

## Oregon

# Juniper funding garners bipartisan support

Bills would devote more than \$1M toward juniper wood products

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

SALEM — Legislation that would direct more than \$1 million toward strengthening Oregon’s juniper wood products industry has garnered bipartisan support from lawmakers.

A bevy of Republican and Democrat legislators recently testified in favor of three House bills — HB 2808, HB 2997 and HB 2998 — that would assist companies that harvest and process juniper, a



Courtesy of In the Sticks sawmill

Juniper logs are stacked for cutting outside a mill in Fossil, Ore. A better market for juniper might help sage grouse and cattle ranchers.

tree that’s native to the West but has overrun arid landscapes to the detriment of other species.

Removing a high-density juniper stand can cost several hundred dollars per acre, which poses a staggering financial challenge in light of

the roughly 10 million acres occupied by the trees in Oregon, said Tim Deboodt, a Crook County extension agent with Oregon State University.

The tremendous expansion of juniper is related to wildfire suppression and other effects of European settlement in the

West, Deboodt said during a Feb. 26 hearing before the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Juniper acreage has grown by tenfold since the 1930s in Oregon and continues to increase faster than it’s being cut, he said. “We’re still losing

the battle in the expansion.”

The prevalence of juniper is problematic because it crowds out sage brush and other plants are necessary for sensitive species such as the sage grouse, a candidate for Endangered Species Act protection. The trees also have a major thirst for water in a region where it’s often lacking.

The gnarled trees are common in economically depressed areas in Eastern Oregon, which has spurred the idea of turning their wood into a marketable commodity.

However, juniper grows in inaccessible areas that complicate economical logging. Its twisted wood and multitude of limbs also render it difficult to cut.

The three bills aim to help Oregon companies overcome

these hurdles:

- HB 2998 would create a Western Juniper Industry Fund to provide juniper harvesters and manufacturers with \$900,000 in business development loans and grants, technical assistance, worker training and mapping services during the 2015-2017 biennium.

The bill would also designate juniper cutting as a farm activity and exempt such harvest from regulations under the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

- HB 2997 would provide Portland State University and community organizations with \$250,000 to help juniper companies with “technical business assistance, market development and supply chain coordination.”

## Extension ballot measure gains support

By MITCH LIES  
For the Capital Press

Bob Zielinski, a farmer in Marion County, Ore., has been relying more and more on private consultants to help with crop management decisions on his diverse farm in the years since he lost access to field and vegetable crops extension agents.

And Zielinski is getting tired of it.

“Oregon State University doesn’t see (extension) as a big need, so if they get short on funds, they dump us,” Zielinski said. “And we’re tired of being dumped.”

“We’re tired of them deciding what the priorities and the needs are for the communities, and we’re trying to take the control of this entity out of their hands,” he said.

Zielinski is one of a handful of sponsors of a ballot measure that Marion County voters will consider in May that would form a tax service



Mitch Lies/For the Capital Press

Bob Zielinski, pictured in his hazelnut orchard just north of Salem, is among a handful of sponsors of a ballot measure to create an extension service district for Marion County. Voters will consider the measure in May.

district to support the county extension service.

Backers have formed a political action committee,

developed a website and are seeking campaign donations and volunteers.

The Citizens for Marion County Extension Political Action Committee has a goal of raising \$50,000, according to Chuck Adams of New Media NW, which is helping run the campaign.

Backers are seeking a tax rate of 5 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value, or \$10 a year for a \$200,000 home. If passed, the tax is expected to generate around \$900,000 annually for the county extension service.

The Marion County Board of Commissioners voted last year to advance the measure, relieving backers of gathering signatures to place it on the May 19 ballot.

If approved, the tax revenue would free up some \$350,000 in funding the county annually provides to the extension service.

Zielinski said he chose to back the measure not just

because of his needs, but because a robust county extension service provides multiple services that benefit a community.

