

EDUCATION EXPERTS TO ADDRESS OREGON'S SCHOOL FUNDING CRISIS

According to Oregon's Quality Education Model, Oregon is shortchanging its schools by about \$2 billion every two years. On March 29, a panel of education funding experts will convene at the University of Oregon to discuss "Solving Oregon's K-12 Funding Crisis: Where We've Been and Solutions for the Future."

"I think this is a really important topic for Oregonians to consider," says Colt Gill, superintendent of the Bethel School District and one of four panelists scheduled to speak at the event sponsored by the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics.

Gill says the discussion will include a look at the history of school funding in Oregon and how Oregon stacks up against other states. Gill, who serves on the state's Quality Education Commission, adds that he will explain the work of the commission and its origins.

Finally, Gill says, he plans to describe how funding shortages have impacted school districts in Lane County, including class size increases and the elimination of programs.

The word "crisis" is an appropriate way to describe Oregon's school funding situation,

Gill says — Oregon's growth for school funding is last in the nation.

"When you're last or close to last of 50 states on several measures, and the United States is not known any longer as an education power house, you're bottom of the heap in a middle-of-the-pack player," he says. "I think we're in crisis mode."

Gill says the issue of funding is multifaceted, but in order for change to occur, Oregonians need to figure out what they want for schools and then decide how they want to pay for it.

"Those are two things that haven't happened here," Gill says. "We've let this creep up on us, and many Oregonians don't even realize the state of schools in Oregon."

Other speakers at the panel include Adam Davis, who conducts public opinion research, Oregon Senator Sara Gelser, who serves on the Senate Education Committee, and John Tapogna, president of consulting firm ECONorthwest.

"Solving Oregon's K-12 Funding Crisis" takes place 7 pm Tuesday, March 29, at the UO's Knight Law Center, room 175. The event is free and open to the public. ■



'We've let this creep up on us, and many Oregonians don't even realize the state of schools in Oregon.'

— COLT GILL, BETHEL SCHOOL DISTRICT

ACTIVIST ! LERT

- A weekly **"Food Not Fences"** community lunch series will begin at noon Thursday, March 24, at the newly constructed fences at Washington Jefferson Park on 1st and Jefferson. Organized by Badass Freedom Fighters and Humanity First, the gatherings are in solidarity with "our unhoused community members and in search for solutions." Email ourhumanityfirst@gmail.com or cryswebb1975@gmail.com.

- A **County Commission candidate forum** for the North Eugene District 4 will be at 6 pm Thursday, March 24, at the First Christian Church, 1166 Oak Street.

- A community meeting on **"When the Federal Budget Fails Us"** will be at 7 pm Thursday, March 24, at the First United Methodist Church, 1375 Olive Street. Sponsored by Oregon Women's Action for New Directions. WAND members will talk about human needs in our area and how they are affected by federal budget priorities.

- **"The State of the Visual Arts** in Eugene" is the topic at City Club of Eugene at noon Friday, March 25, at the UO Downtown Baker Center, 975 High Street. Speakers include Libby Unthank Tower, Charly Swing, Miriam Jordan and Tina Rinaldi, with the panel moderated by Otto Poticha.

- The fourth in a series of **Save Kesey Square** events sponsored by the International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment will begin at 4 pm Friday, March 25, at Kesey Square downtown. The event's theme is "Odd Ducks Try to Out-Crazy Donald Trump in a Positive Way!" and the "competition" will be broadcast online. SLUG Queen Markalo Parkalo is expected to rain over the event. Contact davidwoaks@gmail.com to perform or judge the event.

- A **Eugene Peaceworks program** in support of a new non-commercial radio station, KEPW, will be from 6 to 8:30 pm Friday, March 25, at Reality Kitchen Bakery & Cafe, 645 River Road. Live music is planned, including the Eugene Peace Choir. Food, beer, wine and ciders will be available. Call 337-1323 or visit kepw.org.

- **David Berliner**, noted education professor at Arizona State University, will speak on "50 Myths and Lies That Threaten America's Public Schools" at 7 pm Monday, March 28, at 202 Ford Alumni Center on campus. Sponsored by CALC and the Wayne Morse Center.

- **350 Eugene** is planning a public meeting on "Break Free from Fossil Fuels" at 7 pm Tuesday, March 29, at First United Methodist Church, 1375 Olive Street. Discussion will focus on upcoming climate campaigns and action plans.

- A Eugene **City Council candidate forum** for the Ward 1 position will be at 6 pm Thursday, March 31, at the First Christian Church, 1166 Oak Street.

SLANT

- **Bus tickets** to ship off homeless people? We hear the city of Portland is looking at allocating \$30,000 to buy one-way bus fares for indigent residents who are stuck in Portland and want to go home, or at least to a place where they have the support of family or friends. San Francisco has a similar program called Homeward Bound. At first glance, this seems like a cynical way to get rid of "problem" people and pass them along to other cities. But it's become increasingly apparent that homelessness is a complex issue that calls for multiple and creative solutions: private and public shelters, legal tent sites with garbage service and toilets, vehicle camping, tiny houses, veteran housing, wet beds, affordable housing of all kinds, day-labor jobs, mental health and substance abuse intervention and services. Maybe helping an individual get sober and return to his or her family could be one of the solutions.

- Former governor **John Kitzhaber** is speaking in public again, only weeks after his fiancée Cylvia Hayes gave her first post-scandal talk at the UO's Public Interest Environmental Law Conference. Kitz says he's looking for

work. Any suggestions? Our favorite so far is that he "trim weed like the rest of us."

- **Will Trump come stump** in Oregon before the May 17 primary? Democrats might have resolved their nominee question by then, but The Vulgarian could be short on delegates as well as fingers. Oregon Republicans met in Seaside last week for the Dorchester Conference, and a straw poll gave top votes to Kasich, followed by Cruz, Trump and Rubio. It's encouraging to see the Dorchester gang favoring the only moderate candidate on the GOP ticket, but the state's more conservative and diverse electorate will probably line up, reluctantly or enthusiastically, behind Trump.

- Why did Gov. Kate Brown sign a controversial **package of sprawl bills** passed by the Legislature last month? Land-use planning advocates urged her to veto at least some of the bills, but it looks like she bought into the cynical argument offered by the Oregon Homebuilders Association and others that sprawl is necessary to deal with undefined "affordable housing." In a letter to a constituent March 15 defending her support of HB 1573, Brown wrote, "We need to increase our

supply of safe, affordable and decent homes for Oregonians," and, "in the past we have seen a number of situations where a city and county have approved the urbanization of an area, only to see a subsequent action that prevents the area from being added to the city." In other words, if city planners want to control expansion into urban growth boundaries, too bad. Now it's up to property owners, and taxpayers can pick up the costs.

- **This dragged-out election** season has some people irritated and frustrated, while others are fascinated by the political process and inspired to get involved somehow in this messy experiment we call democracy. One good way to plug into the local political scene and gain valuable experience in government is to get appointed to a city board, committee or commission. April 8 is the newly extended deadline to apply for appointments to the city Budget Committee, Police Commission, Civilian Review Board, Human Rights Commission, Planning Commission, Toxics Board, Sustainability Commission and several others. Apply online through the city's website.