

EW obtained an email Richardson sent out to county employees on May 11, in which she writes “if you email or call me or stop me in the hall and tell me that I’m doing a lousy job, shouldn’t have been hired, made a bad mistake, or are going in the wrong direction on something” then she would stop and listen to the complaints though “it will hurt.”
— Camilla Mortensen

BIG YEAR FOR POT POLITICS

Pot smoked other issues as the hot topic in the May 15 Oregon attorney general primary race, in a sign that Oregon voters don’t see enforcement of marijuana prohibition as a law enforcement priority. It’s continuing as an issue thanks to petition drives asking voters to put legalizing pot on Oregon’s November ballot.

No Republicans ran in the primary, so Democrats Ellen Rosenblum and Dwight Holton faced off in a showdown that will likely decide the November AG race. Rosenblum won with 64 percent of the votes after enforcement of pot prohibition made the Oregon AG race a topic in publications across the country like the *Chicago Tribune* and *The Huffington Post*.

On her website, Rosenblum wrote that she’d make marijuana enforcement a low priority as attorney general, while Holton said at a March 20 Eugene City Club debate that Oregon’s medical marijuana law, as run, is a “train wreck” because “it’s putting marijuana in the hands of people, in the hands of kids, who are not using it for pain management purposes.” Holton also said, before and during the campaign, that he supports the medical marijuana law and those who are in compliance.

“In Oregon, this issue is more important than people realize,” says Robert Wolfe of Citizens for Sensible Law Enforcement, which donated \$53,000 in in-kind contributions

to Rosenblum’s campaign. Wolfe says his group reached out across demographics to publicize differences in Rosenblum and Holton on weed, and young voters and parents concerned about their kids losing scholarship opportunities due to possession convictions were among the most responsive.

A source familiar with the Holton campaign told *EW* that polling showed that any differences between the candidates’ positions on marijuana weren’t stark enough to sway voters one way or the other, but the source said that they did have the potential to generate out-of-state campaign donations for Rosenblum.

After the widespread publicity on the AG race and marijuana, Rosenblum’s campaign contributions also included \$80,000 from Drug Policy Action and \$70,000 from businessman and medical marijuana activist John Sperling.

Meanwhile, the initiative process is under way for the November ballot, and two petition drives say that they’ve gathered more signatures than are required. Wolfe is a chief sponsor of Initiative 24, which would give Oregon adults the state constitutional right to possess marijuana.

Wolfe says that Oregonians smoke weed at a rate 40 percent higher than the national average. “We can’t keep criminalizing such a huge percentage of our population when there are more important ways to spend our limited resources,” he says.

Initiative 9 would allow the commercial cultivation and sale of marijuana.

Despite having to fight the secretary of state on a proposed \$65,000 fine for allegedly paying petitioners per signature (Wolfe says he is innocent), Wolfe thinks his initiative has a good chance of passing in November. “We’re not going to run a campaign that glorifies the marijuana lifestyle — that’s not what we’re about,” Wolfe says. “It’s a matter of social justice. We want to end prohibition because it’s a failed policy that costs us too much in every possible way.”

— Shannon Finnell

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE & CLIMATE CHANGE

An Athabascan woman holds up a blood-red salmon in a village on the Alaska Peninsula. With a gentle tug, she slides the fish’s skin off like sludge. The salmon, a major part of the village’s diet, had been overcome by *Ichthyophonus hoferi*, the microscopic parasite that is proliferating in Alaska’s warming rivers and tributaries.

“It felt like paste,” says Larry Mercurieff, deputy director of the Alaska Native Science Commission and a keynote speaker at this week’s “Indigenous People, Climate Change, and Environmental Knowledge” conference at the UO. “I’ve never seen it before.”

UO history professor Mark Carey, the co-organizer of the conference, sought out keynote speakers like Mercurieff, an Aleut member, and Daniel Wildcat, a Yuchi member and professor of American Indian Studies at Haskell Indian Nations University, because he continues to see a lack of understanding in the general public about the impacts of climate change on indigenous peoples.

“Native peoples are disproportionately affected by climate change,” says Carey, who teaches the new UO Honors College course Climate and Culture in the Americas.

Carey hopes that the conference will expose the community and university to different perspectives on climate change because, in spite of the innovative methods many indigenous groups are using to adapt, there is little information transfer to scientific communities. “In my own interaction with scientists, there is a lot of resistance to incorporate indigenous knowledge.”

That’s where Mercurieff comes in. “What’s missing is the spiritual component,” he says. Mercurieff has been denoted as the messenger for the elders, or wisdom keepers; he grew up with on Alaska’s Saint Paul Island, a

**Keep it local...
Grow it yourself**

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS • 1977-2012

Fresh Organic Vegetable Starts
Available weekly at both Down To Earth locations

**HAYHURST VALLEY
ORGANIC
FARM & NURSERY**
Providing your garden with a healthy start for over 20 years

DOWN TO EARTH
HOME, GARDEN & GIFT

5th & Olive Street
541-342-6820

Mon-Sat 10-6
Sun 10-5

25th & Willamette
541-349-0556

OR 58 Salt Creek Tunnel and Half Viaduct Project, Milepost 56
Spring to mid-October 2012 and 2013

Project Location

OR 58 Suggested Alternate Routes

Complete day/night highway closure:
8 p.m. Monday, June 4 through 6 a.m. Friday, June 8, 2012

Other travel impacts:

- Closed completely at night Monday - Thursday, from 8 p.m. - 6 a.m.
- Open to a single lane of travel Monday - Thursday, from 6 a.m. - 8 p.m.
- Open weekends to a single lane of travel from Friday 6 a.m. until Monday 8 p.m.
- Travel is restricted to a single lane with pilot cars. Expect 20 minute delays.
- No complete daytime closures in July or August.
- Oakridge will always be open for business from the west.
- Crescent Lake and Willamette Pass will always be open for business from the east.

Know Before You Go
To learn more about the construction project and schedule, visit the project website at www.58tunnel.com

For the latest road conditions, visit www.TripCheck.com or call 511

Construction Starts May 18