

HASS

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deeply involved in the push for increased education funding.

Hass on Monday tweeted out a campaign ad in which he touts his work on the passage of the Student Success Act, a historic school funding package he championed. Hass said it was the toughest

thing he's done in his career.

Hass said if elected, he would make sure the \$1 billion per year is used properly.

"The very first audit will be to ensure the student success function, the money and the fund, is all distributed as the legislature intended; to teachers and classrooms," he said.

Hass started in the House in 2001 before being appointed to the Senate in 2007. He has largely focused on tax reform and education policy.

When asked who will take on that work when he leaves, Hass said there are several lawmakers who could fill that role after he leaves.

Hass previously worked as a TV journalist for 20 years.

There, he said, he learned the importance of the audit function. Under his leadership, that would be a focus of the office, he said.

"I see audits as a way to realign state agencies' intent from what they're doing," he said.

Hass is the second Democrat to announce his candidacy in what is shaping up to be a formidable primary.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner, a Central Oregon Democrat who unsuccessfully challenged U.S. Rep. Greg Walden for his congressional seat, announced her interest earlier this summer.

Following the announcement, McLeod-Skinner sent out a news release welcoming Hass to the race and challenging him to several debates throughout

the state.

Secretary of State Bev Clarno has long said she will not run for election. She was appointed by Gov. Kate Brown when Dennis Richardson died while in office.

Hass said he's ready for a tough fight, and has not discussed his interest in the job with other Democrats rumored to be seeking the same position.

INTERNET

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and businesses on Washington and Jefferson

avenues gained access about six months ago. In July, fiber optic internet became available to businesses on Cove Avenue from Cherry Street to Interstate 84.

Crews also said EONI will begin installing fiber optic cable in the City of Cove for many households and businesses in about four months. The work should be

finished by March of 2020. Once complete, many Cove residents will have access to fiber optic internet.

One of the advantages of

fiber optic internet is that signal strength is not impacted by how far it is from its source. Crews said this is not the case for internet received via TV cable or phone lines.

GUNS

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When investigators discussed semi-automatic firearms with Lee, he said he didn't own or have any reason to own a semi-automatic gun, and he said they weren't reliable or methodical when shooting, according to McKaig. However, Deva Williams, an associate whom Lee had hired to drive him around due to having a suspended license, told McKaig that he recalled Lee saying he would like to have a Glock.

At the hearing, McKaig said that during the investigation, Deva Williams also told police that he and Lee tested a Glock to see how loud it was by shooting hay near Lee's shop, and the casings of those bullets were later found in Lee's pickup truck by police.

Other people possibly involved with Lee's alleged possession of a Glock

are Jamie Griffin, Russell McEntire and Tammy Hadder. Griffin, a business neighbor located near Lee's shop, overheard Lee's end of a phone conversation with McEntire, who is a friend of Lee's. Due to having his phone still connected to a bluetooth speaker from listening to music at work, Griffin heard Lee saying that the cops had come by and telling McEntire neither of them know anything while Lee borrowed Griffin's phone, according to evidence presented at the hearing.

McEntire purchased a Glock, according to McKaig, and gave it to Lee before Loretta Williams was killed. The gun was purchased from Gamer's Sporting Goods in Pendleton, McKaig said. Hadder, the store's owner, told police she remembered Lee called multiple times, attempting to purchase the firearm over the phone, which the store does not allow, according to McKaig.

Also purchased with the Glock were two boxes of ammunition, one of which was a box of S and B 10 mm ammo, consistent with the kind found at the scene of the crime, according to McKaig.

McKaig said McEntire also recalled seeing a PT Cruiser that matches the description of Deva Williams' car when he delivered the pistol to Lee. However, McEntire did not see the driver, according to the detective.

A .22-caliber revolver

An autopsy performed on Loretta Williams found the cause of death to be gunshot wounds to the head and chest. She had received three shots in her head and one in her chest that exited out her back, and she had a graze wound on her right shoulder. Of the bullets found in her head, only one could be positively identified as a .22-caliber bullet. The oth-

ers were damaged beyond recognition. This meant that the police were looking for a second weapon, according to McKaig.

During a search of Lee's home, investigators found a .22-caliber Single-Six stainless steel revolver in his safe. It had been purchased by Lee from Oregon Trail Trader in La Grande. The police determined it had not been used in Williams' death, but investigators suspected Lee had a second gun like it, since they found the gun had not been fired recently, according to McKaig.

