MAYOR

Mayor focused on how to help

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great, but we really need to see what we can do for existing business, find out what they need and how we can help them." He hopes to create a partnership between the city, The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center at Columbia Gorge Community College to address such business needs, outside the realm of visitors and tourism.

Mays said he would also like to explore a "50/50 sidewalk split" program in the city.

"Property owners could fix their sidewalks, and half the cost would be paid for by the city," Mays explained. He noted that such a program would be considered during the upcoming budget process.

Mays is also interested in exploring a public-use space on Federal Street and would like to support and encourage the enthusiasm for the Main Street program generated by the Small Business Revolution project.

Mays was seated on the city budget committee in 2015, prior to running for mayor. He was elected to replace former Mayor Steve Lawrence, who did not run for a fourth term in office, in 2018. His current term expires at the end of this year.

Now retired, Mays worked many years as a city manager and holds a Master of Arts degree in public affairs.

"Bringing people together to do what's best for everyone in the long run, that's the ultimate goal," he said of public service during his first campaign.

HIGHWAY

Repair of tunnel planned in future

Continued from page A1

ensure the safety of workers involved later in the tunnel repair project.

The hillside was burned during the fire, destroying vegetation and increasing the threat of rockfall.

Late Sunday, the Historic Columbia River Highway was closed around-the-clock to all users between Multnomah Falls and Interstate 84, exit 35 (Ainsworth State Park). The road will reopen by 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28.

Access to Multnomah Falls

During the closure, eastbound travelers can continue on the Historic Highway to reach Multnomah Falls, or use I-84 Exit 31. Westbound travelers cannot reach Multnomah Falls on the Historic Highway and should use I-84 Exit 31.

Restoring the tunnel

A second phase of work is planned to restore the tunnel itself. That work is anticipated to begin in late 2020. The tunnel will remain closed until restoration work is complete.

The 125-foot tunnel originally opened in 1914, and carried vehicle traffic from the Historic Highway.

In 1948, ODOT bypassed the tunnel and filled it with rubble. In 2009, it was restored for bicycle and pedestrian use.

In 2017, the Eagle Creek Fire burned the tunnel's wood lining, and it has remained closed since.

Visit TripCheck.com for 24/7 road conditions and closure information.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS AT THEDALLESCHAMBER.COM/EVENTS OR EMAIL ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE TO MGIBSON@THEDALLESCHRONICLE.COM. LISTINGS ARE FREE.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday, February 26

ADULT YOGA: Adult Yoga, 6 p.m. at The Dalles-Wasco County Public Library, 722 Court St., The Dalles. Vinyasa flow. Free.

Thursday, February 27

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Governmental affairs, 7 to 8 a.m. at The Barbecue, 1013 W. Sixth St., The Dalles. Open to public.

CODE CLUB: If you are a girl who enjoys creating digital art with a purpose the new Girls Who Code Club at TDMS is for you. The free club meets every Wednesday from 8 to 9:30 am at TDMS. In Girls Who Code, students work together to learn about computer coding and solve a real world problem. To register call 541-296-5494 or email lu.seapy@oregonstate.edu.

Thursday, February 27

KIWANIS PROGRAMS: Kiwanis meetings are held every Thursday at noon at Spooky's and visitors are welcome. This week's events include: is a club business meeting. For more information go to www.thedalleskiwanis.org.

Friday, February 28

PRESCHOOL YOGA: Preschool Yoga, 10 to 10:30 a.m. at The Dalles-Wasco County Public Library, 722 Court St., The Dalles. Free.

TEEN POWER: Teen Knowledge is Power Trivia Game, 4-5:30 p.m. at The Dalles-Wasco County Public Library, 722 Court St., The Dalles.

Saturday, February 29

HISTORY FORUM: Notable visitors are the topic of the final Regional History forum at the Original Wasco County Courthouse. The Dalles journalist Rodger Nichols is also a historian and a member of the Original Courthouse board. He will share stories about notable folks who have come to town in the past 215, as well as some homegrown notables, in a presentation titled "Famous Visitors: Guess Who Came to Dinner?" Program begins at 1:30 p.m. in the upstairs courtroom of the 1859 courthouse, 410 W. 2nd Place, The Dalles. Admission is free, cookies and coffee will be served.

SATURDAY BINGO: Saturday night bingo at the Mid-Columbia Senior Center, 1112 W 9th Street, The Dalles, on Feb. 1st. Plus, an additional $750 payout for a blackout in 53 numbers or less on the final game. Minimum buy-in is $10. Doors open 4 p.m. Games start 6 p.m. Players must be eight years old, 8-18 years must be accompanied by a legal guardian). New players encouraged to arrive by 5:30 p.m.

MARCH

Monday, March 2

CODE CLUB: If you are a girl who enjoys creating digital art with a purpose the new Girls Who Code Club at TDMS is for you. The free club meets every Wednesday from 8 to 9:30 am at TDMS. In Girls Who Code, students work together to learn about computer coding and solve a real world problem. To register call 541-296-5494 or email lu.seapy@oregonstate.edu.

