed live music performance that may well define its future as a consistent stage for local and regional acts.

“It’s pretty cool to see people in here,” said Wolves & People Farmhouse Brewery owner Christian DeBenedetti during a small friends-and-family gathering on June 20. “I feel like for the past few months it’s been the crew and me in here with tools and brooms. It’s great to actually see people in the space.”

DeBenedetti said getting to June 25 — opening day for the Wolves & People bar, whose name may change, at 107 N Meridian St — has come with its own set of hurdles. The previously vacant garage needed significant work to transform into a pub atmosphere, from installing new electrical to building a walk-in cooler and taps behind the bar.

“It’s been a big group effort,” he said. “We’ve all pulled together to make this happen and we’re excited to finally be at this stage.”

The project was announced in June 2025, with the goal of opening later that year. DeBenedetti launched a GoFundMe page seeking to raise \$18,000 to help fund the retrofit. As of press time, the fundraiser has raised more than \$17,000. The page lists a top-level goal of \$30,000.

A series of setbacks — with physical work, permits, and licensing — pushed his opening date back. Another hitch arose when a restaurant concept that would have occupied the other half of the building fell through. The original business model outsourced food service to that restaurant. Without food service, the bar would face licensing issues with the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

That’s when DeBenedetti reached out to Briar Ridge BBQ food truck to see if they’d be willing to bring their Texas-style barbecue to the plate.

“It feels like a natural connection,” DeBenedetti said. “It plays right on theme and pairs really well with everything we’re serving.”

Briar Ridge BBQ will offer a limited menu on site until they’re able to build and move into the building’s kitchen, said the food cart owners.

Wolves & People beers will be the primary beverages on tap, though DeBenedetti said they’ll likely bring in selections from other breweries to help fill the lines in the early days. The tap wall features 15 taps, one reserved for nitro beers and another outfitted with a Czech Lukr faucet for pouring authentic European lagers with a dense, wet foam cap. DeBenedetti said there will likely be nonalcoholic options as well, including kombucha and soda. Unlike the brewery’s farmhouse location, the downtown space will feature a full bar, which DeBenedetti said will likely start with a standard cocktail list.

He connected with Juneau, Alaska-based bluegrass musician Josh Fortenbery about performing at the new venue and set a date of June 25 — a deadline, he said, that helped him focus the final push to open. He tapped local bluegrass band Knuckle Grease Station, which formed out of Wolves & People’s weekly bluegrass jam night, to open for Fortenbery. Tickets to the show are available in advance on Eventbrite, and DeBenedetti said tickets should be available at the door.

“It’s a nice full-circle moment, and I think captures what we’re trying to do here,” DeBenedetti said. “We want to bring high-level acts to Newberg, and elevate the musicians and bands that are already here.”



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Gilded Heart Tattoo Co-Owner Killed in Portland Motorcycle Crash

Jason A. Doherty, 60, owner of Gilded Heart Tattoo Studio, died June 19 after his motorcycle struck a jersey barrier on southbound Interstate 5 near the Marquam Bridge.

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — A Newberg tattoo shop owner died Friday evening after a single-vehicle motorcycle crash on southbound Interstate 5 near the Marquam Bridge in Portland, according to the Portland Police Bureau.

Jason A. Doherty, 60, was identified as the rider. Portland police said Doherty was operating a 2002 Harley-Davidson motorcycle with a sidecar when, after negotiating a left turn off the Marquam Bridge, the motorcycle veered sharply out of its lane and struck a jersey barrier. The crash occurred at 6:18 p.m. The incident closed southbound Interstate 5 traffic for more than four hours. Police said no other vehicles were involved.

According to a Portland Police Bureau news release, a Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue crew happened to be passing by and stopped to render aid. Portland Fire & Rescue also responded and attempted lifesaving measures before determining Doherty was deceased at the scene. Police said Doherty was wearing a helmet, but that it was a half-shell novelty helmet not approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation.



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OTHER HEADLINES

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First “Fourths”
in Yamhill
County

On America’s 250th birthday,
a local historian looks back
at the first Fourth of July cel-
ebration in Oregon before the
territory acquired statehood.

By Sheri King
Local Historian, for Newsberg

On July 4, 1846, Oregon was not
even an incorporated territory of the
United States, much less a state. But
that didn’t keep Oregon’s earliest
American pioneers from celebrating
their country’s birthday here on the
Pacific shores.

