

adding that she is now applying to the DMV for a title report. “Hopefully it truly does clear it up,” she says.

According to the Oregon Department of Justice website, three formal complaints have been filed against Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson. All of them were resolved. The Better Business Bureau website lists 151 closed complaints against the company in the last three years, but it gives Linebarger an A-plus rating.

“In many cases the complaint is the result of a misunderstanding,” says Joe Householder, the media representative for Linebarger. “This is money that the city is owed. It’s

needed to fund important services.” Householder explained that Linebarger is one of the biggest government debt collecting agencies in the country. “We bring an economy of scale,” he says, noting that any illegal practices

would result in the loss of the partners’ law licenses.

Stone says that the state of Oregon issues a list of approved debt collection agencies to which municipalities can sell their outstanding accounts receivable. “As part of the process, they checked out references,” Stone says about the state’s list. “I’m not aware of any of these grievances.”

She added that if the vehicle is sold and the title is not transferred promptly with the DMV — by the buyer or seller — it is possible to get a parking ticket that is not yours. “We’re absolutely willing to work with them to get it resolved,” she said about anyone who might be in such a situation.

Heidi Hubbard, representative at the city’s parking department, explained that it is possible to receive a parking citation even years after the sale of the car due to discrepancies in the city’s records.

The first time someone gets a ticket, Hubbard says, the city records the car owner’s information. “That info is put in the Eugene Municipal Court database,” she says. But if the ownership of the car changes, the city will be left with outdated information. “DMV doesn’t notify all the courts, municipalities, institutions,” she says.

“To take care of that, they are asking for proof of sale,” Hubbard says about the collection firm. “I’m hoping they can say that’s not your debt.” She adds, “If there’s any notice of collection in the mail from these people, it’s a legit collection.”

Gillis says she wished it had never reached this point. “Had I ever got a letter about this I would have cleared it up at that time,” Gillis says of her 10-year-old ticket. — *Daemion Lee*

JUNIPER TREE LEGISLATION FOR LOGGING AND RESEARCH

It’s time for the Oregon Legislature to do its part to help solve eastern Oregon’s “juniper problem,” according to Rep. Julie Parrish (D-West Linn).

Since the 1870s, the trees have flourished to an unnatural and dangerous extent, Parrish says. “It’s more like a weed than a nice part of the forest.” Her proposal is to assist juniper harvesters to get the trees out of the dry soil and into the marketplace. However, some conservation groups have concerns about the bill.

There are several small mills already pioneering juniper wood products. In July 2013, Gov. John Kitzhaber launched an initiative called the Western Juniper Utilization Group. Its aim is very similar to Parrish’s — develop incentives and infrastructure to harvest and distribute juniper wood. The

representative from the Portland suburb says part of what’s missing now is a “mission” from the Legislature. “Right now there’s no directive,” she says.

Much of the juniper being harvested today is on private land. Instead of having to metaphorically knock on the doors of private ranchers’ land, Parrish wants to encourage ODOT and state agencies to start working with juniper harvesters. Opening up state land for extraction would be a small step in facilitating the juniper market. She says that it is difficult to travel on the roads that lead to where juniper grows, and juniper wood is notorious for being difficult to work with.

Parrish says there is no doubt in her mind that a juniper bill will pass in the current session. Eventually, she expects her bill to be “married” with proposals from other legislators.

Besides just opening up state lands, she wants to allocate funding to the OSU Extension Service to research additional uses for juniper wood. She also thinks it will be vital to establish some small business loans or other aid to people interested in getting into the juniper wood business.

Parrish says there’s potential for the wood to be used for freeway guardrails or, depending on the research, maybe even as a biofuel.

Doug Heiken of Oregon Wild says the group has “grave concerns about commercializing juniper removal” and that it is not a sustainable industry as, once removed, prescribed fire can hold the trees in check.

He says, “It’s worth noting that juniper is a native species that develops astonishingly beautiful old-growth trees.”

According to Heiken, “There may be some benefit to removing small, newly established juniper trees from sage grouse habitat” but he cautions against building roads and skid trails across “fragile high-desert soils.”

Parrish says that juniper loggers are “providing a service for the state” by taking the trees out. By investing in the research and infrastructure to get the juniper industry moving, Parrish says it will be a new way to think about Oregon being a logging state again. — *Lucy Ohlsen*



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