



## INCOME TAX LESSON: TAX THE RICH

The vote on an income tax for schools last month and a vote on an income tax for the county jail four years ago had a very similar outcome, and perhaps similar lesson for future income tax measures.

The school measure failed in Eugene with 38 percent voting “yes” and the jail measure failed with 37 percent in Eugene voting “yes.” The similar outcomes for income taxes dedicated to two very different purposes appear to indicate that, no matter what, income taxes with a broad impact on the middle class will fail in Eugene.

The jails and schools measures were both similar income taxes with a broad impact on the middle class. Both taxes exempted the poor. The jail tax had an average estimated impact of \$224 per household, the school tax had an average impact of about \$120.

The jail tax enjoyed a \$100,000 campaign in support of its passage with another \$250,000 in an “informational” campaign by the county plus dozens of supportive news articles and editorials in *The Register-Guard*. The schools measure faced a \$109,000 campaign in opposition plus articles and editorials in *The Register-Guard* in opposition.

Both the schools and jail measures had their strongest support in south Eugene and their strongest opposition in north Eugene (see chart). But the difference with the schools measure was more pronounced in about half the city. In east Eugene (Council Ward 3) near the UO and in central Eugene (Ward 1) the school measure had 14 percent more support than the jail measure. In conservative north Eugene (Wards 4 and 5), the jail measure had 7 to 10 percent more support than the school measure.

But the defeat of broad income taxes in Eugene doesn’t mean that voters in the city wouldn’t pass a populist income tax on the rich. State Measure 66, an income tax increase on households above \$250,000, passed by a 72 percent vote in Eugene last year. The measure showed a similar pattern of having its greatest support in south Eugene and weakest support in north Eugene. But still, it passed with more than 60 percent “yes” in every ward and more than 80 percent support in south Eugene. The measure passed despite a \$5 million opposition campaign.

State tax data show a strong concentration of taxable wealth in local upper income brackets. If the Eugene City Council had chosen to refer a tax increase limited to households above \$100,000, the school tax could have generated roughly three-fourths of the revenue while only impacting one-sixth as many voters.

— Alan Pittman

# news Briefs

## CUTTING TREES NO SOLUTION TO SLUMP

County funds might be in a slump and the economy is hurting, but it’s not because the Pacific Northwest isn’t logging its forests. Conservationists say that logging is not the answer to the Northwest’s economic woes.

The Pacific Northwest Research Station announced May 21 that for the first quarter of 2011, West Coast softwood timber exports were up 50.5 percent from the first quarter of 2010, according to Debra Warren, a research economist with the station.

The data from the Pacific Northwest Research Station shows that log exports from Oregon and Washington totaled 379.5 million board feet. Logs and lumber went primarily to China and Japan as well as to Taiwan, Indonesia and South Korea.

The Bureau of Land Management exceeded its volume of trees offered for sale in Oregon and California in 2010. According to agency data, the BLM was congressionally financed to offer 184 million board feet of wood, and it offered for sale 192 million board feet.

Doug Heiken of Oregon Wild says for perspective that 1 million board feet is equal to 200 log truck loads of wood, and 192 million board feet is equal to 400 miles of log trucks parked end-to-end. Heiken says the connection that many politicians make between increasing logging and putting money in county coffers is incorrect. “Nothing the BLM is doing puts money into the county’s coffers,” he says.

Heiken says, “If timber payments did fund the counties, even modest increases in the possible money they could get from timber sales is very small.” He adds, “The county funding does not come from timber sales; it hasn’t for 20 years.”

“There’s no way,” Heiken says, “we’re going back to the clearcutting of the late

’80s, driving salmon to extinction and making the public upset.”

He says, “If the goal of increased logging is seen as a way to create jobs, I would advise them to look elsewhere for the best economic development opportunities.”

