

Bill would restructure emergency management system

Connor Radnovich
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A bill that would create independent agencies for the State Fire Marshal and Office of Emergency Management is back for the third consecutive legislative session, aiming to streamline and refocus the responsibilities of those in charge of responding to disasters.

Proponents said the crises of last year have created greater awareness of the issues the bill is trying to solve, and they hope that will generate momentum to get the bill through the Legislature this year.

These issues include at times ineffective coordination and communication between state agencies with overlapping responsibilities, particularly in response to the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic.

"2020 provides us, quite frankly, an opportunity as well as a challenge. We have to look at the voters and the people of Oregon and tell them, point-blank: 'You're going to be safer, or you're not going to be safer,'" said Rep. Paul Evans, D-Monmouth, a chief sponsor of House Bill 2927.

The bill is scheduled for its first pub-

lic hearing at 3:15 p.m. Thursday. The Capitol remains closed to the public due to the pandemic, but the hearing will be live-streamed and available for replay on olis.oregonlegislature.gov.

What it proposes

HB 2927 is unchanged from the previous versions of the bill in 2019 and 2020. Evans said the crises of 2020 didn't reveal any structural problems they hadn't already identified several years ago, but those challenges received more attention.

Despite the bill being somewhat lengthy at 90 pages, Evans said its intention is simple: to streamline and optimize the emergency management bureaucracy so each agency can focus on its core mission.

Currently, the Office of Emergency Management is within the Oregon Military Department and the Office of the State Fire Marshal is within the Office of the State Police.

Evans said that doesn't make sense because the core mission of the Military Department is to prepare or respond to emergencies, and the fire marshal and state police sometimes have conflicting priorities.

Certain offices lacking independence can also impact communication between various state agencies, leading to duplicative actions.

"What we have seen — between the pandemic and the wildfires — is that the current structure is not as efficient as it could be. And before we have another catastrophic event, we should fix that," House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, who will testify in support of the bill on Thursday, said.

HB 2927 would also upgrade the state's Homeland Security Council into a commission and move it from within OEM to within the Governor's Office. The bill envisions this commission to serve as a coordinating hub for state agencies and political leaders.

Support and opposition

Evans said he recently had a meeting with Gov. Kate Brown on his bill, and while they are not in total agreement on its provisions, he described their conversation as "constructive."

Spokespeople within the Governor's Office declined to describe Brown's thoughts on the bill as of Wednesday evening.

As far as opposition, Evans said he

anticipates pushback from different parts of the current bureaucracy because of natural inertia with respect to change.

"If we don't get it right this time after what we've seen this past year, then really the blame's on all of us," Evans said. "That said, change is hard, and you have to explain to people why change is necessary."

Amendments are expected, but the bill does have bipartisan support.

Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, began working on the bill with Evans a couple years ago while Findley was still in the House of Representatives.

He said the emergency operation system is not as efficient as it could be, and giving emergency operations more autonomy is the first step toward achieving that.

"This is not a partisan issue. Typically, Republicans like smaller government, more efficient government," Findley said. "Efficiency is the trump card over size."

Reporter Connor Radnovich covers the Oregon Legislature and state government. Contact him at cradnovich@statesmanjournal.com or 503-399-6864, or follow him on Twitter at @CDRadnovich.

Ways to taste Oregon's most prized mushrooms

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Not much is growing in the Willamette Valley at the moment, but in the woods it's the best time of the year for hunting those elusive and prized mushrooms: truffles.

Typically, the early months of the year bring mushroom enthusiasts to the area for the Oregon Truffle Festival and the Joriad, Oregon's annual truffle dog championship, the only one of its kind in North America.

Though in-person events like these have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, there are still ways to appreciate the local truffle season.

For the first time ever, Newberg is celebrating Truffle Month throughout February, and businesses throughout the Newberg and Dundee area are offering ways to taste the prized mushrooms. Here's where you can try truffles in Newberg, and a couple of options closer to home, too.

Fresh Truffles & Truffle Butter

Want to try cooking with fresh truffles yourself? Local truffle hunter Will Craigie and Oregon Truffle Traders have you covered. The business sells foraged fresh truffles online, both black and white, and also truffle butter (\$12 to \$28) already infused with the mushrooms. Lively Station is stocking the truffle butter in their market area. oregontruffletraders.com

Fresh Truffle Mac-N-Cheese

Besides operating her food cart, Gumbo YaYa, owner Lisa Brosnan trains dogs to hunt for truffles. While the season lasts, food cart visitors can add freshly shaved truffle to their mac-and-cheese, Ya Ya pasta, or roasted marrow bones for just \$5. Supply may vary, so Brosnan asks people to keep an eye on the business' Facebook page for updates. Gumbo Ya Ya 4106 State Street (503) 791-1462

Local Truffle Oil

Most truffle oil sold on the mass market contains no truffles at all. Instead, they are flavored with synthetic aroma compounds. A locally-made exception



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is the truffle oils made by Jack Czarnecki at the Joel Palmer House in Dayton. These oils, infused with real Oregon black and white truffles, are pricey, about \$8 per ounce, but a little goes a long way in terms of adding truffle flavor to dishes like risotto or pasta. Available for sale directly through Oregon Truffle Oil. Chapters Books & Coffee, Newberg's independent bookstore, also stocks them. Chapters Books & Coffee 701 E. 1st St. Newberg (503) 554-0206 oregontruffleoil.com