After Williams' death—Steve Witty, a friend of Lee's, contacted the police to say that Lee had told him he wanted to purchase an undocumented .22-caliber revolver, according to McKaig. Witty said he told Lee about an ad he had seen in The Nickel, and Lee told him he had purchased the unregistered firearm and

tested it by a river, according to McKaig's testimony. When Witty heard the police had taken Lee's gun he thought they may have the wrong one, McKaig said.

According to McKaig, additional evidence supported Lee's alleged possession of an unregistered revolver. The detective said Lee had shown Craig Lore — the business partner of Lee's son, Chris Lee — identical .22 revolvers in his home. McKaig said Deva Williams said he also knew about the unregistered revolver.

In April a farmer found a .22 revolver on Highway 237, less than 10 miles from Loretta Williams' home in Cove. The gun was loaded but was missing three rounds. The serial number identified the handgun as the one purchased from The Nickel ad, McKaig said. A chunk of the gun's grip was

missing, and the piece was found 15 feet away from where the gun was located. This led investigators to believe the gun had been thrown from the window of a car.

Other evidence cited by McKaig in his testimony at the hearing included two cases of .22 bullets found in Lee's home. One case was missing exactly six rounds, and they matched the type of bullet from the one round that could be positively identified in Williams' autopsy because of the "F" for Federal ammo stamped on the bullet. However, this could not rule out or confirm the gun found on the highway or the revolver purchased by Lee as the murder weapon.

Lee will remain in custody at the Union County Jail until the trial, which is expected to last at least a month.

CHURCH

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machinery," Haddock said.

After it was moved, the wooden building, originally constructed in 1900, continued serving the La Grande congregation for the next four decades until it was torn down in 1952. Today La Grande First Christian Church is located at 901 Penn Ave. in a still striking brick building constructed in the 1950s.

Unfortunately, no remnants of its original building remain, Haddock said. Still, the church continues to have a presence at Washington Avenue and Depot Street for this is where La Grande's U.S. Post Office is. Fittingly, La Grande First Christian Church has a post office box there.

The public will have a chance to learn more about First Christian Church's 1913 move and many other chapters of its history Sunday when it celebrates its 130th anniversary with an open house. Numerous items from the church's archives will be displayed, including scrapbooks, photos and bulletins. A DVD about the construction of the education wing and sanctuary in the 1950s will also be available to view.

This marks the church's 130th year for it was formally organized in 1889, Haddock said. The First Christian Church's congregation did not have its own building the first 11 years while it met at a variety of sites including the old McWhirter Building in downtown La Grande.

The church was then light years from where it would be in the 1950s when its current structure was built on Penn Avenue. Its education and fellowship hall were first constructed in 1950-51, and the new church sanctuary adjoining the education wing was built in 1954, according to a booklet on the church's history written by Haddock with help fromCarolynn Vaughan, the church's longtime administrative

assistant.

Haddock credits Gene Robinson, who served as the church's minister from 1946 to 1959, with inspiring the congregation to provide the support needed to build its current building six decades ago.

"He had a vision and inspired them to dream," she said.

Haddock said a new structure was badly needed because the congregation was growing and the condition of its building was declining due to age.

Robinson was one of 29 ministers, including three interims, the church has had. Jack L. Hart, who served from 1973 to 1988, is the

minister with the longest tenure, and Robinson ranks second.

People attending the open house will be able to see photos of most of the ministers regularly displayed on a wall in the church building. They will also have the opportunity to learn about the church's architectural features, including the wooden arches in its sanctuary. These soaring arches were made over a three-year period by congregant Harvey Elmer with the help of many friends. Today they remain the sanctuary's best-known feature.

"We owe such a debt of gratitude to Harvey Elmer," Haddock said.

Haddock is encouraging

people who were married in the church to sign a guest book indicating their wedding. She said the church has long been a popular place for weddings, perhaps because of its large sanctuary. Haddock said years ago local churches with large sanctuaries like that of the La Grande First Christian Church were rarer.

The church's weddings in recent years have been conducted by Ray Smith, the current pastor. Smith, who has served the La Grande congregation since 2014, said he is looking forward to Sunday's anniversary celebration.

"It is a special time," Smith said.



Karen King
Pendleton, Oregon

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