Thanks to early newspaper jour-
nalists, we’ve been given front-row
seats to Oregon’s first Independence
Day events. Our state’s first newspa-
per — the Oregon Spectator, estab-
lished in 1846 — described in great
detail two of these celebrations held
that year. The first took place in Or-
egon City. The second was hosted
right here in our own neighborhood
at today’s Champoege Park.

Like all new Oregonians, the
pioneers at Champoege were still
trying to adjust to Oregon weather
— and the unpredictable nature of it
even in the middle of summer. The
“heavy fall of rain” that day led the
ladies to cancel their plans to march
in the parade. Without the refuge of
pavement, a rainy day was also an
extremely muddy day!

The rain didn’t keep people from
coming to the event, though. A mi-
litia group — the “Oregon Rangers”
— officially kicked off the festivities

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by marching to where a “large num-
ber of the Oregon fair” were seat-
ed. Next, the “Chaplain” offered a
prayer, a town leader read the Dec-
laration of Independence, and final-
ly an oration was recited for the pur-
pose of educating the “descendants
of the heroic men who lighted the
beacon of liberty...”

The orator closed his speech with
the following words: “And now, fel-
low-citizens, prone as Americans
are to differ in opinion, I know you
will all unite with me in saying “That
star-spangled banner, O long may it
wave, O’er the land of the free and
the home of the brave.”

The following year, The Spectator
made a brief mention of Portland’s
celebration: “There was a large as-
semblage of people from various
parts of the territory, who had sus-
pended their daily avocations to
keep the ‘Sabbath of the Nation.’ A
salute of thirty guns was fired at
12 o’clock, after which an excellent
oration was delivered to a crowded
audience...”

In the spring of 1848, a small
group of men gathered in a rustic
log schoolhouse near present-day
Lafayette to plan what is possibly
the first documented July 4 event in
Yamhill County.

A few weeks later, the men led a
gathering at the Yam Hill Falls, just
past Lafayette’s old steamboat land-
ing at the Yamhill River. Alonzo
Skinner, the first circuit judge of
Oregon Country, gave the patriotic
speech. He was a circuit rider and
most likely showed up to the event
on horseback.

Lafayette, as the county seat,
hosted the holiday gatherings.

On July 4, 1850, a parade began
at the town’s public square. After
the parade, the Declaration of In-
dependence was read, speeches and
toasts were given about the nation’s
founders, patriotic songs were sung,
and a group prayer was offered.



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Comic Diaries

Created by Brittany Long Olsen

Saturday 06 june



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UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

- JUNE 23**
6:30 p.m. — Tunes on
Tuesday: Hometown Sound
Downtown Newberg, 116 S
College St

JUNE 24
1 p.m. — Tech Help
Chehalem Senior Center, 101 W
Foothills Drive

4 p.m. — Newberg
Wednesday Market
711 E 2nd Street

5:30 p.m. — Wellness
Wednesday: Spine - Neck to
Lower Back Care
Chehalem Chamber of
Commerce, 112 N Garfield St.
Suite 103

7 p.m. — Newberg Comedy
Night ft. Andrew Sleighter &
Julia Corral
Stoller Wine Bar, 106 S Center
Street

JUNE 25
8:30 a.m. —Last Thursday
Trash Clean Up
Newberg Downtown Coalition,
210 N Blaine Street

5 p.m. — Living Haus Tap
Takeover
Stumptown Taps, 2401 E
Portland Rd, A-6
- 6 p.m.** — Josh Fortenbery
w/Knuckle Grease Station
107 N Meridian St, Newberg

JUNE 26
5:30 p.m. — Emerald Ash
Borer Info Session
Chehalem Glenn Golf
Course, 4501 E Fernwood Rd.

JUNE 27
11 a.m. — Garden
Workshop: Lavender and
Herb Wreath
Durant at Red Ridge Farms,
5510 NE Breyman Orchards
Rd., Dayton

3 p.m. — Lavender Wreath
Making Class
Wayward Wind Lavender
Farm, 17005 NE Courtney Rd.

6 p.m. — Weekly Board
Game Night
Barley & Vine Tavern, 408
East 1st Street

JUNE 28
11 a.m. — Open Mic Night
Barley & Vine Tavern, 408
East 1st Street
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