

Subpoenas arrive as governor departs

By Jonathan J. Cooper
Associated Press

SALEM (AP) — Just hours after Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber announced his decision to resign, a subpoena arrived in a state office building confirming that federal agents are looking into the influence-peddling scandal that led to the abrupt end of a four-decade political career.

The Democratic governor gave in to mounting pressure Friday, abandoning his office amid suspicions that his live-in fiancée used her relationship with him to land contracts for her green-energy consulting business.

His resignation cleared the way for Secretary of State Kate Brown to assume Oregon's highest office.

"This is a sad day for Oregon. But I am confident that legislators are ready to come together to move Oregon forward," said Brown, also a Democrat. Unlike most states, Oregon does not have a lieutenant governor. The secretary of state is next in line to succeed the governor.

When Kitzhaber closes the door on his life in public office, the scandal that toppled Oregon's longest serving governor will still linger. Subpoenas delivered to the Department of Administrative Services Friday request a massive array of documents from Kitzhaber's administration.

The subpoena was the first acknowledgment of a federal investigation against Kitzhaber and his fiancée, Sylvia Hayes. It seeks

records pertaining to 15 other people besides Kitzhaber and Hayes, including Kitzhaber's chief of staff, policy advisers, Kitzhaber's lawyer and secretaries.

The subpoena orders the agency to produce documents for a federal grand jury before March 10. An agency spokesman, Matt Shelby, said it would provide whatever requested records are in its possession.

Kitzhaber insisted he broke no laws.

"Nonetheless, I understand that I have become a liability to the very institutions and policies to which I have dedicated my career and, indeed, my entire adult life," he said in a statement.

The announcement of the planned resignation capped a wild week in which Kitzhaber seemed poised to step down, then changed his mind, but ultimately bowed to calls from legislative leaders that he quit.

It's a stunning fall from grace for a politician who left the governor's office in 2003 and then mounted a comeback in 2010 and returned to his old job.

In a long statement announcing his decision, a defiant Kitzhaber cast blame on the media and on "so many of my former allies" who did not stick up for him. His staff released an audio recording of him reading the statement. Near the end, his voice trembled and he seemed to choke back tears.

Kitzhaber handily won re-election in November to a fourth term after

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SPRD youth basketball thrives

The youth basketball league running through Sisters Park & Recreation District (SPRD) is midway through their season.

The basketball league, which includes a 1st- and 2nd-grade league and a 3rd- and 4th-grade league, has been playing since January 5. The league has more than 70 kids playing in it this year. All games are played at the Sisters Elementary School gym on Saturday mornings.

Parents nearly fill the bleachers as they cheer on their kids. The atmosphere at the elementary school on Saturday morning is festive and fun as teams, coaches, and spectators file in and out to watch the youth basketball league.

There is a strong line-up of coaches at all levels this year with Andrew Schar, Chance Beckwith, Erik Pronold, Mark Greaney, Brad Tisdell and Derek McNamara heading up the 1st- and 2nd-grade league. This league has been playing 3-on-3 games this year, and players' skills have been developing rapidly throughout the season, according to coaches.

Kids have been learning how to cut off the ball to get open, perform layups with each hand, and play good man-to-man defense.

The 3rd- and 4th-grade league has been competitive this season with each team taking some wins and losses. Coaching the teams this year are long-time coaches



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Youth basketball is instilling good habits and a love for the game.

Paul Patton, David Tolle, Kyle Fischer and Cenobia Gonzalez. Each coach brings a unique coaching philosophy to the table, and all are committed to developing the fundamental skills of their players.

The game format for the 3rd- and 4th-grade teams has been full-court 5-on-5 basketball. At the end of the season, these teams will play in an end-of-the-season tournament after being seeded from regular season play.

Making sure everyone plays by the rules is the job of referee Katie Aryanfard. Katie is a high school basketball athlete and has been helping develop the younger

kids on the court as their referee. At games, Aryanfard takes the time to explain the fouls to the players so they can learn from their mistakes and become better players.

According to SPRD, referees are hard to come by in youth sports and Aryanfard has been doing an outstanding job this season enforcing the rules and being firm with both coaches and players.

The final games for the 1st- and 2nd-grade teams will be played on February 28, along with the 3rd- and 4th-grade tournament. End of season awards will be given out to the teams, and participants will begin to look forward to their spring activities.

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