

Appeal Tribune

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Gates is in a scramble for sidewalks

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

GATES – To catch the school bus in this quirky, East Marion County city of 500 people, children walk in the middle of skinny roads to reach the stop near busy Highway 22.

In his four years as mayor, Jerry Marr spent much of his time trying to figure out how one of the cities with the lowest revenues in the state could do something both simple and safe — build sidewalks.

The city applied for a grant through the Oregon De-

partment of Transportation's Small City Allotment Program last year, and was awarded the maximum \$100,000 in December 2018, though that was reduced to \$85,000.

New estimates from a project engineer are the project will cost \$170,000 and now Gates is stuck between the prospect of finding another \$100,000 in 18 months, drastically scaling back the project or giving back the money.

"Basically, we have a year and a half yet to come up with some money," current mayor Daniel Tucker said. "If we're lucky, we'll just have to have at least three more grants just to get it up to the point where we

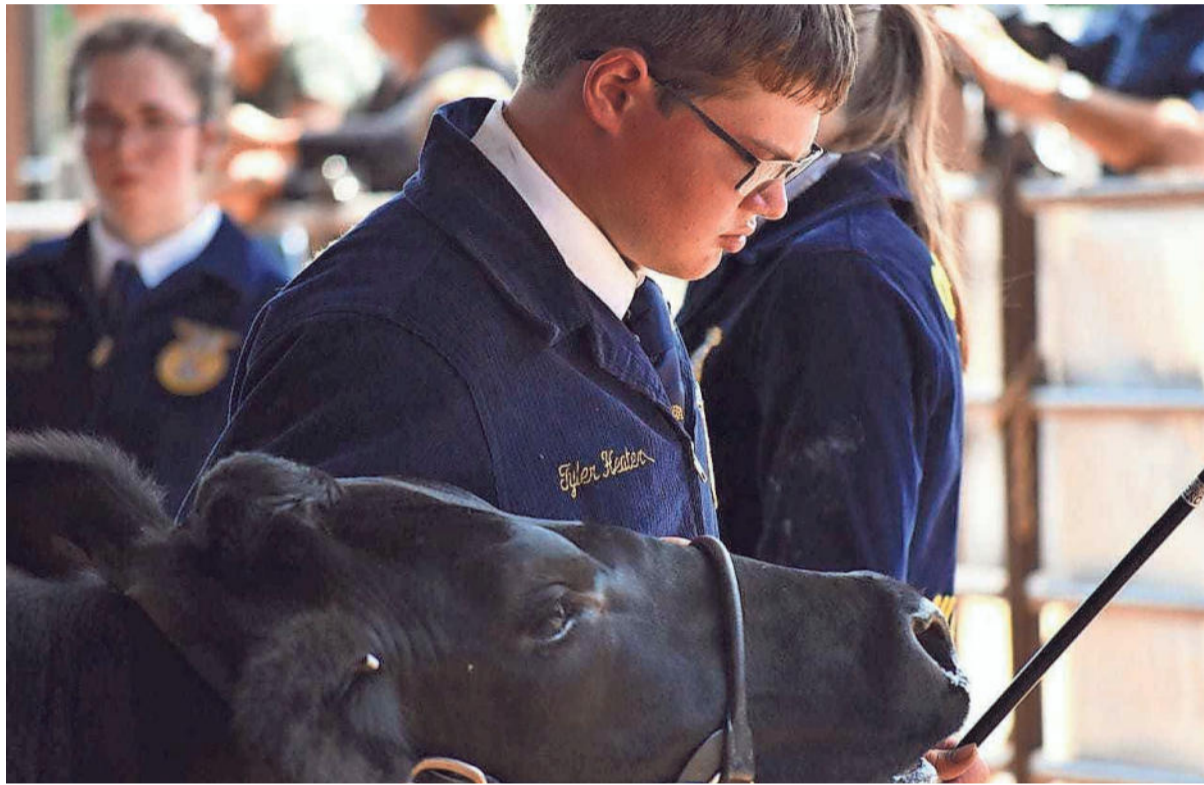
could afford to do it."

Gates has a combination of roads owned by ODOT, Marion County, Linn County and the city, and it can only do work on streets it owns.

The streets it targeted for upgrading are Louisa Drive, Dogwood Drive, East Sorbin Street and Oak Street.

Gates public works superintendent Greg Benthin sought a cost estimate for the work in the grant a project manager from construction company Keller Associates estimates \$170,418.

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Silverton High School FFA member Tyler Heater and his angus heifer Stella in a breeding class at the Marion County Fair earlier this month. PHOTO COURTESY OF SILVERTON FFA

FFA GETS STATE FUNDING BOOST

Oregon State Legislature approved \$1.43 million in spending

Christena Brooks
Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

They show farm animals, give speeches, judge soil quality, weld, fix cars and so much more.

They're known as "Future Farmers of America," and they're getting targeted state funding for the first time in eight years. The Oregon State Legislature approved \$1.43 million in spending on FFA programs and competitions in this state over the next two years.