TEEN TECH: An Arduino microcontroller uses open-source hardware and software to create digital devices and interactive objects that can sense and interact digitally and physically. There is a large community have programmers who have shared their Arduino creations online for everyone to use. So come learn how to program and use these amazing little motherboards. By registration only, 3 to 5 p.m. at The Dalles-Wasco County Library, 722 Court St., The Dalles. Free.

Tuesday, March 3

BACKYARD GARDENING: Learn Backyard gardening and farming for food, fun, by registration at The Dalles-Wasco County Public Library, 722 Court St., The Dalles. Classes are 6:15 p.m.

See **HAPPENING**, page A5

CAP&TRADE

Electricity rates would not go up

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through political claims and focus on what the program would do as proposed and how Oregonians would be affected.

Why limit gases?

What are greenhouse gases, and why does the state want to cut back on them?

Greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere and change the Earth's climate, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The most significant is carbon dioxide, released into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels, solid waste and biological materials.

According to a 2018 report from the Oregon Global Warming Commission, the effects of increased greenhouse gas emissions are already here. The report states that forest fires start earlier, last longer, are more intense and produce smoke that's particularly harmful to sensitive groups. The report also states that Oregon is seeing less snowpack, which can result in droughts.

In the long term, Oregon could see a dramatic die-off of forests or sea-level rises in coastal communities, according to the report.

According to that same report, Oregon emitted about 65 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent in 2017. The state wants to cut that dramatically by 2050.

What's the impact?

What environmental impact will this bill have?

Climate change is a global phenomenon. Critics of the current effort say that Oregon's emissions account for just a sliver of the total greenhouse gases released worldwide.

After President Donald Trump pulled out of the Paris climate agreement in 2017, Gov. Kate Brown announced that Oregon would join other states, cities and countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Cap and trade programs can improve local air quality by reducing pollution, while lowering global greenhouse gas emissions.

Impacts on price

I've heard this will make gas at the pump more expensive. Is that true?

The program would require companies importing fuel into Oregon to pay for emissions those fuels will generate.

Gas prices could increase by about 20 cents per gallon in 2022 in areas where the program will start, according to an analysis provided by Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, a leading author of the bill. After 2022, gas prices could increase by 1 to 2 cents per gallon annually.

According to that analysis, large parts of the state are years from experiencing an increase, because the legislation would phase in the requirement on fuel importers by geography as follows:

2022: Portland metro area

2025: Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Douglas, Hood River, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Tillamook, Washington and Yamhill counties.

2028: Coos and Curry counties, and the metropolitan areas of Bend and Klamath Falls.

Counties not included: Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, Wheeler.

Counties can volunteer to join the program, which would give them access to new state money to use for local environmental projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gases.

Once 23 counties are covered by the regulations the entire state would require fuel importers to buy allowances—essentially a permit to pollute—from the state.

To insulate some Oregonians from higher fuel costs, Senate Bill 1578 would provide a tax credit for people making less than $65,000 per year who live in areas of the state where fuel importers have to buy allowances. Those credits would be higher in counties subject to the regulation that are also more rural, where the average resident travels longer distances by car.

Greg Dotson, assistant professor of law at the University of Oregon, who is an expert in environmental and energy law, said that before a similar system went into effect in California critics predicted gas prices in that state would spike.

But he pointed to U.S. Energy Information Administration numbers showing that between 2014 and 2016, gas prices on the West Coast dropped by a dollar while California was enacting its carbon pricing program. Numbers show that gas prices in California since then have ebbed and flowed.

The global oil market largely dictates gas prices, Dotson said.

"These state programs, they're just the gnat on the dog, which is the global oil market," said Dotson. "And these big global oil market forces are determining oil prices."

Impacts on manufacturing

How could this law affect manufacturing?

The program would apply to about a dozen manufacturers in the state that emit more than 25,000 metric tons of man-made greenhouse gases every year.

Potentially, nine of these facilities could be considered "trade exposed." That means these companies are subject to competition from states where environmental policies are less stringent, and they would be excused from paying for emissions if they are using the best technology available to their industry to control those emissions.

What's considered "best available technology" would be assessed every nine years to figure out whether those technologies have changed. As long as the manufacturer continues to meet that benchmark, it can still qualify for free allowances.

Impacts on business

How will the bill affect other businesses?

Fuel suppliers and utilities supplying natural gas and electricity will have to get allowances for their emissions. Altogether, about 100 companies could have to abide by the new regulations, according to the state Carbon Policy Office.

The Carbon Policy Office doesn't expect electricity utilities, which already have to abide by state laws moving them to clean energy sources, to increase rates as a result of cap and trade.

Businesses using natural gas might see increases in their utility bills.

If companies are considered "trade exposed"—at risk of losing business to the states where environmental regulations are less strict—they will get help mitigating rate increases for that natural gas use.

Natural gas utilities would be given allowances associated with emissions from "trade exposed" commercial users of natural gas through a process called "consignment." That means the allowances would be sold at auction, and utilities can use the money from the sales to cover costs that otherwise would be passed on to trade exposed businesses. As a result, those businesses would be protected from rate increases for their natural gas.

