

August 2019 | Oregon

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## Students learn the value of their voice at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Academic Bowl

### Wild River Pizza is an annual sponsor of the event

The competition is fast-paced and intense. The eight teammates stand, hands poised to hit the buzzer before the other team. The questions are tough, and cover a wide range of subjects. "Being able to speed read and having good team communication is extremely helpful. For the first time in my life I felt like my voice had value," says Samantha Castaneda, her enthusiasm showing as she shares her experience of participating in this year's Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Academic Bowl through her interpreter. Samantha is the only deaf person in her family. She continues, "For the first time in my life I felt like I was competing on an even playing field."

Dale Balme, Southern Oregon Educational Service District's (SOESD) Hearing Program Manager echoes Samantha, "Competing is truly a life-changing experience for students. It's a serious commitment and requires a great deal of dedication." SOESD serves 153 DHH students in 13 school districts and five counties.

The competition is open to all DHH high school students who compete to earn a spot on their local teams. "I would not have considered going to college before this experience, but now I'm planning to go to a technical school for the deaf to study math, sciences, and pre-med," shares Samantha.

Students seek various fundraising opportunities in the community for travel expenses. Avista customer Wild River Pizza & Brewing in Medford, OR is an annual sponsor of the event. "We are committed to giving back and take great pride in being a local business that supports the community that supports us," said manager Matthew Bilyeu. The event is a sizable one; they made over 200 pizzas that day.

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# Find a trusted HVAC contractor

## Take the guesswork out of your next home improvement project

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We can help you find the right contractor for your needs. We work with third-party industry associations—like the Northwest HVAC/R Association—to provide referrals for qualified individuals and businesses in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon.

The companies in Avista's Contractor and Dealer Network are dedicated to excellence and provide:

- Free estimates and proposals
- One-year minimum warranty on equipment and parts
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Our online referral tool delivers results:

- Personalized to your ZIP code and project type
- Pre-screened to include only those contractors that are licensed, bonded, and insured
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Avista works with the Northwest HVAC/R Association to provide referrals for qualified equipment contractors. Start your search today at [myavista.com/findacontractor](http://myavista.com/findacontractor).



## Rooted in safety



**You love the look of maple trees and have the perfect spot picked out in your yard, one that will give you lots of leafy shade in the summer. But did you know that tree roots will spread out at least as wide as the tree's canopy and often much further?**

As the roots spread and grow deeper, they can entangle or even break natural gas lines or damage protective gas pipeline coatings. Severe storms can also uproot trees which can pull up or break a natural gas line, potentially causing a serious gas leak.

If planting trees and shrubs is on your summer to-do list, make sure you start your landscaping project by knowing where underground utilities, including natural gas lines, are located.

Before putting down roots, determine where natural gas lines are and plant your tree at least 10 feet away. Shrubs, flowers and ground cover are good choices for landscaping near natural gas lines since their root systems are not as extensive as those of trees. When selecting your plantings, consider the size of the root ball, the matured plant's roots and keep in mind the distance to a natural gas line.

Remember to call 811 at least two days before starting any project that involves digging. Your underground utilities will be located and marked with the approximate location at no cost to you. It's the law and it keeps you safe.

Visit [myavista.com/811](http://myavista.com/811) to learn more.



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