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Kulongoski defends plant closure bill

Freshmen reading below 'par'

by VON BRASCHLER

Gubernatorial candidate Ted Kulongoski, D-Junction City, defended his plant closure bills before the Sandy Chamber of Commerce Tuesday, predicting Oregon communities would suffer from wood products phase-out in another 10 to 20 years.

"I won't back away from it," the attorney said of his cleaned-up bill redraft. "There's no one in this state except Vic Atiyeh who doesn't recognize there's a problem."

He explained the legislation was designed to protect small communities faced with sudden closure of its only industry and economic and social problems to follow.

"I've seen too many people here lose their jobs," he said. "What can you do with a 55-year-old choker-setter? He's too young for Social Security, and you probably can't retrain him for the electronics industry."

The issue, said the state senator, is what Oregon communities do to survive.

"We all end up paying for it, because our taxes go up," with the tax burden shift from industry to the residents who remain.

"What I CAN be criticized on," Kulongoski said, "is that I didn't recognize the political sensitivity of the term, plant closure. Perhaps I should have called it an early warning system," he said, referring to California's similar debate.

He chided his opponent, Republican Gov. Victor Atiyeh, for early support of the president's economic recovery program and chided the president for his housing program—an issue big in Oregon's boom-or-bust old timber economy.

He referred to a post-war federal recovery program that primed economic pumps in the Northwest with public work programs and low-

cost home loan subsidies.

"We no longer will enjoy that subsidy," Kulongoski said of the president's housing subsidy veto in August. "It's no longer a priority program."

Lost federal housing subsidies, coupled with money market competition the government's created for declining passbook savings for banks to loan, paint a depressing picture, he said.

"That's why I believe the state will continue to be in an economic development program the next 10 to 20 years," Kulongoski said.

Oregon could recover from its economic reverses, he said, by diversifying beyond timber and developing a state-engineered export marketing plan.

Oregon is an ideal export site for Pacific rim nations, he said, mentioning ports of Coos Bay, Portland and Umatilla, among others.

"We've got the resources. Why don't we develop the market for finished logs in the Asian market?" he challenged.

Kulongoski advocated transition from Oregon's wood products economic base to new technology, "so every time the Federal Reserve Board adjusts its rates, Oregonians don't lose their jobs."

He criticized the governor's inability to predict state revenue shortfall in special sessions and the governor's recent budget-balancing use of State Accident and Insurance Fund surplus money.

Kulongoski noted the SAIF funds were designed to pay legitimate claims, pay program administrative costs and—lastly—reduce cost of Workmen's Compensation premiums of workers involved.

He criticized the state's present Workmen's Compensation program as having the highest rates in the nation.



State Sen. Ted Kulongoski, D-Junction City, told the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce Tuesday that the campaign issue in the gubernatorial campaign is what small cities, like Sandy, do to survive the economic slump.

Kulongoski said he could live within the state's present budget, if elected, but would reserve the right to review emergency budget measure sunset taxes to expire by next June.

He also said he favors a graduated corporate tax, "not to raise more

money, but to bring about a more equitable tax structure for smaller businesses."

Kulongoski said the major difference in the gubernatorial race in his view is leadership. He said the incumbent governor

seems to be saying, 'It's always the federal government's fault.'

"There's no single agency in this state that has as its priority the economic development of the state," Kulongoski charged. "That's a damning indictment."

Fire department takes aim at illegal burning

by DAN DILLON

The smoke of the fall burning season fills the air these days.

While most abide by guidelines established by the Department of Environmental Quality, some cloud the air with an increasing problem for the Sandy Fire District—unauthorized burns.

The illegal fires, however, are not limited to burning season. They are a year-round problem that has constituted 24.9 percent of the local district's fire calls in the past four years.

And that, according to Sandy Fire Marshal Jim Gallagher, is "only the

tip of the iceberg."

The statistic, he explained, covers just those fires that a fire engine responds to. Many times the fire chief or officer in charge will drive out to the site of an unauthorized burn, explain the rules and regulations and ask that the fire be put out.

"We find many, many repeat burners," Gallagher said. But in the last three years, only two offenders have been cited into court. One was given public service work as a fine. The other case was thrown out of court.

"The district attorney doesn't want to touch these," the fire marshal said. "At least that's the indication

we get. He's got more pressing matters."

As a result, fire district officials are upgrading the record-keeping system so that no matter who goes out to an unauthorized burn, they'll know someone's been there before if it is a repeat offender.

"The bottom line is state statute allows the fire department to charge to put the fire out," Gallagher said.

The local fire district is studying that point and may resort to it as a deterrent in the future as a cost-cutting measure.

"If we could cut out almost 25 percent of our responses, that's a money-saver," Gallagher said.

That doesn't mean the fire district would charge to put out illegal fires overnight. With the upgraded records system, however, they'll know who's been a culprit before.

"If we go into this, the first day we're not going to go out and charge somebody," Gallagher said. "We'll give reasonable notice."

If the number of unauthorized burns were reduced, it would allow fire officials to spend time with other pressing matters and make firefighters more readily available in the event of a real emergency, he said.

The worst area for violations isn't in the rural areas of the district. It's

inside Sandy's city limits.