Silverton's long-running FFA program and Mt. Angel's new club — restarted several years ago after a nine-year hiatus — have been self-supporting, thanks to generous donors and an annual auction.

However, this new state funding, to be meted out by the Oregon Department of Education, will continue to help local students participate and compete. About 7,000 Oregon high school students participate in FFA. Clubs at some high schools will use the new funding to waive individual students' \$20 membership fees to the national organization.

Silverton's FFA program already picks up those fees for anyone enrolled in FFA courses, but every little bit of funding helps, said club advisor Scott Towery. A classic blue FFA jacket rings up at \$80, a trip to nationals costs a minimum of \$1,200, and the competitions leading to it — districts, sectionals and state — require plenty of cash too.

Local members fundraise by selling Christmas trees at Wilco, holding plant sales, and cleaning up at the Oregon State Fair.

So, as representatives and senators arrived for the 2019 legislative session, FFA advisors and students from around the state wrote letters and visited their lawmakers to request funding.

"We have a lot of support at the state level right now," Towery said. "I took a group of kids to the Capitol, and, on the day that this bill passed, three of our graduated members were able to be there."

In Mt. Angel, Kennedy High School's FFA advisor and agriculture teacher is Korrie Shull. At Silverton

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State's native trees declining

Tracy Loew
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon's iconic Douglas firs are declining as the state's summers have grown hotter and drier.

Drought also is killing grand fir, and may be contributing to declines in Western red cedar and bigleaf maple.

"A lot of people really notice it, especially driving down I-5," said Christine Buhl, an entomologist for the Oregon Department of Forestry. "They see a lot of dead trees in the hills."

Oregon has experienced drought each summer since 2012, peaking in 2015. While rainfall and snowpack have been close to average the past two years, temperatures in many areas still were above normal. Climate change is expected to increase drought in Oregon.

Oregon Department of Forestry scientists conduct statewide aerial and ground tree surveys across 30

million acres each year, recording the number of dead and dying trees from all causes, including drought, storms, disease and insect damage.

They look for indicators of drought stress, such as sparse or asymmetrical crowns, an abnormally high number of cones, and brown or dead branches.

In 2018, about 680,000 acres contained damaged or dead trees attributed to all causes. That's fewer than at the peak of the drought but still higher than historic levels.

Doug fir, Oregon's official tree and largest timber cash crop, has been declining since Oregon's drought began in 2012, Buhl said.

Die-offs were first recorded in the driest areas, like south-facing sites, ridges and rocky areas.

"Now, we're seeing Doug fir dying in other areas where maybe they could have lived before," Buhl said. That includes throughout the Willamette Valley.

Tree mortality has dropped a bit in the past couple

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Q&A WITH RAQUEL MOORE-GREEN

Newest legislator outlines her views

Connor Radnovich
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Raquel Moore-Green was sworn in as the newest member of the Oregon House of Representatives Thursday during a brief ceremony in the state Capitol with friends, family and future colleagues.

Moore-Green now represents House District 19, a district previously represented by Sen. Denyc Boles, R-Salem, who herself was appointed to replace the late Sen. Jackie Winters last month.

House District 19 encompasses roughly 63,000 people in South Salem, Turner and Aumsville.

While she had never sought public office before, Moore-Green has worked behind-the-scenes in state politics for years. She worked on the campaigns of Marion County Commissioner Kevin Cameron, and as a legislative aide for Cameron when he was in the Legislature and for Winters in 2019.

The Marion County Commissioners selected Moore-Green Tuesday over two other finalists — House legislative aide Becky Mitts and Salem city councilor Brad Nanke.

"Raquel's background as a small business owner, her time working as a legislative staffer and her leadership and non-profit service in her community will make her a great addition to the Legislature," said House Republican Leader Carl Wilson, R-Grants Pass.

After the ceremony, Moore-Green sat down with the Statesman Journal for a brief interview. The exchange below has light edits for clarity:

Q: I'm curious about your perception of last session: It was considered broadly one of the more contentious sessions in recent memory and I'm curious how you thought it went from a political perspective but also from a "what was done" perspective:

Moore-Green: Obviously, there were some positive things done for Oregonians but I do feel that there were some things that did not favor many Oregonians well. The gross receipts sales tax — essentially a sales tax on the working class — that's just an extra burden there. And I've said this before, as well, the repeal of the undocumented driver's licenses, which the voters had voted on in 2014.

Some of the good things that happened were that thousands upon thousands of Oregonians were re-engaged in the process of government and I think we saw that through the Timber Unity group and through ... the anti-vaxx moms. And I think that's a good thing. I think any time that you can engage people in the process, because it's their process. I mean, this is their government. We are a government for the people and by the people, you know.

On the Senate side, there was that nine-day walkout at the end of session. What's your position on that? Do you think that was the right thing for them to do?

I believe that they were representing their constituents. And that's what we're called to do. We're called to represent our constituents. I think they made a statement.

You've been involved in politics behind-the-scenes for some time. I'm sure you have a good

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Raquel Moore-Green takes the oath of office. ANNA REED/STATSMAN JOURNAL

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