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SILVER FALLS SCHOOL DISTRICT



The Silverton High School band during the West Albany vs. Silverton High School boys basketball game in Silverton on Jan. 25, 2019. MICHAELA ROMÁN / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Santiam Canyon passing bond to build new high school

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Santiam Canyon School District's \$17.9 million school bond is passing by a slim 6 to 5 margin in the May 21 election.

If the bond measure passes, construction would start on the new buildings to replace the current high and middle schools, which were built in 1956, in the fall of 2019 and students would start school there in fall 2020.

The bond would also pay to build a new cafeteria for the elementary school, an auxiliary gymnasium and an outside play area – including a basketball court – in the middle of the campus.

"Honestly, I'm excited to start building our future," Santiam Canyon superintendent Todd Miller said. "A lot of hard work and thought went into these plans."

If the bond is approved by voters, residents would pay \$2.45 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, approximately \$245 per year for 25 years.

The Santiam Canyon School District is one of the few districts in the Willamette Valley which has yet to pass a bond. The last time the Santiam Canyon district put a bond measure to voters was 2008 when it asked for \$14.5 million, but it failed 61 percent to

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Boosters beat drum for music program support

School board chafes after advocacy group hires specialist to evaluate district curriculum, offerings

Christena Brooks
Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

For many young musicians, fifth-grade band is a rite of passage. It entails handling instruments for the first time, learning to read music, and making a cacophony of strange new noises at home for nine months.

The loss of fifth-grade band in the Silver Falls School District has already hurt middle school band, and high school band will be the next to suffer, said a music specialist who surveyed the district last month. His numbers show middle school band dropped from 127 members three years ago to just 37 now.

"(The) enrollment decline in band grades 5-8 demonstrates the probable complete collapse of the high (school) band program within three years," Dr. John Benham, author of "Music Advocacy: Moving from Survival to Vision," wrote in his status report.

That wasn't all. General music instruction is woefully lacking in nearly all the district's 13 schools, most of them K-8 schools with no music classes at all, he said. Five teachers, working a combined 3.76 FTE (full time equivalent) offer all the certified music instruction to a district of nearly 4,000 students.

"It is obvious that there is an insufficient number of faculty to provide instruction to every school in the district,"

he wrote.

School board members haven't responded publicly to Benham's report, which they received last month from the local non-profit Silverton Friends of Music. Neither did Supt. Andy Bellando participate in the music specialist's survey.

"There's never been a real willingness to work with us, and that's why we hired Dr. Benham," said Sarah Weitzman, president of Silverton Friends of Music. "To help us mediate and facilitate ... maybe even help us hear some stuff from the administration. But we were shocked when the administration responded with a complete shutout."

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State bracing for wave of retirements

Ben Botkin Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Patricia Whitfield remembers when police agencies sent fingerprint cards to the Oregon State Police by mail.

She joined OSP's criminal history records unit as a clerical assistant in 1979, when fingerprint matches were searched by hand and lasted for hours.

Today, Whitfield directs OSP's Criminal Justice Information Services Division, managing about 100 employees who support police statewide and process fingerprints around-the-clock — pulling records in minutes — whenever people are booked into jail.

But Whitfield's career also illustrates a looming, twofold problem for Oregon.

She's one of the longest-tenured state employees, and her peers are retiring at an increasingly rapid rate.

Nearly a quarter — 24.7% — of state agency and executive branch employees either are, or will become, eligible within five years. That's 8,844 employees.

At the same time, state workers' jobs have become significantly more technical, more specialized and harder to fill.

Potential impacts on agencies vary. The Oregon Department of

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Patricia Whitfield, director of the Criminal Justice Information System Division of Oregon State Police, is interviewed in her office in Salem on May 2. Whitfield has worked in state government for nearly 40 years.



Randy Wildman holds a largemouth bass he caught in Fall Creek Reservoir. CHRISTINA MURPHY / OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Draining Ore. reservoir aids young salmon

Chris Branam Oregon State University

CORVALLIS — A new study finds that the low-cost, extreme draining of a reservoir in Oregon aided downstream migration of juvenile chinook salmon — and led to the gradual disappearance of two species of predatory invasive fish in the artificial lake.

The study is published in the journal *Ecology*.

The elimination of largemouth bass and crappie from Fall Creek Reservoir, about 30 miles southeast of Eugene in the Willamette River basin, could have management implications for reservoirs that have been invaded by certain species of fish that eat other fish, according to Christina Murphy, a recent Oregon State University doctoral graduate and lead author on the study.

"Even though the strategy appears extreme, it's both helping juvenile salmonids pass downstream and pro-

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