

Walden optimistic about safety net money for counties

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operations.

Oregon is a leader in trying to control the problem, he stated. Keeping drugs containing certain chemicals behind counters has reduced dramatically “mom-and-pop” labs by denying operators access to over-the-counter drugs.

But there is still high-intensity trafficking from the Mexican drug trade. In fact, from so-called super labs in five major countries.

“We have to gain access to the five major countries identified as having super labs,” Walden stated. “And if they don’t cooperate, we’ll pull foreign aid from them.” He was present when the latest anti-meth bill was signed into law.

The next topics were the Budget and Ethics Reform bills, both imminently due for a vote.

“This year’s budget is critical for Oregon and the Northwest because we need to have reauthorization of the Secure County Roads and Schools Payment Legislation,” Walden stated. Current authorization expires in September and for Josephine County, a critical \$16 million hangs in the balance.

That “safety net” revenue used to come from timber and the shared timber receipts from federal land. The funds are very important for local services and the health of the county’s economy.

Walden pointed out that he recently visited Jackson County and was shown the rescue equipment purchased through the funds he is now working to get reauthorized, adding, “The funds are important in more ways than you can imagine.”

In a bipartisan effort, Walden is working with Fourth District Congressman Peter DeFazio (R-Ore.); and he is confident that they can get funds written into the proposed budget.

“Then we have to go back and get it voted on,” Walden added, along with a promise that, “We won’t let you down.”

Regarding the Forest Emergency Research and Recovery Act, it was assumed that this bill would automatically be renewed when it was passed six years ago, Walden stated, then asked, “What happens after a fire? It does not take three or four years to burn a dead tree. If you let trees rot and decay you lose dollar value.”

Walden wants to allow for quicker action and an expedited way to make the plan work. “Every other timberland manager -- private, county, state -- doesn’t wait.” Walden added. “Only the federal government waits. Not waiting creates jobs. There are millions of acres of federal land, and reforestation happens every day as forests grow more and more.”

Walden’s aim is for safe forests and to not have catastrophic wildfires. Currently there are hearings on the issue, and the committee was to meet again Wednesday, March 29, hopefully to pass the forest act.

Regarding ethics and how to restore credibility to government, Walden again is working in bipartisan partnership with an Oregon Democratic congressman. He and Third District Rep. Earl Blumenauer want to remove all ethics review from a sitting Congress.

“The Ethics Committee is not an assignment that anyone wants,” Walden said. “They all try to avoid

it. And with an evenly split 10-member committee (five Democrats and five Republican) like we presently have, nothing gets done.

Walden and Blumenauer propose forming an outside committee composed of former congressmen who have been out of office for at least two years. Both want to restore the integrity that he indicated is so desperately needed, and want to establish a process that will identify problems sooner and remove politics from the process.

There always will be a few bad apples, Walden conceded, but his and Blumenauer’s plan will go a long way toward restoring integrity, he said.

During the question-and-answer period which followed the congressman’s address, he was asked about the governor’s race. Naming it a local issue, he declined to comment except to note, “There are challenging and vexing problems and we have to hold leaders accountable. We have to think 10, 20, 30 years ahead. We also have to think about how the state can get ahead.”

Someone asked “How do we eliminate pork?” And Walden replied that the way

is for all appropriations bills to be open to public view for 48 hours before being voted on. And then, those who vote on any issue should initial it. That way, “If it’s a stinker, the congressman would be identified.”

Another question was about ethics and about why not simply removing the temptations? Walden replied, “Everyone wants to take you to dinner. Or give you a gift basket.” So the question is always where does one draw the line.

Quoting another congressman, Walden noted that one rule of thumb is, “If you can’t smoke it or eat it or drink it in one place, don’t take it.” He then added his own standard: “All I ever owe to anyone is a ‘thank you’.”

To a question concerning health care and retirements, Walden replied that, in April, legislation will be initiated to reform the Pension Guarantee Corp. He also discussed how PERS in Oregon caused great problems because it contained contractual, legal obligations to pay benefits that were put in place at time of inception.

Actuaries said that it could not be sustained, Walden noted. “What you have

to do is create a new system that is not so expensive,” he said.

Walden also gave assurance that there is absolutely no support in Congress for selling public land. There is perhaps a possibility of co-management, he added, between the federal and local governments, but any idea of selling the land through the Forest Emergency Recovery Act is out of the question.

The final question concerned outsourcing, and the congressman admitted that he did not know how many U.S. jobs had been lost in this manner. But he then went on to speak of “insourcing” and said that foreign companies have set up shop in the United States as well.

“What we have to look at is why do jobs leave,” Walden concluded. “We need to wipe out corporate tax and to make things comfortable for businesses to stay. We are in a global economy.”

Cats are rather delicate creatures, but I never heard of one suffering from insomnia.

- Joseph Wood Krutch -

Campus Achievers

Kevin LaPierre, a senior at Illinois Valley High School, is March Josephine County Commissioners Student of the Month.

LaPierre is the son of Walter and Donna LaPierre. He has maintained a 3.9 grade-point-average.

He has been a member of 4-H for six years, plus Mathletes, IVHS Chapter of the National Honor Society, and Smile Club. He was chosen for “Who’s Who of American High School Stu-

dents.” He is also on the mountain bike, soccer, and basketball teams.

He had the best batting average in baseball for 2004. At the Josephine County Fair, LaPierre received the Reserve Champion Showman award. After graduation, he will attend Oregon Institute of Technology at Klamath Falls, or Oregon State University at Corvallis to major in civil engineering.



KEVIN LAPIERRE

Ask the Acupuncturist:

How does acupuncture work? Does it hurt?

