

Governor to detail health plan expansion Thursday

■ **HEALTH:** Kitzhaber seeks to extend health plan coverage using revenue from the cigarette tax increase

By Brad Cain
The Associated Press

Sen. Lenn Hannon says the waters have calmed since he took to the floor of the Senate to chastise fellow Republicans for proposing to cut back general fund spending on the Oregon health plan.

"Shame on you. It is an insult," the Ashland lawmaker said during last week's speech as Senate President Brady Adams and others in the chamber looked on.

Hannon and Adams say no hard feelings linger over the remark.

"We're still speaking cordially," Hannon said Wednesday. "It wasn't a personal attack."

But Adams made it clear he was stung by the comment as well as one by Gov. Kitzhaber's chief spokesman that Adams has been using a "bait and switch" maneuver to try to cut financing for the health plan.

"We're both talking about protecting the existing plan and expanding it," the Senate president said. "What I also want to talk about is the amount of money we are going to spend on it."

On Thursday, Kitzhaber is to announce more details on how he proposes to expand the Oregon health plan using money from a 30-cent-a-pack cigarette tax increase ap-

proved by Oregon voters last fall.

Kitzhaber wants to spend \$70 million of the cigarette tax money to help maintain basic services for low-income people already covered by the plan. Another \$70 million would be used to extend health coverage to an additional 45,000 people by relaxing eligibility requirements and by providing subsidies for low-income people whose employers don't provide health coverage.

Adams said Wednesday that the cigarette tax money will go to the Oregon health plan and that he and other Republicans are willing to commit to an expansion of the health plan, though not by as much as Kitzhaber wants.

The Grants Pass Republican said he can't say at this point how many people he

thinks should be added to the health plan, but he indicated it could be far less than the 45,000 additional people envisioned by Kitzhaber.

"We intend to bring Oregonians into the plan based on the available revenue we have," he said.

Kitzhaber's communications director, Bob Applegate, said Wednesday that his boss is open to discussion about the number of additional people who should be covered.

"The entire cigarette tax campaign was about expanding the health plan," Applegate said. "As long as the debate is how to expand the program — not if — we think that's a step in the right direction."

Seven new categories of endings to be added to Internet addresses

By Elizabeth Weise
The Associated Press

Just as Internet users got used to the difference between disney.com and redcross.org, seven new sets of address endings could appear as early as May to identify groups and individuals who want their own online tags.

Demand for Internet addresses is going through the roof, with about 80,000 new names being registered a month.

The need for online identity is so strong that name disputes have ended up in court as trademark infringement battles.

A plan announced last week would restructure the system for assigning Internet addresses, or "domain names."

Right now, all Internet addresses in the United States

end in one of six ways: .com for commercial businesses, .org for non-profit organizations, .net for networks, .edu for educational institutions, .gov for governmental bodies or .mil for the military.

Under the proposal by the International Ad Hoc Committee, seven endings would be added: .store for businesses offering goods, .info for information services, .nom for individuals who want personal sites, .firm for businesses or firms, .web for entities emphasizing the World Wide Web, .arts for cultural groups and .rec for recreational or entertainment activities.

The committee is made up of 11 representatives of Internet, legal and other international standards groups. It officially began work two months ago.

Vernonia drug testing done haphazardly

■ **SPORTS:** Officials admit the program does not test student athletes consistently

The Associated Press

A year and a half after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Vernonia school district's policy of mandatory drug testing for student athletes, the program is administered only haphazardly.

The wrestling and boys' basketball teams were not tested until the last week of January, about two months after their seasons began, athletic director Scott Finley said.

"The bottom line is, there is no excuse," said Finley, who is responsible for making sure all athletes are tested. "It should have been done."

Finley, who also is the boys' basketball coach, said he had been busy this winter with administrative and other duties.

"No one purposely messed up the program," said Randall Aultman, the author of the policy and principal at Washington Grade

School in Vernonia.

Vernonia gained national attention in 1991 when James Acton, then a seventh-grader going out for football, refused to submit to the tests.

The school's policy reads in part: "At the option of the district, all student athletes may be drug tested at the beginning of any athletic season. In addition, random testing will be conducted weekly during the athletic season."

Acton and his parents sued the school board. The case wound up before the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld the school's drug policy in June 1995.

This year, Acton would have been a senior at Vernonia High, but he left after his junior year. Instead, he is home-schooled and attends classes at Portland Community College.

The school district has continued its drug testing policy since the Supreme Court decision. Testing stopped for a time last spring, after severe flooding in the town in February, and resumed last fall.

But until the last week in January, only the girls' basketball and the cheerleading squad had been tested. No random testing had been done.

"It is a lot of work," Finley said of the testing. But, he added, "It's something that is worth doing."

Linda Butler, athletic director at the grade school, said it took her and an assistant 45 minutes to test 10 girls.

There are 205 students at the high school, approximately 70 of whom go out for sports each season. About 80 seventh- and eighth-graders play sports at Washington Grade School. The total cost for testing seventh-through 12th-grade athletics is about \$2,600 a year.

At least 10 schools in Oregon and around the country have called Aultman to ask about Vernonia's drug testing policy.

Corning Union High School in Corning, Calif., an 800-student school about 80 miles north of Sacramento, adopted a policy similar to Vernonia's last fall.

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