

# Caution urged for Oregon intermodal funding plans

'Deficiencies' found in three proposals before Oregon Transportation Commission

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

Oregon transportation officials are being urged to proceed cautiously with funding for intermodal facilities in the Willamette and Treasure valleys due to economic obstacles facing both projects.

Two years ago, Oregon lawmakers authorized spending \$51 million for the two facilities, where containers of farm goods would be loaded from trucks onto railcars to ease highway congestion.

The proposed intermodal facility in Nyssa, Ore., is intended to allow farmers to save on transportation costs by shipping onions from the Treasure Valley by rail rather than trucking them to a more distant intermodal yard in Eastern Washington.

Competing sites in Millersburg and Brooks in the Willamette Valley both aim to give agricultural exporters a new way to get their products to marine ports along Washington's Puget Sound by rail while avoiding traffic in Portland, Ore.

The Oregon Transporta-

tion Commission is expected to decide whether to fund the \$26 million Treasure Valley facility and whether to award \$25 million to either the site in Millersburg or Brooks on March 21.

However, experts warned the commission during a Feb. 21 meeting that all three proposals would have to overcome serious hurdles to become self-sustaining operations in the long term.

Business Oregon, the state's economic development agency, refrained from recommending the intermodal facilities for funding until the proponents address a "common set of identified deficiencies," said Chris Harder, the agency's director.

"Our determination is further information is necessary for the department to make a recommendation to move forward any of the three projects," Harder said.

Specifically, Harder said the "deficiencies" include "overly optimistic" projections of container volume moving through the facilities and insufficient commitments from railroads regarding available service and rates.

Matthew Garrett, director of the Oregon Department of Transportation, said he recommends the commission advance the Treasure Valley and Millersburg projects in an "incremental manner" with "off-ramps" for cutting off public funds if appli-

## Planned intermodal facilities debated



Capital Press graphic

cants can't meet the necessary goals.

The onus is on project applicants to resolve these concerns, Garrett said. "It's not a punt or a pivot. It's a direct engagement from the project sponsors that there are unanswered questions and they should be the ones to answer those questions."

An analysis by the Tioga transportation consulting firm found that volumes at the Treasure Valley facility are likely to be lower than proponents expect and the site will have less reliable rail service than the intermodal yard in Eastern Washington.

As for the rival Willamette Valley proposals, Tioga determined that neither is far enough from marine ports to economically spread the costs of building and operating an intermodal terminal.

"We don't think either proposal can succeed on a standalone basis," said Dan Smith, Tioga's principal. "There's nothing either team can do to change the fundamental economics."

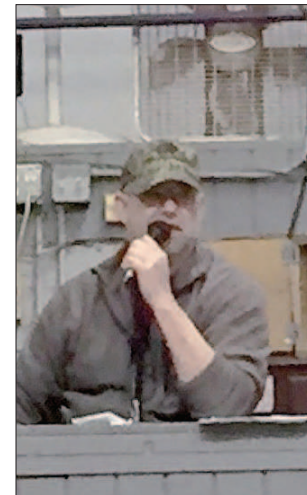
Even so, Tioga recommends funding the site in Millersburg over Brooks because its proponents have secured the cooperation of Northwest Container Services, an intermodal operator in Portland that already works with Puget Sound marine ports and is effectively subsidized by ocean carriers.

Smith said the Millersburg site must still conquer formidable problems but is "a few yards ahead in a long race."

"This doesn't make any of this easy," he said. "It does give Millersburg a slight head start, we think."

# Livestock market owner struck by bull dies

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press



Joe Parypa died Feb. 21, almost two weeks after being struck by a bull.

Joe Parypa, noted auctioneer and co-owner of the Chehalis Livestock Market in southwest Washington, died Feb. 21 at a Tacoma hospital, 12 days after he was struck by a bull. He was 63.

