

By Jillian Daley
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Gubser Neighborhood Association, founded in 1994, encompasses 1,500 homes and is the home of Volcanoes Stadium, the arena for the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes, the local minor league baseball team, the city Web site states. Gubser is bound by River Road N, Keizer Station, Labish Ditch and Chemawa/Lockhaven Road NE.

There once were seven associations, but five are now defunct. Gubser area representative Dana Birch said that it takes residents' initiative to keep an association going. "Somebody has to step up and be involved, or we end up like other neighborhood associations, which are dead," Birch said. She attributed her neighborhood's success to a Christmas tradition, Keizer Station and the fact that some major players in the city live in the neighborhood.

Some of Gubser's residents include Mayor Lore Christopher, City Councilor Jacque Moir and City Councilor Jim Taylor, but Moir said she's not convinced that having Christopher, Taylor and herself in the neighborhood is crucial. "That's minor," said Moir, who did not run again for her council seat in the November general election. "That really does not play a huge role at all. Though, it probably doesn't hurt." Moir, who helped found the Gubser association, said the Miracle of Christmas lighting display is key to the association's success.

Neighbors decorate their homes and encourage people to drop off food donations in a barrel in the neighborhood. The donations are sent to Marion-Polk Food Share and a Keizer food basket program. Taylor will be the main organizer this year and will have the collection barrel at his house. "There's a lot of organization and planning that goes into it, and it is what bonds us all together," Moir said.

The city and developer of Keizer Station sought area residents' input on the shopping center, which is in Gubser and broke ground in 2004. "There were a lot of meetings with neighbors over that," Moir said.