

Atkinson hopes to stop ‘Bad bills’

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

During a Wednesday, April 29 interview on Grants Pass radio station KAJO, Sen. Jason Atkinson (R-Central Point) discussed the status of several important pieces of legislation.

Senate Bill 80, which would establish a statewide cap-and-trade system, has undergone three hearings and a work session before the Senate Environment & Natural Resources Committee. Atkinson, who serves as vice chairman, said that SB 80 is a “bad bill” that would boost utility bills in Josephine County by 82 percent and 100 percent in the Portland area.

“It’s essentially a tax on everyone,” Atkinson said. “It’s bad policy and there’s absolutely no environmental benefit from it.”

Atkinson said that he strongly has opposed SB 80 in every step of the legislative process. He added that Oregon is doing a good job of capping its emissions without the use of costly regulation.

“I think I’ve got it tied up and it won’t get to the Senate floor,” he said. “The citizens don’t need this, and I’ll do everything I can to stop it.”

Another piece of legislation, SB 430, would ban all destination resorts in Oregon if passed. Atkinson said that he has been working hard for several years to allow counties the option to pursue destination resorts without interference by the state Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC).

“It’s just a very good tool to allow counties to diversify,” he said.

That kind of flexibility is especially important for rural counties that have long been dependent on timber revenues, Atkinson said. Destination resorts have “worked very well” in Deschutes County, Atkinson said, which prompted him to try and extend the option to Jefferson and Crook counties.

During the 2007 legislative session, said Atkinson, he worked to expand it to Josephine, Jackson, Klamath and Curry counties. As such, he said that he strongly opposes SB 430.

“It overturns everything I’ve worked on for about the last seven years,” he stated.

SB 430 was prompted by a fight regarding development near the Metolius River in Jefferson County. The owners of properties located 6 and 11 miles from the river wanted development rights, but LCDC and some lobbyists wanted to stop it, Atkinson said.

“Most Oregonians believe the Metolius River is something to be protected, including me. I’m a huge fan of that river and the natural environment around it,” he said. “(But SB 430) really has nothing to do with protecting the river. It has everything to do with stopping development.”

The would-be developers and Jefferson County took on a two-year process to approve the resorts, but Gov. Kulonogski began efforts to stop it by executive order last De-

cember, Atkinson said.

Despite Atkinson’s objections, SB 430 will move out of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee and to the Senate Rules Committee. Atkinson serves on that body, and said he doubts SB 430 will move any further.

“I believe I have that one stopped also,” he said.

Water rights also have emerged as an issue during the legislative session. SB 740 has been introduced, and would tax each owner of a water right \$100 per year if passed.

“This is probably the worst bill I’ve ever seen,” Atkinson said. “And that’s saying a lot.”

Atkinson said that SB 740 has been pushed by lobby groups as a way to help fund the Oregon Water Resources Dept (OWRD). However, Atkinson said that he and other legislators have discovered that OWRD has a balance of \$9.3 million.

“This agency has been hiding \$9.3 million. They don’t need the money,” he said.

SB 740 also has passed out of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee and has moved on to the budget-writing Ways & Means Committee, Atkinson said. But he’s confident that SB 740 will not make it any further than that.

“I think I’ve got it stopped down there,” Atkinson said. “Nobody in their right mind is going to tax water in this Legislature.”



Lorna Byrne Middle School students (from left) Natane Stewart, Elizabeth Jenkins, Alex Manninen and Kelly Armijo (pictured with coach Lacey Fox, second from right) have won the honor of traveling to Washington, D.C. in June to compete in the National History Day competition. The four girls collaborated on creating a website describing the

legacy that Shakespeare’s plays left for posterity. The students, who had never created a website before, were coached by LBMS social studies teacher Fox and a Southern Oregon Education Service District (SOESD) online learning specialist, in cooperation with other teachers and staff at the school. (Photo by Zina Booth, *Illinois Valley News*)

FAC seeks volunteers for old city park cleanup

Saturday, May 23 at 9 a.m. a volunteer clean-up party will be held at Old Stage Park at the end of S. Old Stage Road in Cave Junction.

This event is scheduled as part of Take Care of Oregon Days events in connection with the Oregon sesquicentennial celebrations. Participants will gather to collect trash and pull noxious weeds along Illinois River, helping to clean up the site and control the invasive weeds flourishing in that area.

Volunteers are asked to bring gloves and tools if they have them; also water, as drinking water is not available at the site.

