

Today	Wednesday	Thursday
		
High: 63 Low: 41 Precip: 0%	High: 64 Low: 43 Precip: 0%	High: 65 Low: 43 Precip: 30%

IN BRIEF

Lawmakers consider higher speed limits on interstates

SALEM — Some lawmakers are renewing a push to increase speed limits to 70 mph on rural interstate highways.

Proponents say the bill reflects both the will of Oregonians and current driving practices.

But state transportation experts and safety advocates testified before the House Transportation Committee Monday that raising the current 65 mph limit would increase traffic fatalities and put all drivers in greater danger.

The only testimony for the bill was from Karl Thatcher, whose wife, Rep. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, is on the committee.

Thatcher said Oregon drivers want a faster speed limit and the Legislature should respect that. He also said the government should not

outlaw something because it is potentially dangerous.

But Mark Koberstein, a member of the Transportation Safety Governor's Advisory Committee, said the speed limit should stay where it is.

"We don't raise...the blood alcohol content, because people are drinking more," Koberstein said, "but we seem to keep trying to raise the speed limit," because people are driving faster.

The 2003 Legislature directed the Oregon Department of Transportation to study whether increasing speed limits was a good idea and gave the agency the option to increase rural highway speeds.

But, based on safety studies, the department decided not to raise limits on rural freeways.

The new bill would require speed limits to be increased to 70 mph on rural interstate highways.

Troy Costales, transportation safety manager of the Department of Transportation, said increasing the speed limit would increase traffic deaths.

He said not only does the bill go against recommendations from the study ordered by the Legislature, but it would also set a 70 mph speed limit on all stretches of rural interstate highway, including places where it would be dangerous to do so.

"Speed limit increases are the wrong thing to do," he said.

— The Associated Press

School of Music officials consider security measures

BY EMILY SMITH
NEWS REPORTER

Additional security cameras and shorter building hours are among the possible solutions to the School of Music's ongoing theft problem. The issue is currently being considered by the school's administration and the Department of Public Safety.

SOM Dean Brad Foley and assistant dean Janet Stewart met with DPS last Friday to discuss SOM security weaknesses in light of the burglary earlier this month in which two suspects entered the school three separate times, allegedly stealing instruments valued at more \$25,000 out of student lockers on the second floor.

DPS Interim Director Tom Hicks said he will be looking into the cost of access control, providing increased DPS visibility in the area, additional cameras and closing the building earlier in the evening. He said he would like to see changes implemented during summer term to test them out for fall.

After the March 30 burglary, students and six SOM graduate teaching fellows sent a letter with some

security suggestions to DPS and SOM administration. Stewart said their ideas and concerns were "most certainly taken into consideration."

DPS and the SOM were already in the process of scheduling a meeting to discuss the building's security when GTF Cody Forcier said the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation advised him to write a formal letter with the complaints.

Hicks said finding the money to pay for the changes is going to be difficult, but everything is still in the planning process, so he will look into funding after the costs are figured out.

SOM graduate student Derek Newell had said he was concerned about the lockers as well as the building's easy access and limited security when his \$20,000 cello was stolen using only a pair of bolt cutters.

Stewart said at this time, doing anything about the lockers would be very difficult without replacing them, so for now they are encouraging all SOM students storing instruments in the school "to get decent locks."

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