

Appeal Tribune

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Pioneer BBQ family sued by company they founded

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Like a lot of retirees, Joe Traeger couldn't walk away for good.

After he and his family sold Traeger Pellet Grills — the pellet grill company he founded in 2006 — Traeger participated in charities such as serving free Thanksgiving meals with turkeys cooked on pellet smokers. In recent years Traeger tinkered with new designs

for pellet grills, something he invented in 1985.

In September 2018, Traeger and son Brian Traeger took new jobs with Dansons Inc., a rival to Traeger Pellet Grills.

Now the company that bears his name has filed lawsuits against Joe Traeger and sons Brian Traeger and Mark Traeger as well as Dansons, claiming the use of the Traeger name and likenesses in Dansons' marketing are in violation of the purchase agreements they signed when they sold the company for \$12.4 million in 2006.

Traeger Grills' lawsuits do not specify monetary damages sought.

"We deny all claims made by Traeger LLC, as they are false and unfounded," Dansons' president Jeff Thiessen said in a statement. "We will vigorously defend Dansons to protect our character and reputation."

Traeger Grills has grown exponentially under its current ownership in the past five years, selling more than 2.2 million grills and amassing retail sales of

See **LAWSUIT, Page 4A**



North Willamette Valley Habitat for Humanity supporters and community members gathered for a Habitat home dedication on Saturday, Aug. 24, 2019, in Mt. Angel. PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANIELLE ANDERSON / NORTH WILLAMETTE VALLEY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Changes to law could unseat those now on death row

Whitney Woodworth
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Marion County veteran prosecutor Katie Suver ticked off the names and crimes of various death row inmates:

A father and son convicted of conspiring to blow up a bank, killing two police officers in the process.

Another man sentenced to death for stabbing a Salem woman then peddling her stolen jewelry.

Several inmates who killed while incarcerated for other crimes.

All of these current death row inmates, Suver said, stand the chance of skipping out on a death sentence in the event their convictions are overturned if lawmakers don't make quick changes before Senate Bill 1013 goes into effect on Sept. 29.

The bill narrows Oregon's use of the death penalty by whittling down the number of crimes that qualify as aggravated murder — the only offense punishable by death.

Previously, about 20 circumstances made a homicide qualify as aggravated murder, including murder for hire, murdering multiple people, torturing before killing, the murder of someone under 14 and murder during the course of a felony crime.

Oregon legislators voted to limit these aggravating circumstances to only four: terrorist killings of two or more people, the premeditated murder of police officers, murder committed in a prison or jail by someone who was already convicted of murder, and the premeditated murder of a child under the age of 14.

According to the Oregon Department of Corrections, 29 men and one woman are currently on death row.

Suver said the changes mean most of the people on death row, if tried under the new law, could not be charged with aggravated murder and sentenced to death. This includes a mother accused of torturing and abusing her 15-year-old daughter to death, and a man believed to be Oregon's most prolific serial killer.

The only person Suver believes could still be charged with aggravated murder is an inmate who stabbed and beat another inmate to death at the Oregon State Penitentiary while already serving a sentence for aggravated murder.

"Jason Brumwell is the only defendant currently on death row whose crime would fit under the new definition of aggravated murder," she said. "The only one."

Email sends leaders, legislators, lawyers scrambling

SB 1013 passed the House 33-26 and the Senate 17-10 in the 2019 Legislative session and was signed into law Aug. 1 by Gov. Kate Brown.

The law attracted little attention until an Aug. 9 email from the Oregon Department of Justice sparked debate and confusion.

The department reviewed the bill and a murder case out of Washington County involving a teen thrown off a bridge in 1998 only to find that they could not defend a death sentence or even an aggravated murder conviction.

The defendant in that case, Martin Johnson, was convicted of aggravated murder and sentenced to death in 2001 but his conviction was overturned by the Oregon Supreme Court in 2017. His retrial is set to begin in October.

In an email to Oregon prosecutors, Oregon Department of Justice Solicitor General Benjamin Gutman said the new law would have a significant impact on

See **DEATH ROW, Page 2A**

Dedication ceremony for Habitat home

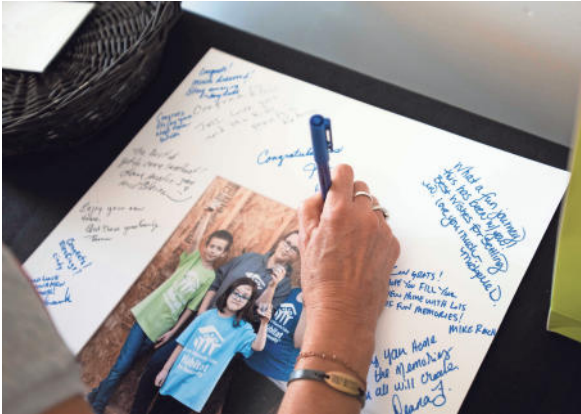
Danielle Anderson
Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Single mother Jessica Bomar and her children, Abby, Chance and Cash, received the keys to their Habitat for Humanity home in Mt. Angel on Aug. 24 during a dedication ceremony attended by more than 50 people.

Family, friends and North Willamette Valley Habitat for Humanity donors and volunteers were there to celebrate with the Bomar family and to see the completed home for the first time.

Like all Habitat partner families, Jessica had a hand in building her home. She was there every step of the way and completed hundreds of hours of "sweat equity" as part of the partnership.

To see more photos from the dedication and to learn more about the NWV Habitat homeownership program, visit nwvhabitat.org.



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Big changes in top positions in Mt. Angel

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Rapid changes are coming to the highest positions in Mt. Angel.

Mayor Andrew Otte has resigned and will be replaced by Kelly Grassman, and city manager Amber Mathiesen has left the city's employ in a one-month span.

Otte, who held the position since 2013, resigned Aug. 5, citing he moved outside the city limits for his

resignation.

Otte was the 2018 Mt. Angel First Citizen. He volunteers with the Mt. Angel Fire Department and coaches football, basketball and baseball at Mt. Angel Middle School.

At its Sept. 3 meeting, the city council selected Grassman as mayor.

Gassman, who has been on the city council since 2009, has been the city council president since 2016. She will serve as mayor until Otte's term expires

See **CHANGES, Page 2A**

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