“There are a lot of things extension does for the homemaker, the person that is trying to can, for youth development through 4-H, the list goes on and on,” Zielinski said.

Mark Dickman, who farms near Mount Angel, said he, too, questions OSU’s commitment to extension and has decided to back the measure.

“I think OSU has been less than committed to keeping this extension system working for us here,” he said. “We went from three field crops agents (in the Willamette Valley) to two, and we’ve had staffing issues even with just two positions, and that is disappointing to me.”

“It takes so long to fill a vacant position, and it takes so long to get a position restored,” Dickman said.

## Wine industry honors five at annual awards dinner

By ERIC MORTENSON  
Capital Press

Two pioneering Oregon wine couples and a veteran vineyard manager won awards at the Oregon Wine Board’s annual dinner in February in Portland.

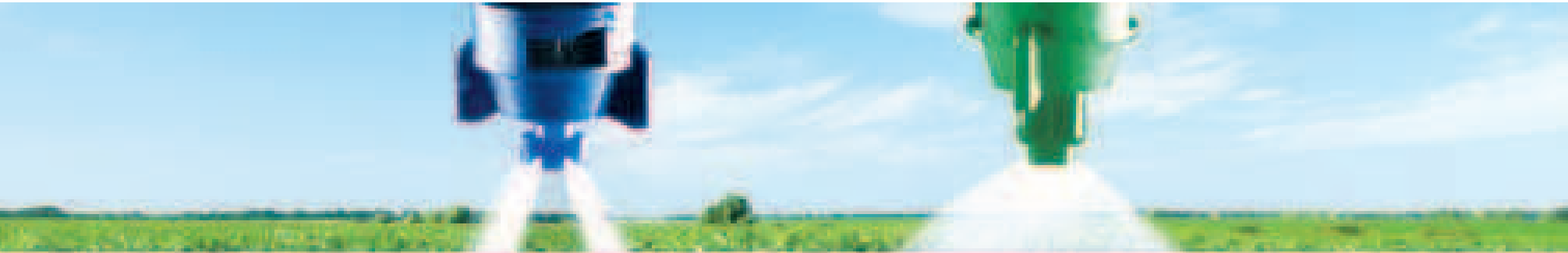
Jim and Loie Maresh earned the Founders Award. They founded Maresh Red Hills Vineyard in the Willamette Valley’s Dundee Hills area in 1970, and it is the state’s fifth oldest vineyard. Wine made from the fruit of their vineyard earned early acclaim for Oregon’s signature wine, Pinot noir.

Earl and Hilda Jones, owners of Abacela Winery in Roseburg, in Southern Oregon, won the Lifetime Achievement Award. They were the first to make Tempranillo wine in the Pacific Northwest, planting grapes in 1995 and pursuing their

passion for the Spanish-style wine for 20 years. A news release from the Oregon Wine Board credits them with altering the course of Oregon wine history and adding to the state’s “arsenal of acclaimed wines.”

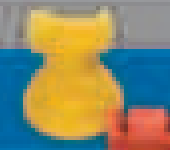
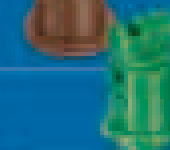
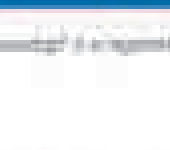
Chad Vargas, vineyard manager of Adelsheim Vineyard in the Willamette Valley, won the Outstanding Industry Service Award. He is described as active in the industry’s relations with federal and state representatives and is chair of Low Input Viticulture and Enology, or LIVE, an organization that pushes industry sustainability. He also served on the technical committee for Oregon State University’s Wine Research Institute.

The awards dinner was held Feb. 24 in conjunction with the annual Oregon Wine Symposium in Portland.



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| <br>4 | Air Induction (AIRAC)                   | Single       | Very Coarse  to Extremely Coarse   | 2,4-Diflouricid®/Dicamba    |
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