

news Briefs

LOCAL BIG WIGS FUND CAMPAIGNS

The spigots are open for local big contributors to right-wing politicians this election.

Timber baron Aaron Jones and his Seneca Jones Timber Co. have given a total of \$35,000 to Republican Chris Dudley's campaign for governor. If elected, Dudley has promised huge tax breaks for super rich people like Jones.

Jones/Seneca gave another \$25,000 to the "Oregon Victory PAC" which funds Republican candidates for the state Legislature.

The local Giustina timber, real estate and land speculation companies also gave Dudley a total of \$40,000. The Rosboro and Murphy lumber companies each gave an additional \$25,000 to Dudley, a former NBA star with no elected or business leadership experience. The Murphy plywood mill gave Dudley \$15,000.

Carolyn Chambers, a local development, TV and construction magnate, gave \$21,050 in "in-kind" contributions to the Lane County Republican Central Committee, which

recently paid \$17,500 to bring Sarah Palin to Eugene.

Lane County Commissioner candidate Jay Bozievich raked in \$12,500 from Murphy, \$11,180 from Jones/Seneca and \$8,400 from developer Steve Lee. Bozievich helped organize a local libertarian group that called for the elimination of Medicare and the Department of Education and recently organized a Tea Party rally in which he wore a colonial soldier outfit and wig.

— Alan Pittman

LEHNER'S COPS BEING SUED

Former Eugene police chief Robert Lehner's current police department in Elk Grove, Calif., is being sued for allegedly "terrorizing" a family in Elk Grove with excessive force. Lehner was criticized for ignoring abusive police actions in Eugene before he resigned in 2008 to take the Elk Grove police chief job.

Lehner, while in Eugene, refused to follow through on his promise to investigate his department's handling of the notorious Lara and Magaña sex abuse cases that shamed the department, sent the two police officers to prison, and led to the city being liable for millions of dollars in civil lawsuit settlements. Numerous other incidents and lawsuits involving accusations of police abuse followed under Lehner's leadership, including the Taser of a protester. Lehner was also criticized for not cooperating with Eugene's independent police auditor, and even violating a city ordinance by not reporting a complaint against an officer to the auditor.

HEAVY LOADS ARRIVING

Despite not getting approval to put its 500,000 pounds of oil-extraction equipment onto U.S. roads, Imperial Oil, a subsidiary of ExxonMobil, has delivered the first shipment of about 200 loads to the Port of Vancouver.

The Missoulian reports that nine modules were unloaded on Oct. 4 from freight ships. The modules were built in Korea and shipped to Vancouver, Wash., where the port is using its heavy-lift mobile cranes to unload the cargo. According to press reports, the modules are not only bigger than anything the port has handled before, they also have unusual centers of gravity.

After they are unloaded, the modules, intended for oil sands extraction in the Kearl oils sands of Alberta, Canada, will be placed on barges and sent up the Columbia River to Lewiston, Idaho.

While Oregonians largely haven't fought the oil companies using the Columbia to barge the loads — it appears no environmental laws are being broken there — many have joined in Idaho and Montana's fight to keep the loads off those states' highways.

Eugene cyclists have taken note of the controversy. The roadways Imperial Oil wants to use are 175 miles of popular Adventure Cycling routes, according to webikeeugene.org's Mike Seager, including the Trans America and Lewis and Clark Trails, Great Parks North Trail and the Great Divide Mountain Bike Trail. Seager blogged about his concerns with how the heavy loads could damage the road surfaces cyclists use, as well as damage the scenic route as a whole.

Not only have environmentalists objected to the use of American roads to facilitate the exploitation of Canadian oil sands, many have expressed concern about the effects the modifications to the roads will have on nearby pristine forests and rivers (see cover story 9/2), and whether oil companies will continue to use the route once its established. Oil sands extraction is said to exacerbate global warming.

Once unloaded, the three-story tall, 200-foot long supersized loads would be put on special trucks and shipped at night for nine days from Idaho to Canada. Nearby residents have expressed concern that the loads, which would take up the entire roadway, could prevent help from getting through to them in an emergency. River advocates fear that if one of the loads, with their unusual centers of gravity, were to overturn into salmon-bearing rivers that border the roads, it would be impossible to get the massive machinery out.

Starting on Dec. 10, the locks at The Dalles and John Day dams on the Columbia will be closed for repairs for more than three months. The oil companies intend to ship loads before and after the dam closures.

But because a separate shipment of similar loads from ConocoPhillips is embroiled in an Idaho Court battle, and because the Montana Department of Transportation is still debating its decision on the loads, there is no date for when the massive shipments might leave Lewiston, though they are scheduled to head up the Columbia in the next two weeks. Four supersized ConocoPhillips loads have sat at Lewiston since May, awaiting an Idaho Supreme Court decision on the issue.

— Camilla Mortensen

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

VAL ROGERS



"My dad is a real outdoorsman," says Val Rogers, who developed a passion for outdoor activities when her family moved from Louisiana to Idaho. "I was 10 that year, and we did a hundred-mile horseback trip." After high school in Idaho Falls, she started college at Utah State in Salt Lake. "The Hoedads brought me to Oregon," says Rogers, who planted trees a couple of seasons, then worked for the Forest Service for many years, on jobs ranging from seed collection to watershed analysis. She commuted to OSU and completed a geography masters in 2002. "My project was right here at Buford Park," says Rogers, who was hired as volunteer coordinator for the Friends of Buford Park and Mt. Pisgah in 2006 and recently named development director. "I looked at the flood history of the area, how it was altered by dams." In 2009, some 750 volunteers helped out at the park, Lane County's largest. Rogers' other passion is music. She joined the Eugene Peace Choir in the 1980s, directed the choir from 1999 to 2006, and toured with the vocal group Northern Harmony in 2007. She currently gives workshops on South African song and dance, including a guest-teaching gig with the University Singers and Dance Africa at the UO this fall.

