



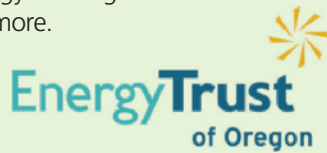
Connections

April 2024 | Oregon

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The oldest community theatre in Oregon is thriving

The story of Barnstormers Theatre reads a little like a fairytale:

once upon a time in 1952, a small amateur theater troop toured around Oregon, performing in—you guessed it—barns. The group and its founder, Mike Spooner, had a dream of owning its own venue, and in 1961, it purchased an 88-seat auditorium building from a church in Grants Pass. For \$10. It's been home to the Barnstormers ever since.

"I think Barnstormers is really cool, and we are kind of a big deal: we are the oldest community theater group in Oregon," said Niki Richards, executive director.

Right before the pandemic hit, Niki left her established career in mental health services to run the little theater. "It was a lot to take on just as everything closed down around us," Richards said. "I wasn't sure how we were going to make it without any performances."

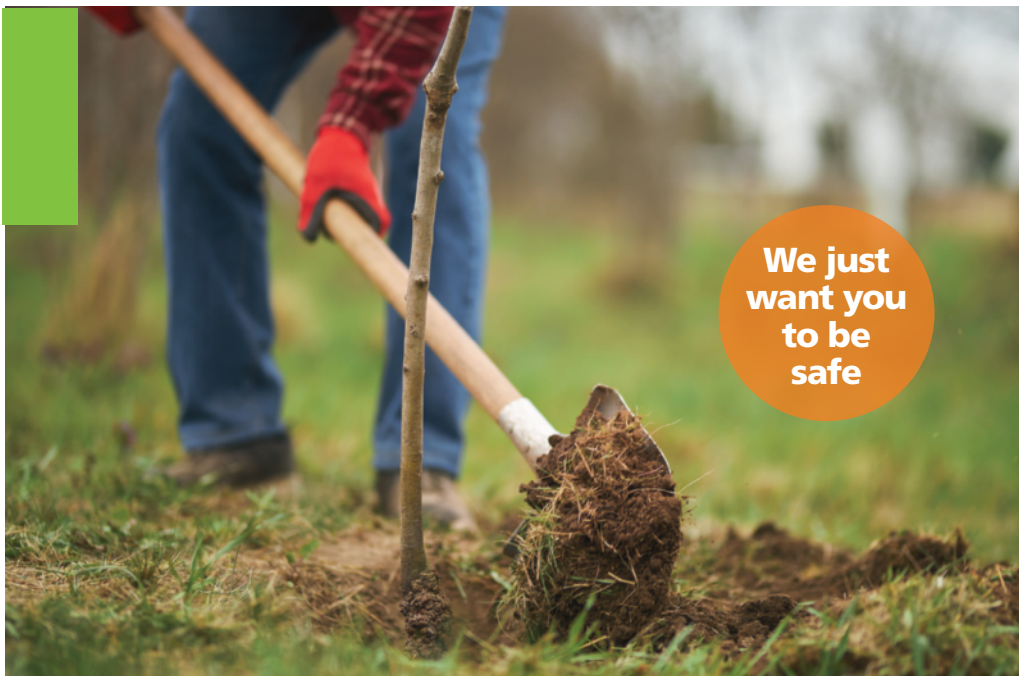
But The Barnstormers didn't let a global pandemic stand in their way. Richards said they spent whatever little savings they had on streaming equipment, worked out some licensing agreements, and kept producing theater people could watch from home. "We were hanging on by the skin of our teeth, but thank goodness we never actually closed," Richards said.

Barnstormers is operated and supported by some 200 volunteers, who do everything from directing performances to painting backdrops, acting, and running the box office and the concession stand.

"Every summer, we have a camp for 8-16 year olds, and it is very common for them to come back as volunteer camp counselors after they age out," Richards said. Like schools and stores, having an active theater company is a huge boon to a smaller community, and by now, there are generations among the volunteers.

Visit barnstormersgp.com to purchase tickets, volunteer or make donations to the theater.





We just want you to be safe

April is National Safe Digging month

To keep our natural gas system safe and reliable, Avista completes regular maintenance. We perform several safety procedures including, but not limited to, leak surveys, pipeline excavation monitoring, meter inspections and meter replacements. You may see one of our workers in your yard performing this maintenance.

Underground lines can be buried anywhere and are a potential safety hazard when digging for any project — large or small, urban or rural. For home projects, state law requires you to **call 811 at least two business days before you start digging.** Calling 811 will initiate a request for someone to visit your work site to mark the ground above utility lines.

Customers can also request private locates for non-utility underground work (this will entail a fee) by calling 811. This way, you won't accidentally hit a line while you're digging. Thanks for being our partner in safety.

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