Heiken says that the housing market is in a depression with recovery expected to be slow, and that the timber industry is a shrinking fraction of Oregon’s economy, because for 20 years other sectors of its economy have been growing relatively faster. In terms of job creation, the logging industry has replaced workers with machines, he says.

For the full report on log and lumber exports, go to <http://wkly.ws/12i>

— Camilla Mortensen

## CITY TO REMOVE BIKE LANE NEAR UO

The city plans to begin a project next week near the UO that will remove a heavily used bike lane and cycletrack on 13th but add a two-way bike lane and crossing north on Alder Street.

The addition of the two-way bike lane on Alder north from 13th with a new traffic light at Franklin Boulevard has been long sought by cyclists seeking a connection to the riverfront path system. But the removal of the existing cycletrack on 13th has been controversial.

UO bike coordinator Ted Sweeney wrote on the GEARs Google Group last year that he was concerned that the design would force traffic into head-on collisions. “I am having visions of students shooting suddenly into the westbound bike lane and causing accidents,” Sweeney wrote.

The city’s design for 13th prioritizes parking cars in the crowded area over dedicated space to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The plan would remove a line of parked cars separating the cycletrack on 13th from traffic and remove a bike lane going the other way on the other side of the street. Instead, the city would move all parking to the south side of the street in back-in diagonal stalls, eliminate the eastbound bike lane and instead paint “sharrow” markings on the street to encourage drivers to share the traffic lane with people on bikes.

City bike planner David Roth, who left the city recently for another job, bristled at criticism of his plan and argued that the

## ACTIVIST ALERT

• Lane County **Commissioner Rob Handy** is hosting three community outreach gatherings Saturday, June 11, in the Bethel/Danebo, River Road, and Whiteaker neighborhoods. The first is from 9 to 10:30 am at Starbucks inside Alberton’s at 4740 Royal Ave. Next is from 11 am to 12:30 pm at Countryside Pizza at 645 River Road. The last is from 1:30 to 3 pm at New Day Bakery at 449 Blair Blvd.

• **World Naked Bike Ride Day** is Saturday, June 11, and Eugene cyclists will join thousands of other cyclists around the world to celebrate the human body and the bicycle. Participants will meet near Skinner Butte Park at the corner of Cheshire and Lawrence at 4 pm. The

route will be determined at that point and will begin at 4:30 pm. For more information, email [tiedyeguy@hotmail.com](mailto:tiedyeguy@hotmail.com) or visit [www.worldnakedbikeride.org](http://www.worldnakedbikeride.org)

• National spokesman **David Cobb** of the Move to Amend coalition will be in Eugene at 10 am Sunday, June 12, at the LCC Longhouse to give a training on “Oposing Corporate Rule.” A prerequisite of the training is watching eight half-hour videos produced by the Community Environmental Law Defense Fund’s Democracy School. Find links to the CELDF at [www.wethepeopleeugene.org](http://www.wethepeopleeugene.org) or call 225-2946. See *EW* story March 10 about David Cobb at <http://wkly.ws/12g> and for a copy of the Move to Amend petition, email [david@duhc.org](mailto:david@duhc.org) or visit <http://movetoamend.org>

• **Oregon Wild** will host “Conservation Through Exploration” with Trip Jennings of EP Films from 6 to 7:30 pm Wednesday, June 15, at Davis’ Restaurant, 94 W. Broadway in downtown Eugene. Rob Klavins will also talk about Oregon Wild’s outdoor program, which encourages exploration of Oregon’s forests, streams and wild lands. See [www.OregonWild.org](http://www.OregonWild.org)

• Public comment on the proposed 2011 Management Plan for the **Elliott State Forest** began June 1 and ends Aug. 29. The draft maps and plans are online at <http://wkly.ws/12j> and comments may be addressed to the State Forests Planning Specialist, ODF, 2600 State St., Salem 97310, or emailed to [ODFStateForestsComments@odf.state.or.us](mailto:ODFStateForestsComments@odf.state.or.us)