

## \$12.5 million in bailouts flowed to Keizer businesses

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Keizer-based businesses retained 1,810 jobs with at least \$12.5 million in paycheck protection loans that were part of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

After haggling with legislators and media organizations over whether to release information showing how the federal program disbursed money in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Treasury Department began releasing some of the information this week. Even with full disclosure a lingering question, Keizer businesses reaped substantial windfalls the data shows.

The loan data is divided into two sets: loans up to \$150,000, which have detailed amounts, and loans more than \$350,000, in which only amount ranges are supplied.

The vast proportion of the payroll protection loans went to a small number of businesses in Keizer, but also accounted for slightly more than half of jobs retained, 941. Twenty-eight businesses

received between \$5.2 million and \$15.7 million in payroll loans. The short list includes the non-profits St. Edward Catholic Church and Assemblies of God Oregon District.

The two largest recipients of payroll loans, \$1-2 million each, were Willamette Farm Labor Contracting, which

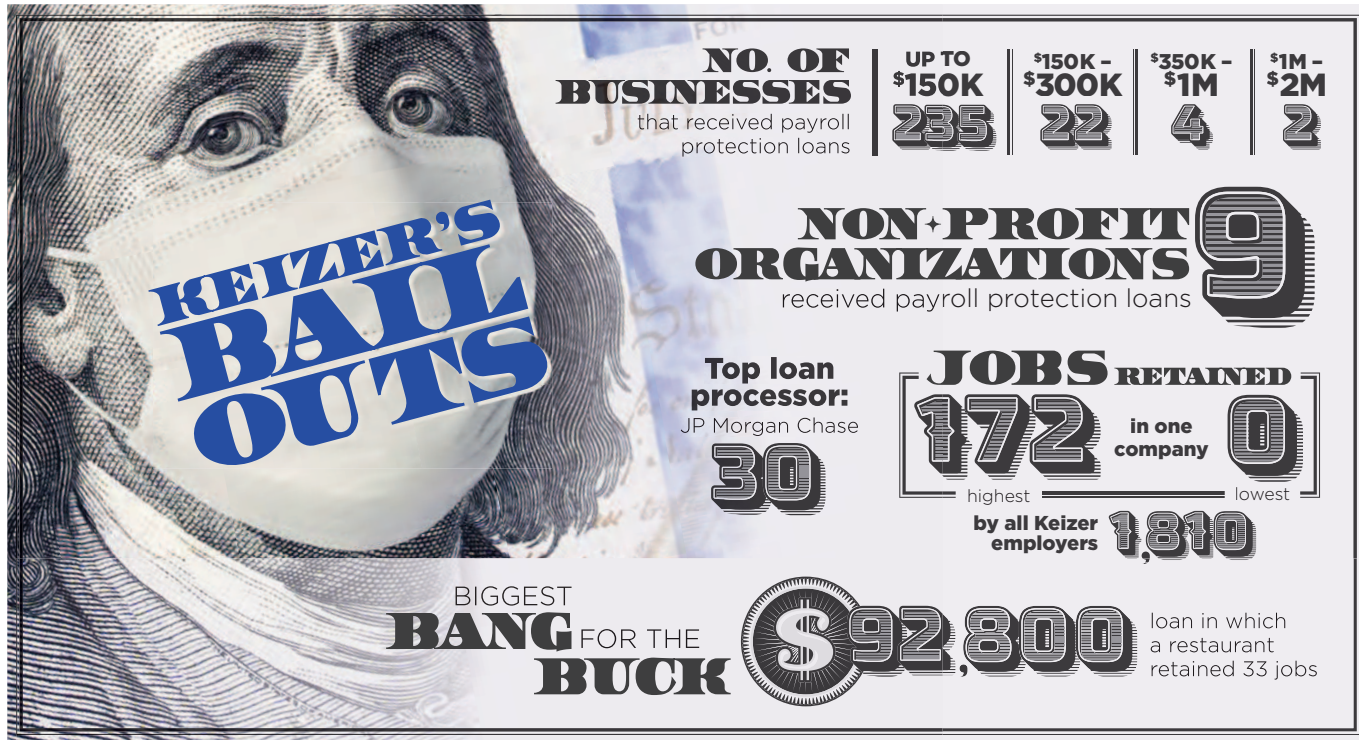
lists a Keizer P.O. Box but operates in Salem, and Keizer Campus Operations, the owner of Avamere Court at Keizer. Willamette Farm Labor reported retaining 100 jobs with the money and Keizer Campus reported retention of 172 jobs.

More than 230 businesses with Keizer addresses

received loans of less than \$150,000. The data offered by the Treasury Department regarding those loans does not identify businesses by name, but does identify the industries they operate within. It also includes the exact amounts of the payroll loans provided instead of ranges.

