

# Anti-tax Spending

The rich fight taxes for schools, government

Oregon billionaires, millionaires and corporate CEOs have spent about \$4 million to defeat taxes on them that would save schools, health care, public safety and other government services from brutal cuts.

The Eugene Chamber of Commerce has joined the anti-tax conservatives, contributing \$2,500 to campaign against Measures 66 & 67, according to the state's campaign contribution database.

If the measures fail as the chamber wants, the already struggling local economy could be dealt a heavy blow. With the UO here, about one in five local jobs in Lane County are with state and local governments.

The 4J School District estimates that it could have to lay off 94 teachers or cut 19 school days to make up from the lost state money if the measures fail.

The UO, the county's largest employer with about 5,000 jobs, also stands to lose millions. The UO estimates that with 21,000 students it pumps about \$1.5 billion into the economy.

The Eugene Chamber donation to the "no" campaign by corporate and wealthy interests itself appears to be a corporate pass-through. The Eugene Chamber PAC reported a recent \$2,500 donation from Northwest Natural Gas, a corporation that reported \$1 billion in revenue last year.

Northwest Natural appears to have never donated before to the Eugene Chamber PAC, which saw its last other activity two years ago.

Almost all the taxes from Measure 67 would come from huge corporations like Northwest Natural. Many of these large corporations avoid taxes through accounting loopholes. The measure would increase the \$10 corporate minimum tax (last increased 80 years ago) to a maximum of \$100,000.

Most small to medium-sized businesses would pay nothing in increased taxes (because they aren't registered as C corporations) or would pay a minimum tax of \$150.

Nike shoe baron Phil Knight has given \$100,000 to the "no" campaign, the largest individual contribution. Knight, one of the richest people in the world, has an estimated worth of \$10 billion, according to *Forbes* magazine.

Measure 66 would increase taxes on households with more than \$250,000 a year in income (\$125,000 for single filers) by about 2 percentage points. The measure would not increase taxes for the 98 percent of people earning less. Many people hit by the recession and receiving unemployment benefits would get a tax break under the measure.

The largest local contributor to the "no" campaign appears to be the Papé family millionaires who inherited a Eugene-based construction equipment company. Papé recently gave \$25,000 in donations to Associated Oregon Industries (AOI), one of the largest pass-through contributors to the "no" campaign.

Other local corporations/millionaires spending on the "no" campaign include

\$13,500 from the Seneca Jones Timber company run by local multi-millionaire Aaron Jones and \$11,500 from Rosboro lumber. The Giustina land and timber baron clan spent \$11,500. The Alltucker family of gravel and land barons that owns Eugene Sand and Gravel and other development companies spent \$10,000 to defeat the measures. The Wildish gravel and land bunch spent \$3,000; the Gonyea timber and land barons \$2,000; and Tyree Oil fuel distribution \$1,000.

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Besides Knight, the biggest "no" donors statewide include Weyerhaeuser (\$78,000), and Columbia Sportswear CEO Tim Boyle (\$51,000). Timber/land companies Roseburg (\$45,000), Stimson (40,000), Plum Creek (36,000) and Longview (26,000) were all leading contributors. Dentist equipment maker A DEC spent \$30,000, Qwest \$26,000, aggregate company Knife River \$25,000 and Schnitzer Steel \$25,000.

Recent statewide AOI pass-through donations appear to include Hoffman Construction (\$25,000), Siltronic computer chip wafers (\$25,000), Electric Steel Company (\$25,000), Benson construction (\$20,000), The Standard insurance (\$15,000), JELD-WEN windows and doors \$15,000 and Northwest Natural Gas \$15,000.

The campaign by the millionaires and corporations argues that if the rich pay more taxes they will hire fewer people to work for them. But supporters of the revenue measures counter that it's unlikely that businesses would reduce their needed hiring because of a relatively small tax increase. Even with the tax increase, 90 percent of other states would have higher business taxes than Oregon, according to a national study.

Supporters of the tax measures have raised about \$5 million, mostly from contributions from tens of thousands of workers passed through their labor unions.

Ironically, many of the millionaires and corporations fighting to defeat Measures 66 and 67 will benefit if the revenue passes. For roads and buildings, state and local governments are among the major customers of construction and sand and gravel companies, for example, and many of the donors have made millions from government contracts.

Charles Sheketoff of the Oregon Center for Public Policy scratches his head at the "economic flat-earthers" opposing Measures 66 and 67. He wrote in a recent essay, "In every corner of Oregon, the private sector benefits directly and indirectly from public spending." **EW**

2 Mile Run & Walk  
4 Mile Run  
Kids Fun Run

# Truffle Shuffle

2010

Sunday, February 7  
Alton Baker Park  
Events Begin at 12:45

**IN PERSON REGISTRATION:**

- Eugene Running Company at the Oakway Center
- CPY-BBBS Office 935 Oak Street, Eugene

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Bee Keeping • Urban Chickens • Earthworms  
Details: Thursday's Register-Guard Home&Garden Monthly  
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Growing Food & Medicinal Plants  
Rose Marie  
Nichols McGree  
Sat. 2pm & Book Signing

Grow Your own Delicious Fruit  
Jim Gilbert  
The Kiwi King!  
Sun. 11am

Create Butterfly & Hummingbird Wildlife Gardens  
Yolanda Vanveen  
Sat. 6pm

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