Businesses not considered trade exposed would still be sheltered from at least part of any increase in their natural gas costs.

NW Natural estimates that its small commercial natural gas users can expect to see a $168 cost increase in natural gas utility bills due to cap and trade in 2022.

Gas bill impact

How will this affect my personal natural gas bill?

According to estimates from Dembrow, low-income residential customers would be exempted from any natural gas increases. The state Public Utility Commission would determine who qualifies as low income.

Other residential customers would see, on average, a 7 percent increase in 2022, according to the analysis provided by Dembrow. For the typical, non-low income customer, Northwest Natural estimates that's about $50 in the first year.

The legislation would provide money to weatherize homes and for other energy projects that could bring down customers' bills.

Electricity bill impact

How will this affect my electricity bill?

The Citizens' Utility Board, which advocates for residential and small business customers, said in its analysis that the new program "should not have any harmful effects on electricity consumers."

Oregon lawmakers in 2016 required a phasing out of coal-fired electricity by 2030, while pushing large utilities to use more renewable energy sources.

Since the utilities already are adjusting for that requirement, there shouldn't be additional costs to electricity customers as a result of the greenhouse gas program, the Citizens' Utility Board concluded.

"Electric service consumers will likely benefit from enhanced energy efficiency and other clean energy programs because a price on (greenhouse gas) emissions will improve these programs' cost effectiveness," the board said in a briefing paper.

Dotson said that a regional greenhouse program covering 10 states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic has reduced carbon emissions while power bills have decreased. A consultant's report in 2018 found that consumers covered by the initiative saw their energy bills decrease because of efforts to improve energy efficiency.

Price impact

Will cap and trade make everything else more expensive?

Business groups have complained that the legislation will increase the cost of doing business in a way ultimately passed on to consumers. Others are more skeptical.

"This is an argument that I've been hearing for 20 years about any policy to address climate change, that it's just going to raise prices on people and be unfair," said Dotson, who previously worked as vice president for energy and environmental policy at the Center for American Progress.

"We're in a fundamentally different world now just because renewable energy is, in most cases, actually cheaper than fossil fuels for many applications. So there's this huge opportunity to invest in those things, and actually reap rewards for people," Dotson said.

Dallas Burtraw, a senior fellow at Resources for the Future who also advises California on its cap and trade program, said that economists tend to favor cap and trade because it allows companies to decide for themselves how to comply with the new regulations.

"If I say that you have to do something, and you have to do it in a certain way, and that's legally enforceable, it'll get you to do what I said," Burtraw said.

"You might know of cheaper ways to do that, or ways that would give you a lot more flexibility and cause less disruption to your production practices," he said.

He said flexibility is a key feature of cap-and-trade programs.

"You get to decide how you're going to reduce those emissions or whether you're going to reduce those emissions, or whether you're going to pay somebody else to do it," he said.

Burtraw also notes that government money raised through the program in turn funds energy efficiency projects, which can make business more competitive.

"It's important not to just take half the story," Burtraw said. "So half the story is that you're raising the costs of combusting fossil fuels and that, everything else being equal, would seemingly disadvantage an industry compared to competitors in other states... But the response to that—that the state could help amplify through the use of revenues that are collected—is to promote innovation and investments to become more efficient. And there's loads of evidence that this has worked out really well."

Low-income families will see little to no cost impacts as a result of the program due to exemptions and credits, according to the analysis from Dembrow's office.

Moderate income families can expect to see increases of less than $100 per year, and high income households in the Portland metro area can expect to see increases of $150 to $400 starting in 2022, depending on how many cars they have and how fuel efficient those cars are. The effect on high-income earners elsewhere will depend on where they live.

Are we ready?

I heard that lawmakers are rushing the bill through. Is there anything they don't know yet about the proposal?

There's no thorough estimate of how much money the law would raise for the state, according to the Legislative Revenue Office. The most authoritative forecast of how much money the law is expected to generate will come from that office has yet to be produced.

The state Carbon Policy Office estimates the program could raise $254 million in 2022 and $437 million in the following two-year budget, though it has cautioned those numbers are preliminary. That money would pay for projects to cut greenhouse gas emissions, including making transportation more efficient.

Nonpartisan analysts at the Legislature have estimated that the state would spend about $22 million in the current two-year budget to run the new program.

WEATHER FOR THE DALLES, OR | FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 3, 2020

Today	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
60° /32°	61° /32°	60° /34°	56° /34°	54° /33°	55° /38°	56° /37°
Mild with clouds and sunshine	Mostly sunny	Intervals of clouds and sun	Cooler with clouds and sun	A thick cloud cover	Sunshine	Rain and snow

Actual High/Low
Feb 17 - 23

Monday	50/35
Tuesday	51/23
Wednesday	51/22
Thursday	51/22
Friday	54/23
Saturday	59/27
Sunday	51/37

Updated 2.24.20, 7:30 AM PDT
Data from Accuweather.com