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Oregon Legislature examines new bills addressing pertinent issues

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

The Oregon Legislature is back in session, bringing with it a barrage of new bills that address everything from the rise of methamphetamine use in Oregon to the need for improved transportation systems throughout the state.

Comprised of the State House of Representatives and the State Senate, the legislature convened on Jan. 10 for the 73rd time and has been bustling with activity since.

Oregon's methamphetamine problem has risen to a new high and is spreading across the country, pushing legislation to fix it to the forefront of the state's agenda, Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, said.

Prozanski, who served on Gov. Ted Kulongoski's Methamphetamine Task Force, said bills to combat the illegal possession and distribution of the prescription drugs used to make meth are expected to receive bipartisan support.

Senate Bill 313, introduced by the Senate Interim Committee on General Government, aims at curbing the distribution of prescription drugs used to manufacture meth, and Senate Bill 183 allows immunity from prosecution for persons reporting the illegal possession or trafficking of those drugs.

Lawmakers are looking to create a system that would allow drug distributors to notify other distributors about individuals who have purchased the maximum amount of drugs used in the manufacturing of meth in order to cut meth production at its roots, Prozanski said.

"If we have that type of tracking, we'll have some way of notifying that those individuals are suspect," Prozanski said.

Rep. Phil Barnhart, D-Eugene, said stopping local meth manufacturers is a crucial step for lawmakers to take but the federal government must do more to stop meth manufacturers worldwide.

"This obviously is not a state issue," Barnhart said. "This is a national issue and an international issue."

Sen. Vicki Walker, D-Eugene, said there is expected to be a collective voice from states across the country calling for federal legislation because of how rapidly the drug is spreading.

"The people on the East Coast have finally gotten word that this is a big deal," Walker said. "Now they're experiencing on the East Coast what we've been seeing for a decade."

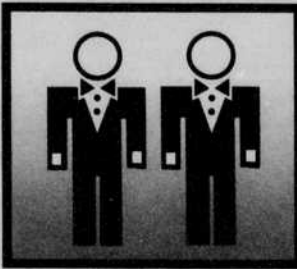
Transportation issues in Oregon are also a hot discussion topic in the legislature, and many lawmakers have emphasized the state's need for an improved "multi-mobile system," Walker said.

Senate Bill 71, which allows lottery bonds to be

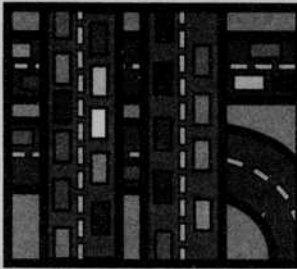
KEY ISSUES

THIS LEGISLATIVE SEASON

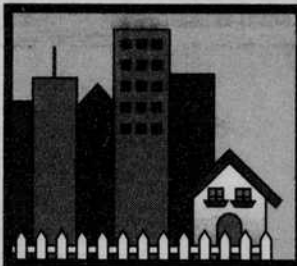
Same-sex marriage was banned by voters with the passage of Measure 36, and bills are expected to be introduced calling for civil unions and anti-discrimination laws.



Transportation issues are at the forefront of many city agendas because of the deteriorating condition of roads and highways and the need for improved bridges and overpasses.



Land use and development in Oregon has come under the magnifying glass with the passage of Measure 37. Legislation is expected this year that would clarify the measure and its impact on the state.



used for transportation projects, is the major transportation legislation being examined this year and is the key to the Governor's Connect Oregon program, Prozanski said.

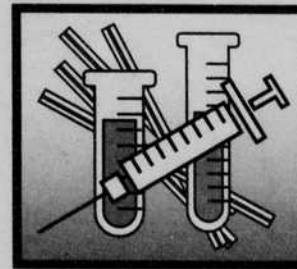
Connect Oregon aims to make transportation systems in Oregon "streamlined and interconnected and supported on a statewide basis," Prozanski said.

Rep. Bob Ackerman, D-Eugene, said the transportation bill is designed to improve the state's economic development by making trade and commerce more efficient.

