

know as Beltline is spelled as one word, Beltline, not Belt Line, as that local daily paper has been spelling it. And the route in question that is being changed is Beltline Highway, not Beltline Road. There are actually two different Beltlines, according to Rick Little of ODOT. It's Beltline Highway from Gateway Street west. From Gateway to the east, it's Beltline Road.

The name change (whatever it gets changed to) would only affect Beltline Highway, not Beltline Road, east of Gateway, where many businesses have street addresses.

This isn't Beltline's first sign and name change. When the county planned the road in the late 1950s it was referred to as the "peripheral road." It was supposed to be part of a larger beltway that encircled Eugene-Springfield. That project was never completed, and the street was then referred to as Beltline Road. In 1978, Lane County gave control of Beltline Road to ODOT and it became Beltline Highway and designated State Highway 69. According to Little, signs designating the route as OR 69 were never posted.

In 2007, as the 2008 Olympic Trials approached, it was proposed that Beltline Highway be given numbered signs in order to help potentially lost sports fans find their way to Hayward Field. Originally, according to minutes from an Oregon Transportation Commission meeting, it was proposed that the highway be numbered as OR 14. Instead the highway was designated OR 569, in place of plain old 69.



"Truthfully, changing from OR 69 gave us more assurance that OR 69 route shields would not be stolen. We were aware that the number 69 had special meaning to some people," Little says.

The new state shield signs deemed Beltline as OR 569. The total cost for that initial sign change "was approximately \$5,000 in district maintenance funds," Little says.

Other signs pointing to Beltline were changed to OR 569 as various construction projects called for them, Little says, and they were already budgeted into those projects. He says, "This district spends about \$30,000 per year on sign replacement. ODOT spends about \$3 million per year in sign replacement around the entire state."

Currently, the proposal is to change the name from Beltline Highway to the Randy Papé Beltline, which would involve \$1,500 to place a sign at either end of Beltline Highway, instead of the quarter million dollars in sign changes initially proposed by Gov. Ted Kulongoski and the OTC. Other signs would be changed later as wear and tear demands. Unfortunately, no plans appear to be under way to change the route back to Highway 69. — Camilla Mortensen

MINERS THREATEN TO SHOOT

Conflicts between activists and those they disagree with are nothing new, but alleged threats to shoot members of Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center (KS Wild) and their fellow hikers stirred up fears in southern Oregon recently.

According to George Sexton of KS Wild, the conservation group found out about the threats to shoot at them that appeared on an Internet discussion forum for miners called Oregon Gold Hunters only after their hike was completed.

KS Wild works to protect public lands, waterways and wildlife in southern Oregon. One of their campaigns has been to end suction dredge mining in rivers. Sexton says suction dredge mining, which stirs up sediment and sometimes toxic substances like mercury, arsenic and cyanide, is harmful to native fish such as threatened coho salmon as well as to water quality.

Sexton says the mining "leaves taxpayers on the hook for cleaning up the mess."

Conflicts between miners and other public lands users, Sexton says, have gone on for years, but sentiment has been stirred up recently by a ban on suction dredging in California that may drive miners up into southern Oregon.

In response to an email about a planned KS Wild hike, one of the miners, under the name "spilnthils" wrote on the Internet forum: "Out in the woods on their own, hmm sounds like disaster. If a guy was pissed off enough he could sit up in the woods with a high powered assault rifle and put an end to the whole group in one swift action."

After law enforcement officials were alerted to the posts, Sen. Ron Wyden wrote a letter to AG John Kroger and U.S. Attorney Dwight Holton asking them to "use your authority to ensure the safety of community groups on public lands."

Wyden also cited the instance of Gregory Graybill who was riding his four-wheel drive vehicle when he was shot by a miner who felt he was too close to his federal mining claim. Graybill's arm had to be amputated.

The full Internet thread can be viewed at <http://wkly.ws/gz> though it has been modified since media attention came to the site. Forum participants have cited their First Amendment right to free speech on the issue. Kroger's office says it expects to know soon if they plan to investigate the alleged threats.

Sexton says KS Wild has no plans to stop its hikes on public lands, "The best way to respond to this stuff is by shining the light of day" on it, says Sexton. "You can't let thugs determine public policy with threats."

