

ACTIVIST ALERT

• **Ramón Ramírez**, founding member and current president of farmworker's rights organization PCUN, will speak on "Equitable Food Initiative: Why it is a Game Changer in the Agriculture Business," at 5:30 pm Thursday, Nov. 20, in Knight Law Room 175 at the UO; and "Forming Coalitions and Grassroots Organizing," at 6 pm on Friday Nov. 21, in the Global Scholars Hall Great Room 123. Gabino Palomares will perform after Friday's presentation. Both presentations are free and open to the public. For more information, email arias@uoregon.edu.

• The **Eugene Toxics Board** meets at 3:30 pm Thursday, Nov. 20, at the Eugene Emergency Services Center, 1705 West 2nd Ave., Fire Conference Room. Call 682-7118 or email joann.c.eppli@ci.eugene.or.us.

POLLUTION UPDATE

Christopher John Bartels (doing business as **Bartels Packing**) has been cited for violations once again by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. (For information on past violations, see EW 6/27, goo.gl/Xb41PD, EW 5/8, goo.gl/BhX5vP, EW 9/4, goo.gl/2gAaie.) Bartels operates a slaughterhouse west of Eugene (south of Fern Ridge Reservoir) and is required by his DEQ-issued permit to sample the blood waste from slaughtered animals applied to land near the slaughterhouse, and to submit sampling results to DEQ by January 15 each year. Bartels submitted 2012 results more than a year-and-a-half late and 2013 results more than six months late, and DEQ discovered that Bartels did not actually do any sampling for 2013, and instead Bartels "extrapolated" 2013 results based on 2012 results. Bartels' failure to sample in 2013 and submittal of extrapolated results to DEQ are serious violations, and DEQ has referred the matter to its Office of Compliance & Enforcement for formal action (which will likely result in fines). — *Doug Quirke/Oregon Clean Water Action Project*

lighten up

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

The message voters delivered to Congress in the recent elections: "We are tired of the political stunts and the gridlock. We are tired of your inability to pass legislation that will improve life in America. We are tired of the influence of big money on elections. KEEP IT UP!"



LANE COUNTY STEPS UP TO HELP HOMELESS SURVIVE WINTER

Ryan, who sleeps in a tent at the new Whoville homeless protest camp north of the U.S. Courthouse, says that he and his fellow campers are "managing" through the recent freezing nights. "It was cold last night," Ryan says, declining to give his last name for fear of repercussions. "It was really cold last night. We could always use more blankets."

With a newfound urgency brought on by the weather, Lane County released plans Nov. 13 to help Eugene's unhoused population get indoors during this winter's unpredictable days and nights.

"This is a very different approach than what we've had previously," says Trevor Steele, assistant public information officer for Lane County. "It's a much more proactive approach."

Under the county's previous administrator, Liane Inkster, Lane County had a much more contentious relationship with homeless advocates. At one point Inkster controversially called to "disinfect" the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza area after a protest camp for the unhoused occupied it.

A key element of the county's new strategy, Steele says, is to work in partnership with local nonprofits and organizations: "It's a much better use of taxpayer dollars for the county to work in coordination with the different groups that have been doing a really effective job at addressing some of these issues."

According to Steele, there are four projects Lane County is working on: collaborating with Egan Warming Centers to provide new overflow locations at the Lane County Fairgrounds and Serbu Youth Services campus; taking a role in Operation 365 to help veterans find housing; establishing a new rest stop with Nightingale Health Sanctuary (NHS) for 30 people on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard; and looking at ways to house homeless youths before the crucial 15th night on the street, after which young people have an 80 percent chance of becoming chronically homeless.

Mary Broadhurst, a member of the NHS steering committee and an Egan Warming Center volunteer, agrees that it's a notably different tack, and is eager to work with the county on the rest stop. Because of the proximity of the site to Autzen Stadium tailgaters, she says, the land will not be handed over until Nov. 22, after the last home football game.

Broadhurst hopes to start getting chronically homeless citizens — with and without disabilities — onto the self-governed site on Dec. 1 and temporarily into structures they can live in.

Though he will remain wary of the shelter plans until he sees them, Ryan is heartened that Lane County is taking more "compassionate" measures this season. "They're kind of stepping up in offering that, and trying to help a social problem, you know? Which is good," he says. "Keep my brothers and sisters warm. You gotta keep 'em warm." — *Ben Stone*

STATE PESTICIDE SPRAY INVESTIGATION WRAPS UP

For years rural residents along Highway 36 near Triangle Lake in Oregon's Coast Range have been asking, even demanding, that someone look into the chemicals drifting

from airplanes and onto their farms, and into their homes and drinking water. They've complained of the health effects on themselves and their children. They've had their own urine tested for the herbicides atrazine and 2,4-D.

This month, an Oregon Health Authority (OHA) investigation into those sprays wrapped up with recommendations that include notifying residents in a timely and specific manner and that "state agencies continue to collaborate on determining best practices that would protect human populations from pesticide exposures." The report also suggests that the residents get a mediator.

Lisa Arkin, whose nonprofit Beyond Toxics has teamed up with the rural dwellers to fight the sprays, sees hope in the report, particularly the recommendation that residents are notified of incipient chemical sprays. Right now, she says, people "pay for the privilege" of getting a list of sprays that might happen six to 12 months from now. She says that, ideally, nearby residents would get from 24 to 48 hours notice of exactly where and when a spray will be so they can bring pets and livestock inside and cover gardens.

EW publishes a list of upcoming pesticide applications collected by the group Forestland Dwellers in its Spray Schedule.

Arkin says Beyond Toxics — which recently coordinated to bring scientist and atrazine expert Tyrone Hayes out to the area to talk about his research on the chemical — is also pleased that the OHA recommended adequate recordkeeping so all spray data is completely accurate and timely.

Arkin says one thing she noted coming out of the report was that "we're going to learn more about the persistence of these chemicals in the environment and living things." In spring 2011 when the residents had their urine tested, elevated levels of atrazine and 2,4-D were found. Atrazine is an endocrine disruptor, and Hayes' research has shown links between atrazine exposure and the feminization of male amphibians.

When the residents were tested in August of that year, the final report indicated that 92 percent of the participants over six years of age had detectable levels of 2,4-D in urine. The report says, "Statistical tests on urinary 2,4-D levels indicated that the range of levels was consistent with the general population at the time of sampling." But Arkin points out none of the residents had recently reported using the chemicals on their properties, and atrazine is most commonly used in the surrounding timberlands in the spring, months before the August testing.

In its findings, the investigation says, "Because 2,4-D and atrazine rapidly clear from the body, the levels of these chemicals in urine can only be used to assess recent (within 24-48 hours) exposures." And it notes that it's unknown if pesticide applicators changed their practices during the investigation.

Arkin adds, "There's a gap here. We need to explain how it's possible it was still found in some urine in the fall when they hadn't been sprayed in a long time."

Despite the low levels in the fall sample, the report also points out that, "Currently, there is little scientific information about the health implications of exposure to multiple chemicals at low doses."

One result of the investigation is that the Environmental Protection Agency has been working on passive air samplers that hopefully will better measure pesticide sprays along Highway 36 as well as in the rest of the state. — *Camilla Mortensen*