

ACTIVIST LERT

• The annual **State of the County** address will be at 11 am Monday, Jan. 4, at Harris Hall, 125 E. 8th Ave. County officials will talk about what has been accomplished in 2015 and plans and challenges for 2016.

• Rep. **Phil Barnhart** will be holding town halls in January to talk about the February special session of the Legislature and to hear concerns from constituents. The first meeting will be at 6 pm Monday, Jan. 4, at the LCC Downtown Campus, 101 W. 10th Ave. Next will be 7 am Tuesday, Jan. 5, at Creswell Coffee Co., 116 Melton Road in Creswell. A Coburg meeting will be at 6 pm Tuesday, Jan. 5, at Coburg City Hall. A Brownsville meeting will be at 7 am Wednesday, Jan. 6, at Randy's Main Street Coffee, 250 Main Street. A UO town hall will be at 11 am Saturday, Jan. 9, at a location on campus to be announced.

• **Health Care For All Oregon's** Eugene Chapter will meet from 7 to 9 pm Tuesday, Jan. 5, at First United Methodist Church at 13th & Olive. HCAO's strategic plan is to place a measure for universal, tax-supported health care for all Oregonians on the 2020 ballot. Also on the agenda will be discussion of a public forum on gun violence planned for Jan. 28. Call 483-3971 or email patbitner@gmail.com.

• Mayor **Kitty Piercy** will deliver her State of the City Address at 5:30 pm Wednesday, Jan. 6, in the lobby of the Hult Center. Piercy, who is not running for reelection, is expected to highlight key accomplishments of the city in 2015 and outline goals for the coming year. Entertainment will be provided by the Dorians Jazz Choir of South Eugene High School. Light refreshments will be served.

• Permits for the **Jordan Cove Energy Project** and the **Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline** will be the subject of two public meetings in January. The first will be from 4 to 7 pm Wednesday, Jan. 6, at the Rogue Regency Inn at 2300 Biddle Road in Medford. The second will be from 4 to 7 pm Thursday, Jan. 7, at the North Bend Public Library, 1800 Sherman Ave. in North Bend. The meetings will allow informal questions and answers during the entire three-hour timeframe. There will be no formal presentation by the state or the applicants. Public comments will be recorded and entered into the public record. The Oregon Department of State Land's deadline for making a permit decision is Feb. 8. See oregon.gov/dsl.

• The political film **Merchants of Doubt** will be shown at 6 pm Thursday, Jan. 7, at Bijou Art Cinemas on 13th Avenue. The film looks at the secretive group of pundits-for-hire who dispute the science of climate change and toxic chemicals.

• A Lane County town hall on **human rights, equity and access** is planned for 5:30 to 7:30 pm Thursday, Jan. 7, at the Baker Center, 975 High Street. The county is looking at how a new advisory board can improve the county's "long-term efforts to implement its new human rights and equity plan."

• Coming up later in January will be a **rally for raising the minimum wage** to \$15 at 2 pm Thursday, Jan. 14, the Oregon State Capitol. A public hearing will be at 4 pm that day with opportunities to sign up to testify. Carpooling is planned from Eugene and elsewhere in Oregon. See 15noworegon.org to get on the mailing list.

Eugene's future City Hall is the topic at GreenLane Sustainable Business Network's monthly member meeting at 11:30 am Wednesday, Jan. 6, at the Eugene Hilton. Mike Penwell, the city's design and construction manager, will provide an update on the project, including information on sustainability aspects.



NEWS

CHANGES TO FEDERAL CIDER RULES BENEFIT OREGON CIDER MAKERS

Instead of reaching for a glass of champagne this New Year, grab a hard cider and toast to Oregon's booming hard cider industry. Recent changes in federal legislation, co-sponsored by Rep. Earl Blumenauer and Sen. Ron Wyden, have smoothed the process for craft cider makers by broadening definitions of hard cider and easing off taxes.

These changes are especially relevant to Oregon, says Lee Larsen, CEO of 2 Towns Ciderhouse in Corvallis, because Oregon has around 6 percent of the market share for hard cider, while the national average is 1 percent.

