



The campaign to **raise state and federal minimum wages** is going strong, and now Oregon State Treasurer Ted Wheeler is calling for more transparency in corporate executive pay packages. Wheeler is the custodian of state funds and says the gap between the highest and lowest paid employees in a company is an indicator of that company's long-term profitability. Such information can affect state investments in Oregon stocks, and Wheeler believes the public also has a right to know. Transparency might serve to pressure corporations to reexamine not only their executive pay but also what they pay their lowest wage earners. Some European countries help protect their middle classes by putting caps on how much executive pay companies can write off as business expenses. We're not there yet, or even close.

Dozens of local businesses and organizations have been hurt a little or a lot by the snowstorm (see our Slant column this week). We hope customers will return and support our local economy and good causes. Aqua Serene's big Founders Day party was snowed out last weekend and will happen instead from noon to 4 pm this Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 14-15, at 2836 W. 11th Ave. Johnson Brothers nursery out in Coburg canceled its big Holiday Garden Party last weekend and it's been moved to 4 to 7 pm Friday, Dec. 13 (Santa will be doing laps from 9 am to noon). Shelton McMurphey Johnson House has better luck with its timing. The historic building at the foot of Skinner Butte will have its annual Very Victorian Holiday Party and silent auction at 5:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 12, trying to raise the \$40,000 it takes to keep the house open to the public. See smjhouse.org for other events, such as evening candlelight tours.

The LGBT Allies annual show and toy drive for kids at Central Latino was canceled, but people can still donate dollars at paypal/iscee.org. The Jazz Station's last weekend events were bagged, along with the International Human Rights Day celebration and the Communities of Color event in Springfield. There are many others. Check business websites, our Calendar and blog or give 'em a call if you missed a special event. Not every venue was closed. We hear Sam Bond's in the Whiteaker was busy as usual, along with some other pubs and restaurants easily accessible by foot. People actually enjoy going out in snowy weather if they don't have to drive.

Reality Kitchen has been looking for a permanent home in Eugene and is now in its third location at 645 River Road, just off the bike path. The nonprofit, which provides various educational services, food and a gathering place for adults and families in transition, was originally on Van Buren in the Whiteaker, then shared space with Hodgepodge on West 11th and is now taking over the Not Just Breads bakery and all its equipment owned by John Roberts. Jim Evangelista, founder of Reality Kitchen, says Roberts donated his business to the nonprofit and will be "sticking around for a while, teaching us his recipes and procedures. It's an amazing gesture." The new location will include both a café and deli and will provide wholesale food items to local pubs and restaurants. Reality Kitchen will also operate its food cart out of the new site and, in partnership with FOOD for Lane County, will "serve meals every week to unhoused neighbors and families," Evangelista says. See realitykitchen.org.

Salon DeLange is in a new space and is holding an open house from 5:30 to 7:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 12, at 31 N. Delta Highway, Suite 110. Call 343-0520.

The first **Winter Native American Arts & Crafts Market** will be open from 11 am to 3 pm Saturday, Dec. 14, at the Amazon Community Center, 2700 Hilgard St. in Eugene. Native American artists and crafters will offer T-shirt designs, graphic arts, beadwork, fine art, Pendleton fabric jackets, wearable art, jewelry and more.

Lots of fundraisers and toy drives are going on and one that caught our attention this week is the **Eugene Generals Teddy Bear Toss**. What's that all about? The local pro hockey team will be playing the West Sound Warriors at 3:35 pm Saturday, Dec. 14, at the Rink Exchange at the Fairgrounds. Admission is free if you bring a teddy bear or stuffed animal. During the intermission, hockey fans will toss their bears on the ice to be collected for the Pediatric and Adolescent Unit at Riverbend. Fans can also buy a teddy bear for \$10 at the ticket office and get a free admission to the game. See eugenegenerals.com or call 359-4154, ext. 207.

Music Masters is having its first holiday recital event at noon Saturday, Dec. 14, in the Edgewood Shopping Center on East 40th. The studio is celebrating its first anniversary and the recital is free. See musicmastersstudio.com.

NEWS

EFFORT TO CHANGE THE PRIMARY VOTING SYSTEM

Mark Frohnmayer is tired of feeling like he has to vote for the "lesser of two evils" in the Oregon elections process, and he's out to change our primary process to a more open process called "approval voting."

Frohnmayer, a Eugene-based entrepreneur and self-described "fixer of broken systems," says that the idea to change the voting system has been on his mind for a while. He wrote the measure with his brother Jon Frohnmayer two years ago, and it sat "gathering bits on the hard drive until the federal government shutdown." He adds, "I couldn't stand idly by."

Under the "fair and unified elections initiative" voters would get a primary election ballot that shows all the candidates for each non-presidential partisan office, as opposed to the current system in which only registered party voters can vote in the primary. Each voter then votes "yes" or "no" on each candidate, and the two candidates with the most up votes go to the general election for a runoff.