"Joe was as honest as the day was long," said Brenda Balmelli, whose husband, Dave, bought the Chehalis market with Parypa in 1986. "I'm a better person for getting to work with him for 20 years, and David is, too, for sharing an office with him for 35 years."

Parypa died at St. Joseph Medical Center. He also had Parkinson's disease and was unable to recover from the internal injuries he suffered, Balmelli said.

Parypa was World Reserve Grand Champion Auctioneer in 1987. "He felt his best on the auctioneer's block," Balmelli said.

Livestock hauler Steve McCombs of Satsop said he met Parypa more than 40 years ago.

"He was a young whipper-snapper auctioneer, and I was a young whipper-snapper livestock hauler," he said. "He was a good man."

McCombs said Parypa was honest about the quality of cattle brought to his market, even if the owner didn't want to hear it.

"He didn't make everybody happy, but he wasn't in that business," McCombs said. "You may

not like it, but he'd tell you the truth."

Rochester dairy farmer Hank Doelman said Parypa drew out fair bids for cattle.

"He'd say, 'Don't quit now! We're just getting started!'" Doelman said. "He knew when to push and when to fold. ... Even if the prices were low, it was a competitive bid."

"His voice, his rhythm, you got used to it. It was part of the attraction to go to listen to him sell," Doelman said. "Everything was legitimate, all honest."

Parypa graduated from Centralia High School. He is survived by his wife, Ellen; son, Aaron; daughter, Katie Parypa-Neva; and granddaughter, Sophie Neva.

There will be a public service 1 p.m. Sunday, March 17, at the Great Wolf Lodge in Grand Mound.

# Oregon lawmakers reconsider commission for fast-growing hemp crop

Proposal previously floated in 2017 legislative session

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

With hemp production zooming toward the top of the list of commodities grown in Oregon, lawmakers are again considering setting up a commission to raise money for research and promotions.

Aside from establishing the Oregon Industrial Hemp Commission, which would be sustained by charging assessments to growers, House Bill 2740 would also align the state and federal definitions of the crop.

An earlier proposal to create a commodity commission for hemp was unan-

imously approved by the House Agriculture Committee in 2017 but ultimately died for unclear reasons in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

Hemp is poised to become the state's top agricultural commodity with more than \$1 billion in revenues in 2019, up from roughly \$500 million last year, said Jay Noller, head of Oregon State University's Crop and Soil Science Department.

With that burgeoning growth, the industry will need to find ways to offset problems that lie ahead, as well as fund and direct OSU research for the crop, Noller said. "We see some issues coming up."

The legislation would harmonize Oregon's statutory language for hemp with the federal government's, which has recently changed with the national legaliza-

tion of hemp through the 2018 Farm Bill, said Courtney Moran, an attorney and president of the Oregon Industrial Hemp Farmers Association.

A planned amendment to HB 2740 would also authorize hemp to be tested under food safety protocols that are less expensive than those for marijuana, the psychoactive form of cannabis, Moran said.

Tests would still have to confirm hemp contains less than 0.3 percent THC, but it wouldn't be subject to as many different tests as marijuana, which would reduce the cost, she said.

The bill is sponsored by Rep. Carl Wilson, R-Grants Pass, and Rep. David Brock Smith, R-Coos Bay, who testified in favor of the proposal at a Feb. 19 legislative hearing.

"We think it's going to

further boost the hemp economy and put Oregon on the map for doing some very good things," Wilson said.

During the hearing, the House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use also heard from Oregon onion growers on House Bill 2451, which would eliminate mandatory state inspections of the crop.

Several onion farmers testified that ongoing in-house onion inspections, as well as a federal onion marketing order, have made mandatory inspections by the Oregon Department of Agriculture outdated and redundant.

"The law is archaic and really has nothing to do with business today," said Kay

Riley, general manager of the Snake River Produce Co. in Nyssa, Ore.

Nobody testified against the bill, which would reverse a shipping point inspection requirement enacted in 1955 with the support of onion growers.

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