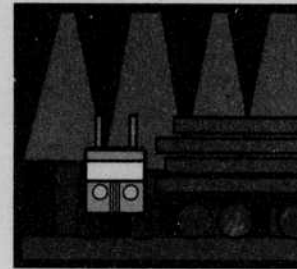
"It probably will be our biggest economic



Health care coverage in Oregon has consistently ranked among the worst in the nation and lawmakers are searching for ways to decrease costs while increasing the number of individuals covered.



Methamphetamine use is increasing throughout the state and lawmakers have introduced bills aimed at stopping the illegal distribution of prescription drugs that can be used to manufacture meth.



State forests are expected to be a topic of debate among lawmakers. House Republicans recently announced plans to reintroduce a bill to double the amount of logging in the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests.

Lawmakers have identified numerous issues that are crucial to the state's long- and short-term development. Bills are being drafted in hopes that these issues can be adequately addressed and dealt with.

BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

development package we get out this season," Ackerman said about Connect Oregon.

Prozanski said interconnection within the state is crucial for economic improvement and called the bill "the next phase in our holistic approach to providing transportation for Oregon."

Legislation regarding state forests and the amount of protection roadless areas deserve is also expected to be a major issue, and lawmakers have differing opinions as to how much the government should be involved in policies that pertain to scientific issues such as

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Tech Thursday

Students put lives online for all to see

Social network Web sites have become popular with those looking to connect with others

BY ANTHONY LUCERO
NEWS REPORTER

Students use the Internet and technology to maintain their schedules — and now their lives. A growing number of students are turning to "social network" Web sites that allow individuals to digitize their identities while connecting them to other users who may have something in common.

The significance is beyond just a trend. Computer and Information Science professor Mike Hennessy said computers are going beyond the desktop and becoming common accessories for computer users, from PDAs to implanted, or "wearable," computers that carry personal information such as medical information in case of a health emergency.

Hennessy said some PDA and cell phone users in Japan meet one another based on mobile profiles on their gadgets, which are shared with other people in range of that device. In America, the trend is catching on and students especially have been willing to put their identity on the Internet through social networks.

One example is Thefacebook (www.thefacebook.com), a Web site where students enrolled in one of the many site-supported universities can find and befriend others with similarities. Almost every single item added into a person's profile is searchable — name, location, class, interests, relationship status — and can bring up results of other students who share similar characteristics.

This marks a big difference from earlier Web services. Today, social networking services are decentralized so users, instead of the service itself, find and connect to each other on their own terms.

Other sites might be useful for cataloging

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JANUARY SPRING



DANIELLE HICKEY | PHOTO EDITOR
Senior Rian Rhoe enjoys the January heat wave.

Unity celebration draws its largest crowd in years

The Black Student Union hosted an event honoring Martin Luther King Jr. that included speakers, singing and a candlelight vigil

BY ADAM CHERRY
NEWS REPORTER

Students, faculty, and community members from different backgrounds gathered to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy Tuesday night at Gerlinger Lounge. The Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Celebration drew about 60 people.

The event, hosted by the University's Black Student Union, opened with the singing of the Black National Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing." University Senior Vice

President and Provost Carla Gary gave the keynote address. Gary stressed the need to continue following in King's footsteps.

"We must never forget that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us," Gary said. "Our obligation is not to say 'thank you'; it is to be thankful in our actions."

Gary encouraged attendees to make the most of the opportunities and freedoms that they have been given.

"Can we afford to

marginalize our hope and our future?" Gary said. "Make the most of this opportunity to stay true to the power of hope. Honor the dream by living it."

Gary added that everyone is "each other's keeper."

"We don't have to like each other all the time, we don't have to agree with each other all the time, but we must be each other's supporters in every way we can," she said.

English major Cory Mainor was the student speaker and

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IN BRIEF

'Community Conversation' draws little response

Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity Gregory Vincent hosted the fourth of five "Community Conversations" on Tuesday.

The meetings are designed to allow members of the faculty, student body, classified staff and the community to give their input on the Diversity Action Plan, a multi-faceted proposal intended to increase diversity on campus. The plan has several other goals, including increasing cultural competency and strengthening community relations.

Tuesday's meeting was sparsely attended and ended a half hour early. After Vincent presented the five points of the plan, he opened up the meeting for comment, but his requests for input were met by deadening silence.

"We're scheduled until 1 p.m.," he said when the meeting seemed to stagnate. "But

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