The loans totaled roughly \$7.46 million and helped retain 869 jobs. The largest number of jobs retained was 33 at a restaurant, but numerous recipients reported no jobs being retained or did not respond to the question. The top three loan

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KEIZERTIMES/Andrew Jackson

## School board appoints new leadership amid controversy

By **MATT RAWLINGS**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

After serving on Salem-Keizer School Board for one year, Danielle Bethell, the Keizer Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, was elected as the Vice Chairperson of the school board for the 2020-21 school in a meeting on Wednesday, July 1.

Bethell will be working alongside Satya Chandragiri, who was elected as the board's Chairperson during the meeting — both Bethell and Chandragiri were elected to the board in 2019.

Over the last couple weeks, the school board has endured immense criticism from members of the community for how they handled calls to the district to remove Student Resource Officers from schools, and for not being proactive when board member, Paul Kylo, held up a cardboard mask of Cliff Robinson, a former Portland Trail Blazers player, during a March 30 meeting — there have been numerous calls for Kylo's resignation.

Marty Heyen, the former chair, has also been asked to resign by a great number of people after she was accused on social media of having ties to white supremacist organizations. Fellow board member Sheronne Blasi also criticized Heyen two weeks ago for what she called "a repeated failure of leadership."

After receiving four of the seven votes for Vice Chair, Bethell gave an emotional speech to the board about the



D. Bethell



S. Chandragiri

state of the school district's leadership and addressed the need for overall improvement.

"This is an emotional time for everyone in this room. At least I hope it is. Because this is a really important decision for all the children in this community, including my own. So, I apologize in advance for my emotions because I never thought in my life that I would live in a community that is in such disarray," Bethell said as she was tearing up.

"Difficult times and difficult decisions need thoughtful, reflective leadership. Our community, like I said, is in

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## Council backs charter changes, removal of anti-LGBTQ+ words

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Members of the Keizer City Council unanimously approved changes to the city charter at its July 6 meeting.

As a result of the vote, city staff will develop a ballot measure asking whether voters want to institute the changes. The council will vote at a later date to put the measure on the ballot, but there do not seem to be any hurdles in the way.

Members of a task force, comprised of residents and city leaders, scrutinized the language of the charter during the past six months with an eye toward removing a section that marginalizes LGBTQ+ residents.

The removal of the offending section,



Section 44, is the major change recommended by the task force, but its members also found other ways to make the document more inclusive, such as using less gendered language throughout the document. There were also numerous changes to the organization of existing language to make it more readable.

In the final portion of a public hearing at the council meeting Monday, Pat Fisher, a member of the task force, spoke in favor of sending the revisions to voters.

"The removal of Section 44 is long overdue. I feel it for myself and friends and family members that live or work in Keizer.

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## Council opts for maskless meetings

By **ERIC A. HOWALD**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

The Keizer City Council approved its first ordinance pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic at its meeting Monday, July 6. The only issue that created consternation was the use of masks during city meetings.

"The question before the council is whether you want to wear masks even with the [physical] separation," said City Attorney Shannon Johnson.

Since the council resumed in-person meetings in June, all the meeting participants have maintained a six-foot separation and not worn masks during discussions.

The ordinance formalizes the city's declaration of a state of emergency and outlines how the city will conduct business to limit the spread of COVID-19.

The section of the ordinance that drew additional

council directed otherwise. Councilors approved the ordinance after removing that provision.

"The way, I understand it is that once you are stationary, masks may be removed," said Mayor Cathy Clark. She likened city meetings to a sit-down restaurant where customers would be permitted to remove masks while eating.

Johnson countered that if the OHA guidance was followed in its most literal interpretation, masks would be required for everyone.

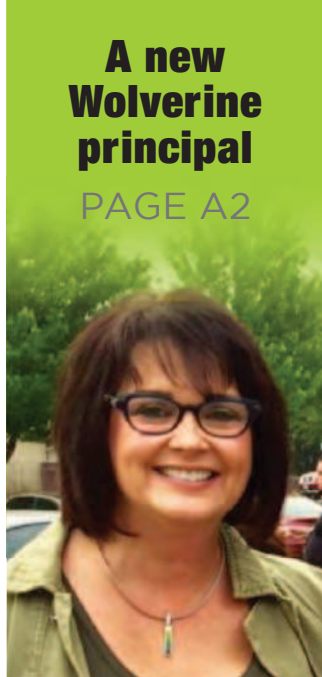
Given that guidance, Councilor Dan Kohler suggested leaving the language

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"I am a big proponent of wearing a mask, but if we're removing them once we are sitting down and distanced, I'm okay with that."

— Councilor Roland Herrera

debate would have required the city to follow all guidance of the Oregon Health Authority, which includes requirements that masks be worn at all times in indoor public spaces unless the



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