"I would think we could keep one man busy traveling the district policing unauthorized burns," Gallagher said. During the summer months, there are "more than you'd care to stop at."

But the district's hands are tied. "We can ignore the situation, which legally we cannot do. We're charged with enforcing DEQ regulations," Gallagher said.

"So we're in a Catch-22 situation. We're damned if we do and damned if we don't."

During authorized burning seasons, the fire district is informed of burn days at 8 a.m.

Vapor from butane stove claims camper

The body of a 25-year-old Portland man who was apparently asphyxiated by a butane heater in his tent was found Sunday afternoon one-quarter mile south of Mirror Lake.

Sgt. Dan E. Wolf, of the Oregon State Police, said the body of Larry Eugene LaFreniere was discovered around noon by hikers. He was in a makeshift plastic tent about 35 feet off the main trail to Mirror Lake.

A preliminary diagnosis by George Coleman of the medical examiner's office indicates LaFreniere died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Wolf said LaFreniere was camped just off the trail in a visquine tent. When it began to rain, he apparently "sealed the tarp to the ground with dirt to keep the rain out and then lit a butane heater" which asphyxiated him.

The heater, when lit, released carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, gas.

LaFreniere, said Wolf, had been seen camped in the same spot for several days, but no one checked to see if he was having any trouble.

"At this point we're presuming it to be an accidental death," said Wolf, "but we will continue the investigation until we are sure."

OSP detective Kurt McBride said, based on evidence found at the scene, he believes the death occurred Sept. 19 or 20.

McBride said the medical examiner's office is performing tests to confirm the actual cause of death, but said it appears to be carbon monoxide poisoning. The valve of LaFreniere's small, backpack heater was completely open and was empty of butane.

"On the heater," said McBride, "were several warning labels to use only in a well-ventilated area."

According to McBride, LaFreniere reportedly took a Trailways Bus to Government Camp Sept. 17 to do some hiking. He was scheduled to return home five days later, but when he did not return his father contacted police.

McBride said this isn't the first death caused by such heaters. He said most people are fooled by the size and forget the stoves can give off a deadly gas if used in the wrong areas.

Candidates square off on measures

by DAN DILLON

There is no gray area between the views of the two candidates vying for the seat in Senate District 14 when it comes to property tax rollbacks or land-use planning.

Joe Davis, R-Silverton, and Steve Starkovich, D-Canby, put up their political dukes Tuesday evening at Rippling River in Welches and outlined their views at a forum sponsored by the Hoodland Chamber of Commerce.

The two left no middle ground on two ballot measures facing voters Nov. 2.

"On election day Joe Davis, private citizen, will go into the election booth and I think I will vote for Measure 3," the Silverton newspaper publisher told the sparse turnout.

Ballot Measure 3 would limit property tax increases to 1.5 percent annually and rollback assessment levels to 1979.

"I oppose it," countered Starkovich, a Canby warehouseman. "As much waste, as much duplicity

as there is, I don't think we can stand those cuts."

Davis and Starkovich also lined up solidly on opposite sides of the fence over Ballot Measure 5.

That measure would eliminate the Land Conservation and Development Commission and its statewide goals, and return land-use planning to the local level.

"I'm going to vote for Measure 6," Davis said. "I believe in land-use planning, but I would say, let's return it to local control."

Starkovich said he opposes the measure as "too radical a step."

The property tax limitation would "cripple local government's ability to provide basic services," Starkovich said. "Ballot Measure 3 would be a signal to business that Oregon isn't serious about jobs."

Davis said the issue has been the most difficult for him in the year-long campaign, but if he got a written guarantee that conservatives would control the state Legislature after the November election, he would vote against it.

Beyond that, however, he said, "The state of Oregon has one of the most chaotic tax systems in the United States." He called the system a "detriment to growth" and chided Democrats, who have controlled the Legislature for the past decade, for letting spending get out of hand.

"When are we going to stop talking about how we're going to tax Oregonians?" Davis asked. "When are we going to start talking about how much we're going to tax Oregonians?"

He said he sees no alternative to Measure 3.

Starkovich outlined a plan he calls the "circuit breaker" as an alter-



Steve Starkovich



Joe Davis

native to Measure 3.

"We have a lot of overheated households right now because they are over-burdened by property taxes," he said. Under his plan, a limitation would be placed on the percentage of household income that could go towards property tax. Taxpayers would be reimbursed for payments above this percentage.

"Too many Oregonians spend their entire lives working to build equity in their farm or home," Starkovich said, "only to be taxed out of it when they retire."

Questions of the amount of revenue it would raise and type of corruption it would attract prevent both candidates from supporting a sales tax as an alternative.

A sales tax, Starkovich said, would never get out of the Legislature

because of the restrictions placed by Measure 3, requiring two-thirds majority approval in both houses of the Legislature for any new tax.

Starkovich acknowledged that there are problems with current land-use planning methods at the statewide agency that controls the strings.

"There are problems with LCDC. There are problems with the permit process. There are problems with the appeals process," he said.

"I oppose Measure 6, not because I'm an LCDC fan, but the concept of comprehensive planning is a valuable one."

Davis commented, "Bureaucratic mandates created a system so complex and inflexible that we have to start over."

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