This event is spearheaded by the Forestry Action Committee (FAC). It is working on organizing a restoration of Old Stage Park. Lack of funds has stopped the city of Cave Junction from developing public areas at the 40-acre park. After the city had to log timber from the park, it has sat neglected.

The site has become a dumping ground, and invasive weeds have choked out many native plant species that used to thrive there, FAC reported.

While the project is still in its infancy, FAC plans to eventually hold public meetings to brainstorm ideas on how the city can recover the beauty of this park and the stretch of the river that runs through it, as well as pursue funding for the project. Ideas tossed around so far include picnic areas, swimming areas, disc golf and a botanical trail.

By organizing the clean-up and participating in the May Take Care of Oregon Days events, FAC hopes to draw attention to the park and gain support for restoration. For more information contact Mara Carnes, FAC project coordinator, at 592-4098.

Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?
~ Juvenal ~

Oregon E-Waste program proves popular

The Oregon E-Cycles Program, which provides free recycling of computers, monitors and televisions throughout the state, is proving popular with Oregonians, said the state Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

First-quarter collection and recycling totals show that the program brought in 4.94 million pounds of electronic waste, said Kathy Kiwala, E-

Cycles Project leader for DEQ’s Solid Waste Program.

The 4.94 million-pound figure is ahead of projected goals. Oregon E-Cycles’ original projection for minimum total returns for 2009 is 12.2 million pounds. During the first quarter, televisions accounted for 55.7 percent of total pounds recycled. Monitors accounted for 33.3 percent; computers accounted for the remaining 11 percent.

Besides recycling, 8,938 units (of TVs, computers or monitors) were diverted for reuse, Kiwala added.

Electronics manufacturers finance Oregon E-Cycles, which was launched on Jan. 1. Many manufacturers support the DEQ-administered state contractor collection and recycling program. Three other

manufacturer groups operate their own collection and recycling programs, but all the programs operate under Oregon E-Cycles.

Program specific information:

*Dell Inc. collected and recycled 1,111,472 pounds and has already exceeded its minimum goal. Dell reported that 2,745 units of televisions, computers or monitors were reused through its partnership with Goodwill.

*The Individual Producers Responsibility Group (IPR) collected and recycled 743,374 pounds, reaching 32 percent of its minimum goal for 2009.

*The Manufacturers Recycling Management Company LLC (MRM) collected and recycled 2,281,327 pounds and is already at 45 percent of its minimum collection goal for 2009. In addition, MRM reported the reuse of 2,466 televisions, computers and monitors through Goodwill and several other non-profit reuse organizations within its collection network.

*The State Contractor Program collected and recycled 802,368 pounds and has reached 20 percent of its minimum collection goal for the year. The program reported that 3,727 units of televisions, computers and monitors were reused by NextStep and FreeGeek, two nonprofit reuse organizations within its collection network.

For more information on Oregon E-Cycles, see DEQ’s website at <http://www.oregonecycles.org/>.

National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 7
The call to pray for our nation

Open for prayer 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Valley Evangelical Free Church
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THURSDAY, MAY 7
* Teacher Appreciation Week
* 21st Century 3:30 p.m.: scrapbooking, rock wall climbing, indoor soccer, homework help
* Baseball at Riddle Varsity boys @ 4 p.m.
* Softball at Riddle Varsity girls @ 4 p.m.
FRIDAY, MAY 8
* Teacher Appreciation Week
SATURDAY, MAY 9
* Baseball vs. Hidden Valley Varsity boys @ noon
* Softball at Hidden Valley Varsity girls @ noon
MONDAY, MAY 11
* Golf at District (Grants Pass Country Club)
Varsity Boys @ 11 a.m.
* Golf at North Valley (Grants Pass Country Club)
Varsity Girls @ 11 a.m.
* 21st Century 3:30 p.m.: yoga, weight training, drama club, vegan cooking, homework help
TUESDAY, MAY 12
* Golf at Henley (Reames)
Varsity Girls @ 10:30 a.m.
* Golf at District (Running Y)
Varsity Boys @ noon
* 21st Century 3:30 p.m.: brain bowl, sewing, guitar lessons, indoor soccer, homework help
* Baseball vs. North Valley Varsity boys @ 4:30 p.m.
* Softball at North Valley Varsity girls @ 4:30 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, MAY 13
* 21st Century 3:30 p.m.: yoga, drama club, martial arts, weight training, beading, homework help

(All 21st Century events are open to parents of students at any I.V. school. Also open to homeschoolers.)