For upcoming KS Wild hikes, go to kswild.org — Camilla Mortensen

• Gov. Ted **Kulongoski is so full of asphalt** on the Papé highway renaming that it's coming out his ears. Excellent reporting in *The Register-Guard* has amply demonstrated that ODOT and the governor intentionally hid the renaming of Beltline from the public because they knew people wouldn't like it. Renaming the freeway after a millionaire who has made big campaign contributions to the governor is a clear violation of state naming rules. This state is clearly run by a good-ol' boys club, and ODOT clearly exists to do things to Oregonians rather than for Oregonians. The Legislature should act quickly to remove the naming power from the governor and ODOT before yet more big signs of corruption are posted.

• **Kudos to the Ems** for making a hilarious April Fool's of KVAL and other local TV stations. The gag gave guffaws while amply demonstrating that the on-air press release readers at KVAL are not only not "First, Fair, Accurate" as they claim, but also embarrassingly dumb and humorless. Here's a hot news tip: If someone sends you a far-fetched press release with a big April 1 in bold on top at 10:30 pm, don't make your top story the fact that you are gullible. Laugh.

• We've been following the **Courthouse Garden** project for several weeks now, and we learned a few new things at City Club April 2. Judge Ann Aiken and landscape architecture professor Ann Bettman were the speakers and showed slides of the garden in progress. Even more people are involved in the project than we had imagined, including Mayor Kitty Piercy, UO President Richard Lariviere and Karmen Fore in Rep. Peter DeFazio's office. And it appears just about everyone who works in the Courthouse is fascinated with the garden, and some are even getting their hands dirty.

What's in the future? The agreement is only for three years, but the historic Agripac building on the site could be restored to become a garden center someday. We also learned that to sustain this project year after year will require a director – someone who can coordinate volunteers, deal with issues, interface with the community and raise money. Public and private grants are likely available for agricultural, educational and community service collaborations that can serve as examples for other cities. And years from now, if and when the land is sold for development, much of that organic composted soil can be scooped up and moved, along with the drip irrigation system, to enrich and beautify another eyesore in the city. It can become a portable institution. Meanwhile, Saturdays are work days from 10 am to 1 pm. See the garden's Facebook page at <http://wkly.ws/gx> for more information.

• Three cheers for the **Eugene Tree Foundation** and Eugene NeighborWoods Program that work with residents and businesses to plant trees along streets where there's nothing but dirt or concrete. We've been staring at the concrete slabs in front of our offices for at least 10 years thinking we could really use some shade trees to go with our bike racks. Turns out the city is a willing partner (see News Briefs this week). Happy Arbor Day.

• Anyone who really cares about America and what our government has done in our names with so much of our blood and taxes should watch the **Collateral Murder** video leaked from the Pentagon by Wikileaks (<http://bit.ly/dlWQdC>). So far TV news has largely censored it, but the bloodthirsty truth of the Iraq War, the digital Pentagon Papers of our time, is on fire online. No, they do not hate freedom, they hate us, with what the video shows is good reason.

• Give us this day **our daily paper**, but hey, it would be nice to see some news on the front page. The wet weather was the lead story in the R-G March 30 and 31, April 1 and 3. We get it. It rains and blows in the spring. Trees fall down. Rivers rise. It's Eugene.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com

Lane Area Herbicide Spray Schedule

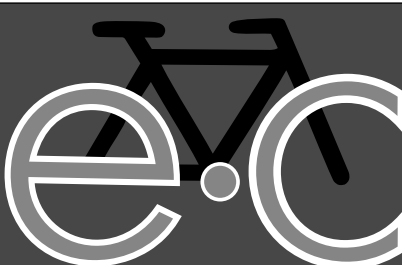
• In **eastern Lane County** near Marcola Schools, Waltherville, Leaburg, Dexter and Lowell: Seneca Jones Timber (461-6245) will ground spray 11 miles of roads with Garlon XRT (ester) and Milestone VM herbicides starting May 15 (No. 771-00413).

• **ODOT** will start spraying state highways with herbicides in District 5 (Lane County) starting April 5 depending on weather (see News/ODOT). Call District 5 at 744-8080 or (888) 996-8080 for herbicide application information. ODOT spraying has already started in other parts of Oregon.

• **Union Pacific Railroad:** plans to spray tracks through Eugene delayed due to weather. Call Jan Bohman at Eugene 682-5587.

• Deadline is April 15 to apply for a vacancy on the Lane County **Vegetation Management Advisory Committee**. Applications available at the 125 E. 8th Ave., phone 682-4203 or visit <http://wkly.ws/gv>

Compiled by Jan Wroncy, Forestland Dwellers: 342-8332, www.forestlanddwellers.org



when I see an adult on a bicycle, I do not despair for the future of the human race.
~H.G. Wells

www.eugenecycles.com