

# Cannon Beach fire fights to find funding

Grants harder to get due to past paperwork errors

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

CANNON BEACH — Issues with past grant paperwork could make it harder for Cannon Beach Rural Fire District to secure certain types of funding.

In 2016, the volunteer fire department applied for two different grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency: one to fund a new volunteer recruitment and retention position, and the other to hire a fire inspector. Both were denied, due in part to the district's failure to properly close out a grant received in 2010, Division Chief Marc Reckmann said.

"When FEMA approves or denies a grant, part of the scoring is looking over seven years at your completion and performance," said Reckmann, who wrote the grant applications.

"In 2010, the district received a grant for turnouts, which required a period performance report to be filed a year after and a closeout report after the grant was done in 2014. Neither were done."

The grant was applied for and used under both former fire chiefs, Cleve Rooper and Mike Balzer. Neither Reckmann or current Fire Chief Matt Benedict were associated with the district in those years. The reason why the reports weren't filed are unclear.



Chief Matt Benedict

What they do know is soon-to-be expired breathing equipment, outdated communication gear and other department needs will need to be funded in the near future. FEMA grants are a significant avenue for volunteer rural fire departments to pay for this kind of equipment.

But if the reporting errors continue to impact the department's competitiveness for these grants, the district may have to pursue other fundraising strategies to make ends meet.

"We're working to get notes from FEMA so we know what to do better next time," Reckmann said. "This isn't the end. We will keep applying. These issues may have played a role, but how large of one I don't know."

### Current needs

Like many departments across the country, recruiting and retaining firefighter volunteers is a challenge. The department has about 18 volunteers, when it is ideal to have about 30.

"In general, it is hard to

recruit volunteers, but in Cannon Beach it is even harder," Reckmann said. "With the cost of living so high, it is hard to find volunteers who can afford to live here and are also able-bodied to do the job."

To address this, Reckmann and Benedict applied for a grant to create a recruitment and retention specialist who would figure out what resources are available to solve the problem. This person would explore different community partnerships in the hopes of expanding the program, Reckmann said.

Reckmann and Benedict are the only two paid employees of the fire district. While they each do their best to recruit volunteers, the necessity to retain volunteers for the safety of the community is a job in itself.

"I don't think most people in the community think of our firefighters as volunteers. When they show up on scene, they don't have a clue who is volunteer and who is paid," Reckmann said. "They just expect a firefighter who does their job."

### Future hurdles

In the next five years, the department will need to replace all self-contained breathing equipment and two 22-year-old fire engines, Benedict said. The breathing equipment will expire in 2019, and in total will cost about \$300,000 to replace in full. Up-to-date fire engines usually run around \$450,000 each, Reckmann said.

The department is also looking to replace outdated radios and repeaters. Because of the geography of the region and weak signals, first responders often have issues communicating with each other in places like Hug Point, where they often go for search and rescue calls.

"It's hard to command the scene when you have to walk back to your truck to communicate. Then you don't have eyes on the situation," Reckmann said.

Strict federal and state guidelines mean not replacing this equipment is not an option. If the department continues to be penalized for old reporting errors, Benedict will continue to look for other matching grants, but in the meantime could problem-solve by buying used equipment incrementally rather than in batches.

For the engines, Reckmann said proposing a levy may be necessary down the road.

"It may come down to decreasing the number of engines we use, buying used or getting a bottle at a time just to get us by. We can do that," Benedict said. "We will do what we need to do to keep our firefighters and the community safe."

# Bend businessman Carpenter to run for governor

Styles self as a Trump-minded conservative

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
*Capital Bureau*



Submitted Photo

**Bend businessman Sam Carpenter announced Wednesday that he will seek the GOP nomination for governor. Carpenter is billing himself as the more conservative choice, contrasting himself with moderate state Rep. Knute Buehler.**

SALEM — Bend businessman Sam Carpenter has announced he will challenge state Rep. Knute Buehler for the 2018 Republican nomination for governor.

"I confidently predict an enormous political and economic turnaround for Oregon as we leave behind the current failed progressive far-left leadership of Gov. Kate Brown, and move forward to an executive branch that is laser-focused on serving the people of Oregon through a smaller, much more efficient government machine," Carpenter said in a statement.

Carpenter, 67, is billing himself the conservative choice against the more moderate Buehler, also from Bend. The primary is in May.

His campaign motto is styled after that of President Donald Trump's: "Make Oregon Great Again."