Truffle Fries

When truffles are in season, Newberg's farm-to-fork restaurant Ruddick/Wood offers hand-cut truffle fries (\$7) available to-go or for patio dining. Ruddick/Wood 720 E. 1st Street (503) 487-6133

Truffled Hazelnut Stout

Each winter, in collaboration with the Oregon Truffle Festival, Wolves & People Farmhouse Brewery makes La Truffe: a truffled hazelnut stout. The 2021 edition of the beer will be released in late February, available to enjoy in the



Oregon white truffles grow throughout the west. For the first time ever, Newberg is celebrating Truffle Month throughout February, and businesses throughout the area are offering ways to taste the prized mushrooms. COURTESY OF TASTE NEWBERG

brewery's beer garden or in 500mL bottles to-go for \$13. Wolves & People Farmhouse Brewery N. Benjamin Road Newberg (503) 487-6873 wolvesandpeople.com

Black Truffle Gruyère Fondue

Adelsheim Vineyard is offering truffled fondue, made by the Newbergundian Bistro, available as a \$40 addition to any wine tasting. Comes with fresh bread, fruit, poached fingerling potatoes and a spoonful of black truffle caviar. Adelsheim Vineyard 16800 NE Calkins Lane Newberg 503.538.3652 adelsheim.com

Truffled Charcuterie Board

Throughout February, Good Company Cheese Bar & Bistro is featuring a truffle-themed cheese and charcuterie plate. The board features truffled Brie, Boschetto al Tartufo, Parmigiano-Reggiano with truffle honey, truffle salami, duck prosciutto with Oregon white truffle oil, marcona almonds and crostini for \$25. Good Company Cheese Bar & Bistro 602 E. 1st St. Newberg (971) 832-8942 goodcompanycheese.com

Truffled Cheese Flatbread

Honey Pie Pizza, Newberg's trendy pizza shop in a former garage has added a truffled cheese flatbread (\$15) to the menu in honor of Truffle Month. It's

topped with mozzarella, Italian herbs, truffle oil and honey. Honey Pie Pizza 112 ½ S. College Street Newberg (503) 554-6750 honeypie.pizza

Oregon Truffle Popcorn

A new store devoted to popcorn has opened in Newberg and February's popcorn of the month features locally-foraged truffles. Miss Hannah's Gourmet Popcorn 200 Highway 99W misshannahpopcorn.com

DIY Truffle Hunt + Lunch

Black Tie Tours owner Stefan Czarnecki and his trained truffle dog Ella take guests on foraging adventure for a native Oregon truffles. \$250 per person includes a 1-2 hour truffle forage, truffle-themed lunch, truffle education and culinary tips, and a truffle take-home gift. Black Tie Tours 971-832-0436 blacktietours.com

Wine, cheese, truffle dinner

Need a staycation? Book the "Truffle Love" package at Chehalem Ridge B&B. The package includes an in-room truffle dinner, cheese from Briar Rose Creamery and wine from Et Fille, and breakfast in-room the next morning. Starting at \$335 per night for 2 guests. Chehalem Ridge B&B 28700 NE Mountain Top Road Newberg (503) 538-3474 chehalemridge.com

Three Course Truffle Tasting

For Newberg's Truffle Month The Allison Inn & Spa is offering a one-night truffle package for up to two guests. The package at the luxury resort includes a three-course truffle-themed dinner served in-room. The \$500 package, available Friday and Saturday nights only, includes tax and gratuities (excludes Valentine's Day weekend). Guests can book an additional night for \$395 plus tax. Use the code TRUFFLE when booking. The Allison Inn & Spa 2525 Allison Lane Newberg (503) 554-2525 theallison.com

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Vaccine

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Authority Director Patrick Allen said in a release. "But it may not be tomorrow, this week or even two weeks from now."

The program is now one of four ways to get local vaccine information.

Residents also have the option of using an orange chatbot on the covidvaccine.oregon.gov website to find out if they're eligible for a vaccine in Oregon or get answers to other questions about vaccines.

Those who are vaccine-eligible in Clackamas, Columbia, Marion, Multnomah or Washington counties to schedule vaccine appointments through scheduling tools hosted by local health care providers.

Eligible Oregonians can also text ORCOVID to 898211 to get text/SMS updates about vaccination clinics (this option is available in English and Spanish only). Or email ORCOVID@211info.org or call 211 or 1-866-698-6155, which is open

from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

Officials said wait times may be long due to high call volumes. The Oregon National Guard will help 211 answer phone calls.

Residents and staff at most licensed facilities for older adults and people with disabilities are receiving on-site vaccinations through pharmacies enrolled in federal vaccination programs. Residents or their family members can ask their facility operator when their residence is scheduled for a vaccination clinic.

Additionally, Oregon has opted into a federal retail pharmacy program that will offer seniors the option to get vaccinated at retail locations across the state.

The Get Vaccinated Oregon tool is available on the Oregon Health Authority's website at oregon.gov website, or at getvaccinated.oregon.gov.

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A patient receives their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine at the Salem Health Covid-19 vaccination clinic at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem, Ore. on Feb. 5. BRIAN HAYES / STATESMAN JOURNAL