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State Rep. Sprenger to seek county seat

Bill Poehler Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Sherrie Sprenger has announced she will not seek re-election for the Oregon House of Representatives position she has held since 2008.

Sprenger, from Scio, filed Sept. 12 to run for Linn County Commissioner position 3, which is currently held by Will Tucker, in the 2020 election.

House District 17 spans Marion and Linn counties and includes Detroit, Gates, Idanha, Lebanon, Lyons, Mill City, Scio, Stayton, Sublimity, Sweet Home and Waterloo.

Sprenger was appointed to represent House District 17 in 2008 then won election for the position in the 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018 elections, always by large margins.

Sprenger said she will serve out her current term,



Sprenger

which runs through the end of 2020.

Tucker announced in June he wouldn't run for re-election and has since endorsed Sprenger for the county commissioner position.

"Over the years I've been asked to run for State Senator, US Congress, and Governor," Sprenger said in a statement. "I seriously considered some of those positions. The reality is I didn't become your State Representative to climb a political ladder.

"In the last few years, I've realized I can have just as much impact, maybe more, focused locally."

Sprenger was the House Republican Whip – also known as the party coordinator – but has resigned that position.

"I think it is time for someone else to take the reins since I will be leaving the legislature at the end of my

term," she said in a statement.

According to the Secretary of State's office, two candidates have filed for the position for the primary for the 2020 election: Jami Cate and Scott Sword, both Republicans.

No Democrats have yet to file for the position.

Cate, from Lebanon, is the chairperson of the Lebanon Strawberry Festival board and is a commissioner for the Tall Fescue Commission. She is listed as a self-employed farmer.

Sword, from Sublimity, is a semi-retired logger and has been on the city councils of Vernonia and Silverton, on several budget committees and on the board of the Willamette Education Service District.

The last time a Democrat won the seat was Gary Hansen in 2000.

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Are there too many RVs in Detroit?



Christine Rasmussen, of Silverton, is currently building a vacation home while she and others in her family stay in recreational vehicles on the property in Detroit on Oct. 2, 2019. Detroit city code allows recreational vehicles on property zoned as single family. Residents have started renting out their yards to tourists in the summer to the point where it looks like there are several small RV parks in town. When the city tried to restrict RVs, there was backlash and the city is now backing down. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

When Detroit eased its rules on recreational vehicles in 2011, it did so intending to allow people to temporarily park RVs on single-family home lots while they built a home.

But in the eight years since, property owners have used the looser rules to create mini-RV parks for themselves and family members or to rent space to other RV owners who come to vacation in Detroit in the summer.

The city of 210 people grows to 1,000 or more during busy summer weekends as people flock from all over Oregon, and the businesses in town rely on dollars from those tourists. With only three small motels, two RV parks and a limited sewer system, RVs have become an important source of housing.

So when the city's planning commission and city council considered rolling back the rules this summer and restricting the number of RVs allowed, there was a huge uprising.

"I'm against it and I'll go on record of saying that, only because there's a lack of properties in Detroit," said Scott Lunski, owner of Detroit Lake Marina. "There's a lack of places for (visitors) to stay. With the lack of sewer system, they're not building more hotels."

Detroit Mayor Jim Trett said the city received a number of complaints about code violations by those parking recreational vehicles on properties in the city.

But the city hasn't tracked those complaints so he doesn't know how many have come in.

"And we are trying to get some of the other ducks in a row like code enforcement," Trett said.

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When power goes out on a ferry, you're stuck

Marion County undertaking \$2M project to ensure riders aren't stranded

Bill Poehler
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A few months ago, a contractor was pulling a power line over Interstate 5 and accidentally knocked out power to a rural section of south Marion County.

It didn't impact many people, but the electric-powered Buena Vista Ferry was in the middle of the Willamette River when the power went out.

It was stuck.

"It was out of power for like four hours," Marion County Public Works Director Brian Nicholas said. "That one was a significant one. I don't think we had

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Cars drive on to the Wheatland Ferry Wednesday. Marion County is undertaking a \$2 million project, including installing back-up generators, to ensure passengers are no longer stranded on the ferries.

PHOTOS BY KELLY JORDAN/STATESMAN JOURNAL



Hikers head into the shadow of South Sister, Oregon's third-tallest mountain.

ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Backpack ventures may see cost hike

Forest Service plan would end free trails

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

If you went backpacking in the vast wilderness between the Three Sisters and Mount Jefferson last summer, you paid little for the privilege.

Most trails are free — or at most \$5 for trailhead parking — and for that backpackers could spend days or even weeks exploring 450,000 acres of alpine lakes and wildflower meadows below Cascade volcanoes between Salem and Bend.

But that financial freedom would change in a big way under a new plan being considered by the U.S. Forest Service.

Under the proposal, a three-night backpacking trip would cost \$21 per person in the Mount Jefferson, Three Sisters or Mount Washington wilderness areas.

A family of four, with two kids over 13 years old, would pay \$66 for three nights.

The plan has arrived because the region's skyrocketing popularity has brought increased trash, poop and damage to a sensitive alpine ecosystems. To control numbers, the Forest Service has been working for years to install a permit system that limits numbers.

On Tuesday, the agency proposed the cost of the permits people will be required to buy beginning in 2020 — and it hits backpackers hardest.

The price of new permit system

The price of a day-hiking permit is fairly cheap — \$3 per day, with a \$1 processing fee, for 19 of the most popular trailheads.

Overnight permits, however, cost \$5 per person, per night, with a \$6 processing fee.

(Children 12 and under get a permit free of charge).

The price structure means longer wilderness trips — particularly with a family or group — will get expensive in a hurry.

"I think that's a crazy high cost for backpacking permits," said Kayla Sulak, a frequent backpacker from Bend. "In my opinion, one shouldn't have to pay more than \$5 to \$15 for a backpacking permit, even if it's a multi-day trip."

"I think it does hit backpackers a little bit too hard," said Franziska Weinheimer of the website Hike Oregon.

Forest Service officials said they came up with the price by looking at other permit-controlled wilderness and backcountry areas in the United States.

A permit for the famed backcountry of Glacier National Park, for example, requires a \$40 application fee and costs \$7 per person, per night. Washington's Enchantment Basin, in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness, is \$5 per person, per night.

"We looked at similar systems across the country to get a sense of what the public was OK with paying, and that would allow us to fund the education, trail maintenance and staffing that would make this program work," said Matt Peterson, who led to the project for the Forest Service. "It's important to note that this is just a starting point. We may adjust it after get-

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