

## TRANSPARENCY HAS HIGH COST

Lane County has been criticized for its lack of transparency, and a June meeting of the county's Policies and Procedures Committee included a discussion of making it even more costly for the public and media to gain access to public records.

Commissioner Rob Handy is a member of the committee, which also includes County Administrator Liane Richardson and fellow Commissioner Sid Leiken, among others. Handy says that Government and Legislative Affairs Manager Alex Cuyler and Richardson brought up a proposal to multiply the charges for public records by a factor of 2.5, calling it a "scrivener's error update" to changes that were made after a December 2011 public records update to the Lane Manual.

In the past the county has threatened to charge \$140 to

\$200 per machine searched in email records requests, and it recently quoted attorney Marianne Dugan a charge of \$3 million for her public records request related to a May 3 emergency meeting and allegations against Handy.

Currently the county manual says "fees shall be calculated to reimburse the county for actual costs in making records or information available." Those fees include the full cost of the staff position providing the information plus 2.5 percent "to cover costs associated with building, maintenance, utilities, etc." Richardson and Cuyler requested this be changed to "multiplied by a factor of 2.5." Other charges include copying fees, staff time to redact records and materials used.

"Looking at this change, doing the math from a couple different angles, it's extraordinary the difference," Handy says. He pointed out at the meeting that adding 2.5 percent on top of the base charge is very different than multiplying by two and half.

A public records request that costs \$200 increases to \$205 when 2.5 percent is added. But if multiplied by a factor of 2.5, the request would increase to a cost of \$500 to the citizen or media outlet.

"We had quite a discussion, and I emphasized that this was not a scrivener's error," Handy says.

Leiken chairs the Policies and Procedures Committee and

did not respond to a request for comment before press time.

Handy called the attempt to push the change through "another in a series of alarming trends in Lane County."

He says that the change in fees that affects the county's transparency needs to rise to the level of having the Board of Commissioners discuss it and have public input, adding that "major policy shifts should be made by commissioners rather than staff."

— Camilla Mortensen

## OLYMPIC CRIMETOWN

Eugene is not only TrackTown USA, according to a press release from the Eugene Police Department, while the Olympic Trials are under way, it's also a Mecca for thieves. The Trials will bring top-tier athletes, tourists, music, good times and, the EPD says, an increase in crime.

EPD "would like to remind citizens of the anticipated crime increase everywhere, not just the vicinity of the Trials," the release says. It continues, "Our area will be a target-rich environment for criminals due to the increase

## HORSE ABUSE DOCUMENTED AT RODEO

Horses were roped by the legs, dragged by the neck and thrown to the ground in a practice called horse tripping at a recent rodeo in Jordan Valley, Ore., and one bucking horse broke its leg. A graphic video of the events from the May 19-20 Big Loop Rodeo was posted on YouTube by the animal advocacy group SHowing Animals Respect & Kindness (SHARK).

According to SHARK the rodeo's sponsors include Les Schwab Tire Centers. The Les Schwab Facebook page is full of angry comments from customers. The company tells *EW* it reviews its sponsorships annually and has no comment at this time.

Horse roping is the Big Loop Rodeo's signature event.

SHARK says on its YouTube page that it has not received a response from the Big Loop Rodeo to the video and criticism.

Scott Beckstead, Oregon senior state director of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), had previously videoed these events at the Big Loop Rodeo in 2008, and he says it prompted him to introduce a bill to the 2011 Oregon Legislature that would ban horse tripping in the state. The bill didn't succeed "in part because people were saying this doesn't happen in Oregon anymore."

In 2011 the horses were roped by the neck but not the legs at Big Loop, and Beckstead says, "We thought maybe

our effort to introduce the bill got them to stop tripping."

In a press release after the anti-horse tripping bill was killed in committee, Dave Duquette of United Horsemen said, "No rodeo event in Oregon condones, or conducts, horse tripping. Oregon has comprehensive laws in place to protect animals. This bill was totally unnecessary. It was nothing more than a first step by HSUS to ban all roping of all animals in our state."

He added, "Horses are livestock, and if this bill had become law, it would have set the precedent for making it illegal to rope a cow. After all, they're both livestock —



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what's the difference between horses' legs and cows' legs?"

Duquette has currently been working on a project to bring horse slaughter back to Oregon.

Most people are unaware that horse tripping even

happens, according to Beckstead. He says rodeos like Big Loop don't get sanctioned by the PRCA (Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association). "The animals obviously are traumatized, injured and badly hurt."

Idaho Power Company was also a sponsor of the rodeo. Communications specialist Kevin Winslow says while he did not attend the rodeo, he didn't see any tripping in the YouTube video. He says the bucking horse that broke its leg was an "unfortunate and uncommon incident" and says Idaho Power sponsors the rodeo because it is a vital part of Jordan Valley, and the utility's intent is to support the communities that it serves.

"Some sponsors are making very bad choices with the activities they are sponsoring," Beckstead says. He says that it's imperative mainstream rodeos like the Pendleton Round-Up take a strong position on horse tripping. The Pendleton Round-Up opposed the anti-horse tripping bill.

He says that under Oregon's current animal cruelty laws, which exempt rodeo events, he doubts cases like this could be prosecuted. "It's obnoxious to most Oregonians," Beckstead says.

The video of the Big Loop Rodeo, which includes graphic images of a horse with a broken leg and animals crashing violently to the ground can be seen at <http://wkly.ws/1b3>

The Eugene Pro Rodeo runs July 3-7 at the Oregon Horse Center. It is a PRCA event and does not feature horse tripping.

— Camilla Mortensen

## Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

### JOSH COEN

A native of Huntington Beach, Calif., Josh Coen recalls the evening his dad was elected mayor. "We had a babysitter and heard it on the radio," he says. "The neighbors TP-ed the house." Coen studied advertising at Cal State Fullerton, interned at an ad agency, then was hired on as a copywriter. After three years, he took leave for a trip to the Amazon with his two brothers. On his return in 1991 he decided to go it alone as a copywriter. "I've been freelancing ever since," says Coen, who was also getting into blues music in those years. "I went to blues festivals with friends who played guitar." When he moved north with his wife and daughter in 2004, Coen found that the blues were alive in Eugene. He joined the Rainy Day Blues Society in 2007 and played a major role in developing a curriculum and coordinating the Society's Blues in the Schools Program. "In the first full year, 2008-09, we visited 750 kids in 10 schools," he says. "Kids and teachers loved it." Free of charge to schools, the program expanded to reach 4,500 kids in 2011-12, thanks to 32 volunteer musicians and teachers. "Every year, we visit the Serbu Youth Campus," he says. "Those kids understand the blues." Check out Coen's effort to export Blues in the Schools to other communities at [bluescomix.com](http://bluescomix.com) and watch *EW* music listings for his daughter Savanna, aka Eugene's teen queen of the blues.