Frohnmayer says this means that voters don't have to choose between their favorite candidate versus one they think would actually win.

He calls the current system "sort of hideously broken" and says it leads to bipolar lawmaking bodies. He calls his primary proposal "more nuanced" and says as an independent voter the current system shuts him out along with the rest of the 54 percent of voters who are not registered Democrat or Republican. He also says 45 percent of newly registered voters are independent, and the current process says, "Hey, welcome to voting, you are shut out."

Frohnmayer says you can see the problems of the current system "writ large on the national scale where even the so-called moderate Republicans are not acting like moderate Republicans because they are afraid of being 'primaried'" — of losing in the primary to a member of one's own party because the vote is split.

He began the process for a ballot measure earlier this fall and has submitted the required 1,000 sponsorship signatures to the Secretary of State Elections Division, after which it makes its way to the attorney general's office for a ballot title, and then it's on to the signature-gathering process. It will take a couple months before the ballot title process is finished and collecting the required 80,000-plus valid signatures can begin.

Frohnmayer is new to politics and the initiative process, but his family is not — his father Dave Frohnmayer was the Oregon attorney general, a gubernatorial candidate and the president of the UO.

Efforts to switch Oregon's primary system have failed in the past, but Mark Frohnmayer says the two previous proposals by former Secretary of State Phil Keisling, the most recent in 2008, would have come at the expense of third party and moderate voices, and thanks to the federal shutdown and hyper-partisanship, "we live in a different time now."

For more information, go to approvalprimary.org. — *Camilla Mortensen*

LANE COUNTY SPENDING BIG BUCKS ON REMODEL

The upper level Lane County Public Service Building is going through a \$750,000 remodel; this includes the area around where the county commissioners work, though not, according to County Spokesperson Anne Marie Levis, their actual offices. Work began last week and is expected to wrap up on Jan. 25, according to a Sept. 30 email from Capital Projects Manager Brian Craner to Commissioner Pete Sorenson.

The upgrade was included in the 2013-2014 budget, which Sorenson voted against. That budget retained the 20 percent cuts to services that were in the previous year's budget. Commissioner Jay Bozievich said at the time, "The level of service we're providing the citizens under this level of funding is not really adequate."

The remodel apparently stemmed from the county administration — under the auspices of now-fired administrator Liane Richardson — and the Facilities Committee, according to the response from Craner. The remodel, Craner says, follows a project on the lower level of the building that relocated Developmental Disabilities downstairs from its spot near the county administration and county counsel. It was then decided to move Human Resources to that upper level spot, "given their regular collaboration, the similar nature of the internal services they provide and the sensitivity of the information they handle."

Sorenson says, "I think the 20-year-old carpet should be removed, and the concrete could be buffed to form a more inexpensive, cleaner and easier to clean flooring surface. Other than that, it seems like a big cost."

Craner says the efforts reaffirm the county's commitment to invest in "preventative maintenance and prudent upgrades" so "we don't find ourselves in the same position as our neighbors across Pearl Street."

County spokesperson Levis adds, "At the same time, Facilities Maintenance is taking the opportunity to address ongoing issues with decades-old building systems and equipment, repair leaking roofs and windows, abate asbestos containing materials, modify fire life safety systems to ensure compliance with modern code standards, etc. Improvements to lighting control systems, HVAC equipment, temperature controls and floor finishes are expected to save Facilities Staff significant time and money each year."

The money from the upgrade is coming from the Capital Budget, which also funds work such as road and bridge preservation and maintenance and construction of the landfill. — *Camilla Mortensen*

\$NOW HIT\$ LOCAL ENERGY BILLS\$

Record-setting low temperatures can lead to record-setting energy bills, but UO students can get help improving their homes' energy efficiency. Student and Community Outreach for Renter Efficiency (SCORE) sends peer energy educators to assess students' dwellings for ways to be more green, complete with about \$40 in free fixes.

"It's a challenging audience," UO Director of Co-Curricular Programs Shelley Bowerman says of student renters and a split incentive. "The landlords have no incentive to make energy efficiency improvements, and the renters don't have the knowledge or resources." With a swag bag of CFL light bulbs, faucet aerators and weather stripping, the program provides the resources that student renters are often reluctant to invest.

For about an hour and a half, student educators take residents on a tour of the home, pointing out energy escapes, such as single-pane windows, excessively cold refrigerators and inefficient light bulbs. Bowerman says that the peer educators benefit from the program, too, gaining consulting experience while still in school. "They have to be quite dynamic and creative," she says. "They have some pretty funny stories."

Bowerman says the program goal is to evaluate 70 to 75 homes by January. Interested renters can learn more at wkly.ws/1n3; at least one member of the household must be affiliated with UO. SCORE is funded by grants from EWEB, the city of Eugene and