Needles are inserted relatively painlessly into specific points with clinically-proven effects. A point may be known to regulate heart rate, improve respiration, regulate blood pressure, or promote labor, for instance.

Points run along the body’s energy pathways called “channels” or “meridians.” The body has 12 channels, each being paired with the function of a “solid” and “hollow” organ, i.e. lung/large intestine, spleen/stomach, kidney/urinary bladder. Needle insertion at a specific point will affect the body’s function in a clinically-proven way.

Acupuncture works with the body’s circulation to promote healing, for example to improve sleep, prevent urinary incontinence, or stimulate the immune system to produce more red blood cells. Such effects have been documented over 5,000 years.



Illinois River Acupuncture
592-5041 Mon., Wed., Fri.
Jo Anne Stone, M.S., L.Ac.



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Josephine County Report



Board Opposes Frontage Road

Over the past two months, there has been significant interest and concern from County residents about ODOT’s proposed improvements to Highway 199 between Midway Avenue and Tussey Lane and the potential impacts to businesses, commuters and the County Fairgrounds. There are actually two parts to these proposed improvements.

1) The first part consists of:

Safety upgrades to the highway itself, between Midway Avenue and Dowell Road, including:

1. Installation of a center median on Highway 199 between Midway Avenue and the entrance to Rogue Community College
2. Building necessary improvements to Hubbard Lane and Demaray Drive

Traffic flow upgrades to Redwood Avenue and Allen Creek Road, including:

1. Removing two traffic lights on Hwy. 199, one at the entrance to the County Fairgrounds and another at Redwood Avenue and Hwy. 199.
2. Installation of improvements to allow safe U-turns at both Allen Creek Road and Ringuette Street.
3. Rerouting Redwood Avenue, extending Allen Creek Road and constructing a new slip-ramp exit from Highway 199 westbound to the new, proposed intersection of Redwood Avenue and Allen Creek Road.

Current funding will allow ODOT to acquire needed Right of Ways (land), construct the new road ways, improve traffic flow and safety, and mitigate the impacts to affected property owners.

The work outlined above will significantly impact Josephine County’s real property and Fairgrounds operations. With the understanding that all of these impacts will be mitigated to the satisfaction of both private and public property owners, the Board of Commissioners supports these improvements.

2) The second part is:

The proposed new frontage road improvements between Allen Creek Road and Tussey Lane. The Board is willing accept ODOT’s request to postpone further discussion on the subject of *how and where* a new frontage road should be built (to mitigate these impacts), until ODOT’s planning efforts begin on the much larger improvements needed for the upcoming South “Y” Project, anticipated for the 2010-2012 timeframe.

To be clear, the Board of Commissioners *does not* endorse the current proposed options for this frontage road. We hope these clarifications help residents understand what they can expect over the next few years in this part of our community. ■

Impacts of Measures 5 and 50 on local property taxes...



Two ballot initiatives, Measure 5 and Measure 50, passed in the 1990’s, fundamentally changed Oregon’s property tax system. Measure 5 limits property tax rates at \$5.00 per \$1000 assessed value for schools and \$10.00 per \$1000 for all other purposes. Measure 50 limited property taxes by actually cutting assessed

How it affects Citizens and County Government.

values 10% for 1996 and thereafter limiting assessed value increases to no more than 3% per year. Measure 50 also divorced the tax rate from a property’s real market value.

Measure 50 has had the most profound impact on County revenues. In plain English, all the *new construction* we see going on around us *is not* going on to the tax rolls at actual real market values. Subject to a complex assessment formula, they go on the tax rolls at a county wide “average” or artificially low assessed value.

When an *existing property* is sold, the actual sales price *is not* used to determine that property’s assessed value. The lower assessed value and the tax advantage is transferred to the new owner. The result creates an attractive investment potential for real estate speculation while effectively preventing local governments from having any potential to keep up with the very real increasing costs of providing public services.

Measure 50 contrasts sharply with California’s Prop 13, where a sold property goes on the tax rolls at its’ real market value, with the rational that if a buyer can afford a \$400,000 house, they can afford to pay taxes on a \$400,000 home. Prop 13 also protects seniors (or anyone who doesn’t sell their home) from increased taxes.

The taxes collected by any government body are determined by the Tax Rate multiplied by the Assessed Value of the property. Taxes can change if either of these component parts changes. To illustrate this point, utilizing a recent month of local property sales data, using today’s tax rate multiplied by the higher potential assessed values (if the Prop 13 system of assessment was in place) the difference in actual revenue to the County would have increased approximately 30% annually, without affecting anyone who did not sell their property.

This information is presented in the hope of stimulating public discussion on potential options for funding public services after the O&C revenues end later this year. No action is being suggested in this article. It is presented only to shed some light on the current state of affairs and how it affects all of us, sometimes in ways we don’t anticipate. ■

Sheriff’s Office Receives Accreditation

The Josephine County Sheriff’s Office received a **Certificate of Accreditation from the Oregon Accreditation Alliance**. According to Director Rod Brown, the Alliance uses 148 standards in order to provide the highest standard of law enforcement possible. Agencies must be 100% in compliance with all of the standards. “I have seen large departments of 3,000 employees and for such a small department the resources are used better than I have ever seen in small or large departments, stated Brown.” The review includes all aspects of the Sheriff’s Office including: Patrol, Records, Evidence, Detectives, Civil, Reserves, Volunteers and Administration. Brown said that the employees, the commissioners and the public should be very proud of the Sheriff’s Office and this recognition. ■



Sheriff Dave Daniel personally thanked (left to right) Lieutenant Howard Banks and Undersheriff Brian Anderson, for their hard work and dedication toward this certification, which has been a three year process. He additionally thanked Director Rod Brown, and all the deputies for their professionalism and dedication to the citizens of Josephine County.

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