"Just like with the craft beer industry in Oregon and the Northwest, Oregon is leading the resurgence of craft cider," Larsen says. "It's an extreme hot spot, and it's currently one of the most competitive cider markets in the nation."

The CIDER (Cider Investment and Development through Excise Tax Reduction) Act, which passed the House, allows ciders to have carbonation levels that resemble the levels in craft beer, matching consumer expectations. While the CIDER Act had been introduced separately, it passed the House and Senate as part of the omnibus Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act authorizing government funding.

Previously, Larsen says, "the carbonation allowed in cider was pretty minimal. We have had people tell us all the time that our cider is under-carbonated."

'The biggest thing is being able to have almost all of our ciders on the shelf and have carbonation levels that consumers are expecting in our products.'

— LEE LARSEN, 2 TOWNS CIDERHOUSE

For higher levels of carbonation, Larsen says, cider makers were previously taxed \$3.30 per gallon, versus \$0.22 a gallon for lower levels of carbonation. Under the new rules, hard cider can contain 6.4 grams of carbonation per liter of liquid, a level closer to the carbonation found in craft beer.

Sean Kelly, owner of WildCraft Cider Works in Eugene, says the new legislation allows more wiggle room for ciders that re-ferment in the bottle. "There was always a concern that if the cider re-fermented a little bit in the bottle, you could be tested and called out for that," he says.

The CIDER Act brings pear ciders into the definition of hard ciders and also allows some flexibility in the level of alcohol present in hard ciders. The legislation amends the section of the Internal Revenue Code that defines hard cider.

"With different apple cultivars, the amount of sugar content in the apple can vary dramatically," Larsen says. The old rules called for hard cider to contain 7 percent alcohol by volume (ABV) or less — this level was taxed at \$0.22 per gallon — and anything above that was taxed at \$1.07 per gallon, a cost-prohibitive jump for cider producers.

The new mark of a little below 8.5 percent ABV, Larsen says, "allows cider producers and apple growers to continue to push the bounds and increase the diversity

of products available on the shelf."

For 2 Towns, Larsen says, this means the ciderhouse can expand its range. "The biggest thing is being able to have almost all of our ciders on the shelf and have carbonation levels that consumers are expecting in our products," he says.

Kelly says it's another step in craft cider mirroring the craft beer movement, and he says he's interested to see what happens next. — *Amy Schneider*

GRANT GOES TO MAKE FEMINIST LITERATURE FREE

A joint grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) was awarded to the Oregon State University Libraries and CALYX Press. The two organizations were awarded more than \$96,000 through the Humanities Open Book program. The grant will go towards the digitization and hosting of feminist literature that is out of print and making it available in free e-books.

CALYX is a Corvallis-based publication and press supporting women's creative works.

"CALYX focuses on newer writers, so for some of the authors CALYX was a place for them to get their work published," Jane Nichols, CALYX treasurer and vice chair, says. "In particular we like to focus on or ensure that women of color, from the U.S. and elsewhere, feel welcome and have a place for their work to be published."

CALYX has published authors including Julia Alvarez, Chitra Divakaruni, Barbara Kingsolver, Sharon Olds, Linda Hogan and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

The OSU Libraries and CALYX plan to make the digitized literature available through creative commons, and plan to launch operations beginning Jan. 1.

"We'll be negotiating with authors to adopt a creative commons license," Nichols says. "That removes any price barrier."

The organization hopes to distribute the literature through popular online applications and sites such as Amazon, Apple iBooks, Google Books and others.

"What people may not realize is that over the past 40 years independent presses have struggled to stay alive through the changes in large publishers," she says. "This project supports independent- and feminist-led press."

The grant will help remove barriers for feminist writers but will also make the literature available for people to consume. Nichols says women are under-published in comparison to men, and CALYX is trying to put women's literature in front of everyone's eyes.

"Through modern technology, these titles can be far more accessible than they are today," Earl Lewis, president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, says in a Dec. 17 press release. The NEH announced \$700,000 in new grants in collaboration with the Mellon Foundation to publish out-of-print books in the humanities.

"These books represent an untapped resource for scholars, teachers, students and members of the public, many of whom turn to the internet as their first stop when looking for information," Lewis says. — *Mohammed Alkhadher*