

# *Yamhill Valley* NewsRegister.com

By [Starla Pointer](#) • Staff Writer • December 28, 2015 [📄](#)

## Wortman Park Cafe to open for seniors

The McMinnville Senior Center will offer a new twist on meal service when it opens the Wortman Park Cafe Tuesday, Jan. 5.

The cafe is the new Tuesday and Thursday meal program that will complement the Monday, Wednesday and Friday lunches offered by Northwest Senior and Disability Services.

“We want seniors to have highly nutritious food and socialization, as well,” said Anne Lane, director of the senior center, located at 2250 N.E. McDaniel Lane.

Wortman Park Cafe will be open from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. each Tuesday and Thursday. For \$5, seniors can choose items from a full salad bar, soup, fresh bread and freshly baked cookies.

Lane said she and other organizers plan to vary the soups and salad bar offerings. They hope seniors will tell them what they like and dislike.

The cafe is a cooperative pilot program involving both the senior center and NSDS.

Both the agency and the center are hoping the cafe will boost attendance at senior center lunches, Lane said. She hopes it will bring people to the center’s programs in general.

Most of the activities and classes already are well-attended, she said, but participation in the regular lunches has dropped — as it has at meal programs statewide and across the nation.

“When this place opened 20 years ago, the dining room was full every day,” she said. “Now it’s often just a few people.”

The decrease in Monday, Wednesday and Friday diners has been accompanied by a rise in the number of Meals on Wheels participants, said Linda Behrens, who runs the meal program for Northwest Senior and Disability Services.

Volunteer drivers now deliver 80 to 90 meals each day of the program to seniors in McMinnville, Dayton and Lafayette. Participants receive a hot meal with an entree, vegetables and dessert, with a diabetic option available. They also get a second meal for later, featuring a cold salad and bread or a sandwich, milk and dessert.

In fact, Behrens said, Meals on Wheels is so popular, she has a constant need for more volunteer drivers to cover the four delivery routes in McMinnville and the one that includes Lafayette and Dayton.

Each volunteer covers one shift a week, working from about 10:30 a.m. to noon. Substitutes also are needed.

To qualify, a volunteer must have a valid driver’s license and be able to pass a background check.

Several people already volunteer on a regular basis, Behrens said. The Mormon Church and the Kiwanis

Club send volunteers, as well.

With the opening of the Wortman Park Cafe, Lane said, the meal program also will need more volunteers in the kitchen and dining room. Volunteers will help bake the bread and cookies and keep the salad bar stocked.

Lane and her staff have been preparing for weeks for the cafe's opening.

She said Janet and Martin Bleck, who own Subterra -- A Wine Cellar Restaurant in Newberg, have been helping her get organized and learn about managing food inventory. The Blecks also own Rogue Gourment, which has the catering contract at the McMinnville Community Center.

Friends of the Senior Center also have been a big help, she said. The organization contributed \$3,000 toward the purchase of a salad bar.

"We couldn't have done this without them," she said.

Although she's wanted to expand the lunch program for ages, Lane said she's finding it difficult to predict how many people will come to the cafe on its opening day. She's guessing conservatively, she said.

"If we run out of food because we have too many .... that would be a great problem," she said.

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