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Roe v. Wade draft draws predictable reactions

By WYATT TEGGINS
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — The leaked draft of the Supreme Court’s majority opinion to overturn the landmark Roe v. Wade case is bright-lining the differences on the two sides of the debate from the halls of Congress down to the local level.

The political journalism company Politico on Monday, May 2, published the 98-page first draft on its website. In the draft, Justice Samuel Alito said the 1973 ruling “imposed a highly restrictive regime on states.” Later he stated, “The Constitution makes no reference to abortion.”

An Do, executive director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon, stood in direct opposition to this claim in a press conference Tuesday, May 3.

Do predicted the dismissal of Roe v. Wade would open the floodgates to attacks on civil rights.

“This is about what we care about,” she said. “It’s about the right to privacy, the right to marry who you want.”

If passed, it will be in the hands of each state to address what restrictions are placed on abortion. Oregon most likely will stay pro-abortion, and Planned Parenthood is looking to expand into Ontario, anticipating a mass surge of patients across the Idaho border.

In a press conference, Lisa Gardener, chief executive officer of Planned Parenthood in Southwestern Oregon, made it clear that expansion into Eastern Oregon is imminent, but how soon is unknown.

Idaho Gov. Brad Little has made several attempts to pass fetal heartbeat laws that would make it virtually impossible for abortions to occur in the state. Planned Parenthood brought a lawsuit to the Idaho Supreme Court, temporarily blocking the bill before it could take effect in April.

Little, in a letter to the Idaho Senate, acknowledged this was a likely outcome: “I fear the novel civil enforcement mechanism will in short order be proven unconstitutional and unwise.”

Eastern Oregon will be the most accessible place for Idahoans to receive care. Planned Parenthood officials indicated that by doing so they would be taxing an already taxed system. Providing a brick-and-mortar location in Eastern Oregon would require service providers that Planned Parenthood doesn’t have.

Eastern Oregon also has the most dissent to abortion laws inside of Oregon.

Father Daniel Maxwell, of the Hermiston Catholic Church, expressed nothing but support for the possible Supreme Court ruling.

“We Catholics will be overjoyed because it will make abortion unthinkable by many people,” he said.

Maxwell emphasized that abortion is prohibited by the Didache, a text the Catholic

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PRIVY PROBLEMS

Union County Fairgrounds sewer project faces hurdles at the city level

✦ The Union County Fairgrounds, La Grande, are quiet on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, but the complex comes alive during the fair and other community events. The fair board is seeking approval to connect a sewer line from the city of La Grande to the fairgrounds to improve visitors’ experience and expand the facility’s usage.

Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

✦ Attendees at the 2021 Eastern Oregon Beer Festival wait in line to use portable toilets at the Union County Fairgrounds, La Grande, on Saturday, Aug. 14, 2021.

Eastern Oregon Beer Festival/Contributed Photo



By DAVIS CARBAUGH • The Observer

LA GRANDE — A major sewer line project that would connect running water and sewage to the Union County Fairgrounds is currently up for debate.

The project, which has been a priority for past fairgrounds operators for decades, seeks to provide functioning permanent restrooms and running water for the multitude of events and regular usage at the La Grande facility.

Despite momentum in gaining the necessary funding for the plans, ownership and liability questions at the city level are causing a roadblock in the proposals.

“We have a fair board that has made this a very high priority,” Union County Fair Board member Deb Cornford said.

Prolonged efforts

The Union County Fair Board has advocated for the sewer project since the early 2000s, analyzing the infrastructure needed to complete the project. Anderson Perry & Associates in La Grande first conducted pre-design reports in 2001, periodically doing so in 2007, 2011 and in 2021. The overall project would cost roughly \$2.1 million, broken up into two phases — an initial \$1.52 million has currently been allocated to the first phase of the project through state funding and fundraising efforts. The line would traverse from the fairgrounds, attach to the Second Street bridge and connect to the city’s system.

The steps following the potential construction of the pipeline and lift station are causing a hurdle in connecting to the city

of La Grande’s system — determining ownership and liability, as well as potential repair costs, in the years to come has become an obstacle in negotiations.

“That’s the big question, who owns that portion,” La Grande Public Works Director Kyle Carpenter said.

Advocates of the project, as well as members of the Union County Fair Board, spoke in turn during the public comment section of the La Grande City Council meeting on Wednesday, May 4, to describe their perception of how the connected sewer system would lead to a positive effect on the use of the fairgrounds. The project would connect the fairgrounds to the La Grande water system to allow for running water and functional

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Opera House Youth Actors group performs at Disneyland

Audition video lands young actors chance to sing at California amusement park

By DICK MASON
The Observer

ELGIN — Boarding iconic rides like Matterhorn Bobsleds or Pirates of the Caribbean is not the only way to experience an unforgettable thrill at Disneyland.

Just ask some of the students who are members of the Elgin

Opera House’s Opera House Youth Actors. On Sunday, April 10, 34 members of the group, more than from Union County, performed a medley of songs from Disney movies at the legendary amusement park complex.

“It was one of the biggest thrills of my life,” said Brady Morgan, a junior at La Grande High School.

The Opera House Youth Actors sang songs from Disney classics like “Mary Poppins,” “Aladdin” and “Little Mermaid” over a 25-minute span in an outdoor theater at Disneyland California Adventure Park.

The group stopped foot traffic

during the performance.

“I saw people walking by and I was sure they would keep going but they didn’t. They stopped and watched. I couldn’t believe it,” said Rose Gray, a member of the Opera House Youth Actors who attends Willamette Connections Academy, an online school.

Morgan said he was a bit uneasy on the outdoor stage initially.

“I was really nervous at first but once we got going the nerves went away,” he said.

The Opera House Youth Actors rose to the occasion, according to Kelli Davis, whose daughter, Kaylie Davis, is a

member of the group.

“It was the best I ever heard them sing. They did a very professional job. I was proud of them,” Kelli Davis said.

According to Terry Hale, the Elgin Opera House’s executive artistic director, the stage manager for the theater at Disneyland California Adventure Park had nothing but praise for the Opera House Youth Actors.

“She told them she had seen hundreds of groups perform at the theater and that they were the first that moved her to tears,” Hale said.

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Tonight
32 LOW
Rain and snow



Sunday
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A few showers

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