"Yes, I share President Donald Trump's vision of a society truly in tune and serving the needs of regular Americans, not the needs of the intertwined cabal of big government, big business, and big finance," Carpenter said. "I'll fight to put the power back where it belongs, in the hands of Oregon's citizens."

Buehler, an orthopedic surgeon, is known for spearheading significant pieces of bipartisan legislation, including increasing access to contraceptives. The two major reproductive rights organizations — Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro-Choice America — nevertheless, have backed Brown. He declared his run for governor in early August.

Rebecca Tweed, Buehler's campaign manager, said she had no comment on Carpenter's announcement Wednesday.

Carpenter told the EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group Capital Bureau in August that he

was considering a campaign for governor but was waiting to see if any candidates with Trump-minded agendas made a bid. If no one else he could support stepped up, Carpenter said he would seek the position.

The winner of the GOP primary will face off with Gov. Brown, who is seeking her second and final term as the state's chief executive.

Thomas Wheatley, Brown's campaign adviser, said Carpenter's "entrance into the race will add a lot more sizzle to the Republican primary."

If elected, Carpenter vows to streamline state government, "facilitate a private sector business environment that allows a robust economy" and curb government "interference in our personal lives."

The Bend businessman is CEO of Centratel national telephone answering service and has authored two books on business management.

He first entered Oregon politics when he made a short-lived bid for the GOP nomination to challenge Democrat U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, then dropped out of the race. He also unsuccessfully sought to unseat U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, in 2016. He has never held elected office.

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

# State Supreme Court rules health care ballot title is unclear

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
*Capital Bureau*

SALEM — The Oregon Supreme Court has ruled that the ballot title on the referendum on the state's health care funding scheme must be clearer.

Three Republican lawmakers — state Reps. Julie Parrish, of Tualatin/West Linn; Cedric Hayden, of Roseburg; and Sal Esquivel, of Medford — want to repeal parts of a state law that requires health care providers and insurers to pay assessments to the state for its Medicaid program.

The three had argued that the ballot title approved by a legislative committee in September didn't fully or clearly explain the effects of the potential repeal.

A ballot title is the official written material that voters see. In Oregon, a ballot title includes a caption, summary and statements that explain the results of a "yes" and a "no" vote.

The court found that the caption needed to explain the assessments with more detail or describe them as "taxes," and explain that insurers were allowed to increase certain premiums under the law.

The "yes" and "no" vote result statements, the court determined, should also be changed to better explain the

**'The court affirmed nearly 100 percent of our concerns which the partisan legislative committee completely ignored.'**

Rep. Cedric Hayden

direct effects of the measure.

The court also said that the statement and the summary should not address an open legal question — whether or not temporary assessments on hospitals would be delayed or removed altogether as part of the referendum.

The ballot title "no" statement currently says that a part of the law that the petitioners want to repeal would merely be delayed, due to how the referendum petition was written.

That's a matter of legal interpretation, the court said, and added it should be resolved at a later time, in the event that voters vote "no" and the partial repeal is successful.

The court did reject some of the petitioners' arguments.

For example, the court found it was appropriate to include, as ballot title writers did, that the revenues went toward health care for low-income individuals and families, and "stabilizing reinsurance premiums" through a reinsurance program.

Parrish had previously raised questions about the process used to write the materials that the Supreme Court said on Wednesday should be changed.

Separate legislation had created a committee of four Democrats and two Republicans to write the ballot title for the health care referendum, although typically the attorney general does that.

The ballot title was approved in a 5-1 vote by the committee assigned to write it. The sole dissenter was Republican Rep. Greg Smith, of Heppner.

Both opponents and supporters of the referendum say the ruling is a victory.

"The court affirmed nearly 100 percent of our concerns which the partisan legisla-

tive committee completely ignored," Hayden said in a written statement on Wednesday. "Their direction clearly demonstrates why the Legislature shouldn't have hijacked the time-tested ballot title process which otherwise balances the powers between the three branches of government."

Yet, their opponents — the Yes on Healthcare campaign — said that the Supreme Court's decision meant that the ballot title committee was "substantially accurate in the description of Measure 101."

"The court affirmed that Measure 101 is a temporary assessment, that it funds health care services for low-income individuals and families and that it will stabilize health insurance premiums," campaign spokeswoman Patty Wentz said in a prepared statement Wednesday. "In addition, the ruling called for technical fixes to rearrange some language. This is great news and voters have been well-served by this process."

The ballot title will be referred to the attorney general, who is tasked with making the changes.

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