

Today	Friday	Saturday
		
High: 63 Low: 47 Precip: 20%	High: 67 Low: 46 Precip: 20%	High: 68 Low: 48 Precip: 20%

IN BRIEF

Bill aims to divert unspent money toward education

SALEM — The Senate completed action on companion measures that would expand the state's education reserve fund as a hedge against future budget problems.

One bill, approved 24-5, would divert the unspent general money left over at the end of each two-year budget period into the education "rainy day" fund. Unspent money is currently carried over into the next budget.

Earlier, the Senate overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure that would double the allowed size of the reserve

fund, so it could grow to more than \$1 billion at current budget levels.

Both measures go to the House, where they stand a good chance of passing, said Sen. Ryan Deckert, D-Beaverton, chairman of the Senate Revenue Committee.

Education consumes more than half of the budget, including K-12, community college and university funding.

The education reserve is now fed by 18 percent of lottery profits and is capped at an amount equal to 5 percent of general fund revenue.

The ballot proposal would raise the reserve fund cap to 10 percent of the general fund. Voter approval is needed because the reserve fund is part of the state constitution.

The other bill would put money that's left over at the end of each two-year budget period into the reserve fund, up to a ceiling of 2 percent of the general fund.

Under the current budget, for example, the bill would put into reserve \$204 million of the \$292 million that's projected to be unspent after the budget period ends on June 30.

— The Associated Press

Art: Cost of the paving plan may increase students' rent

Continued from page 1

marred with potholes, and Rixmann, chair of the West University Neighbors, said he's excited at the prospect of the city's alley paving project, which would restore them to their previous level of quality.

So excited, in fact, that he's spearheading his own effort to add a bit of originality and color to the project in hopes of beautifying a neighborhood that some associate with only alcohol consumption and noise.

"Just pick an old flat concrete alley and put something there that you see every day and makes you feel better," Rixmann said. "It could be something as simple as a quote from a famous author, or it could be something real cool like some kind of neat cryptic puzzle."

The city will pave 23 alleys this summer at a projected cost of \$1.67 million, and Rixmann is hoping to work with local artists and city officials to add original artwork on a portion of each alley.

If the city accepts his idea and finds a way to finance it, each alley would have a small removable block that could be decorated before placing it into the rest of the concrete.

Owners of the roughly 160 properties on the same blocks as the alleys will split the cost of the paving project, something about which Eugene police officer Randy Ellis said he has mixed feelings.

Eugene typically takes on the attitude that property owners need to be the ones spearheading improvement projects rather than the city, but this particular project is different because it was instigated by the city, Ellis said.

"Their attitude kind of is 'oh well, they're absentee landlords, they're not going to complain,'" Ellis said. "The rents go up, so the students pay for it."

Ellis said a task force set up after riots occurred in the neighborhood a few years back discussed the alley paving project at great length during

its meetings.

"It surprised me that the city was that responsive to that one issue," Ellis said.

Improving the alleys' condition could do much to improve the rest of the neighborhood, Ellis said, either by creating a better atmosphere to promote a debris-free neighborhood or making the alleys more inviting to walk through. More people in the alleys means more opportunities to catch crime, Ellis said.

The West University Neighbors discusses the alley paving project at its monthly meetings and has been doing so for nearly a year.

Rixmann said he will share his ideas for the alley art project at Thursday's neighborhood meeting and will look for creative input from interested neighbors.

Rixmann said the project is simple and doesn't involve much work but could be a cherished addition to the alleys if done correctly.

Rixmann encouraged students to make the most of the alleys in the coming weeks and enjoy the large amount of free stuff that will be sitting in them once students start moving out for the summer. He said the alleys last year were so filled with appealing items he had to stay inside to ensure he didn't bring home too much of it.

"I just had to lock myself in the room and say 'stay stoned, don't go outside,'" Rixmann said.

Activity in the alleys is just one reason why Rixmann wants some artistic creativity present after they are paved. He said he's hopeful tonight's meeting will elicit positive responses about the alley art project from neighbors and that people will want to get involved.

"It could be cool or it could just slip into obscurity, but I'm betting on the cool side," Rixmann said.

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- Wash bed linens often
- Use pollen mask
- Keep your pet off your bed
- If using allergy meds, take them early
- Avoid lying in the grass
- Wear sun glasses to help keep pollen out of your eyes



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