

# Governor signs transportation bill

## Ceremonial event planned for Ontario

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown is scheduled to appear at a ceremonial signing of a \$5.3 billion transportation funding package in Eastern Oregon Monday.

Brown officially signed House Bill 2017 without notice or fanfare on Friday.

The governor and lawmakers have touted the legislation as a chief accomplishment of the legislative session, which concluded in July.

The ceremonial signing is set for 10 a.m. at the Ontario Train Depot. Brown is expected to visit Ontario to



**Pamplin Media Group Gov. Kate Brown quietly signed a \$5.3 billion transportation funding package Friday, but will travel to Malheur County next week for a ceremonial signing.**

highlight a \$26 million project in the package to construct a reload facility central to moving products out of Malheur County, The Argus Observer reported Tuesday.

State Rep. Cliff Bentz, an author of the legislation, represents Ontario. The Republican played a crucial role in negotiating an agreement between Republicans and

Democrats that would win enough votes to pass the bill, said House Minority Leader Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte.

"I am happy she is coming here," Bentz said in a phone interview from Ontario Tuesday. "I think it is an important part of the process of sharing with the state the importance of this particular legislation."

Bentz and Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, the Malheur County economic development director, both served on the legislative committee that crafted the transportation package.

Smith is guiding the planning for the reload facility in a proposed industrial park, The Argus Observer reported.

A nonprofit corporation is being formed to govern the new facility and hire a manager, according to the newspaper.

The eight-year transportation plan includes staggered hikes in the gas tax, increases to registration and title fees, and new taxes on payroll, new vehicle purchases and bicycles priced more than \$200. The package also calls for congestion-priced tolling at some of Portland's bottlenecks, which could include certain lanes on Interstate 5 and Interstate 205, to pay for congestion-busting projects.

Among major projects specified in the plan are congestion relief on Highway 217, widening northbound I-205 from Powell Boulevard to Interstate 84 and initial investment in adding new lanes to I-5 through Portland's Rose Quarter.

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

# State economists say taxpayers can expect a 'kicker' next year

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — State economists say nearly \$464 million will be returned to taxpayers next year after income tax collections were higher than expected.

Oregon operates on two-year budget cycles. The most recent biennial cycle concluded in June.

When income tax collections exceed projections for the state's budget period by more than 2 percent, state law requires that the money be returned to taxpayers, a phenomenon called the "kicker."

Since the state has collected about 2.7 percent more

than predicted in May 2015, about \$463.5 million will be returned to personal income taxpayers during next year's tax filing period.

A similar "kicker" rule applies to corporate income taxes, except the excess is kept and set aside for education funding. Corporate excise taxes ended the biennium at about \$111 million more than the close of session forecast.

Today's forecast was the first after the conclusion of a long legislative session where revenue was a key point of contention between legislators who advocated for restructuring the state's tax system to boost revenue and those who wanted to cut costs.

# Woman struck by car near Safeway

The Daily Astorian

A 25-year-old woman was treated for minor injuries at Columbia Memorial Hospital on Monday night after she was struck by a car near Safeway in Astoria.

The woman entered a crosswalk in the westbound lane of Lief Erikson Drive near 33rd Street at about 5 p.m. Just after she began crossing, Candida Ortega Castillo, 20, of Astoria, made a right turn out of the Safeway parking lot, striking the woman.

The woman did not sustain serious injuries, but Castillo was cited for not carrying a driver's license and failing to stop and remain stopped for a pedestrian.

# Attempted stabbing reported in Astoria

The Daily Astorian

A man reportedly attempted to stab a garbage truck driver early Friday morning in downtown Astoria.

The driver told police he was stopped on the 1400 block of Commercial Street just before 5 a.m. when a man who appeared to be homeless swiped at him with a knife and missed. After the near miss, the driver punched the man in the face. The man then stood up and quickly fled the scene.

The driver was not able to provide a description of the man, and no arrest has been made.

# State lifts campfire ban at beaches

The Daily Astorian

Beachgoers are once again free to light campfires at designated state beaches.

The state lifted the temporary ban Tuesday, meaning campfires, candles, charcoal briquettes and tiki-style torches will be allowed in designated areas. The state announced the restriction last week on all open flames at state beaches. Since then, only fuel sources that can be easily turned off, such as propane stoves and fire pits in select areas, were allowed.

The ban was instituted in anticipation of visitors this past weekend for the solar eclipse as well as increased fire danger due to hot, dry conditions. All permanent restrictions, including no fireworks and keeping fires contained in designated rings, still apply.

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