

College tobacco policy focuses on education, being neighborly

Smoking is already restricted

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian



Clatsop Community College has struggled to craft a tobacco-free policy.

The Clatsop Community College Board once again sent a tobacco-free policy back to the drawing board over concerns of truth in advertising and to add stronger language about prevention and education.

Board members voted to rename the proposed policy "tobacco-restrictive," as it allows smoking in good-neighbor zones designated by campuses. Tobacco use on campus is already restricted to designated areas.

The new policy encourages individuals to promote compliance and tobacco cessation. "College employees are expected to support individuals becoming tobacco free and to promote compliance in their areas of responsibility and on the college's campuses," according to the policy.

College President Christopher Breitmeyer said cessation education efforts are almost nonexistent. He recommended adopting the policy "with the knowledge that we will be developing some very active interventions for folks who do smoke, and also for those stu-

dents who have the very real issue of that addiction."

"It doesn't really have legs," said board member Esther Moberg, requesting more language be added about prevention and education. Breitmeyer agreed to work on the language and bring the policy back to the college board in December.

Board member Tessa Scheller was the lone "no" vote on the name change and continued her criticism of the policy for not banning smoking on campus outright.

"All peoples are welcome here," she said. "Bad habits are not. Things that can lead to the injury of other people, they just can't be tolerated, in my opinion."

In June, the college board

voted unanimously to send a proposed tobacco-free policy back to the drawing board because of loopholes allowing people to smoke in cars and on the fringes of campus.

The college can prohibit smoking in cars on its property, Breitmeyer said Tuesday, and is planning the good-neighbor zones in the upper parking lot of the main campus and along Liberty Lane at the Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station.

A council of college representatives has been helping Breitmeyer craft the policy. The council members brought the policy back to the college board over concerns not with a tobacco-free campus, but with the implementation, he said.

Several staffers provided arguments on behalf of the zones.

Angela Martin, a grant accounting specialist with the college, said it has modeled its policy after Portland Community College, one of the first community colleges in the state to make campuses tobacco-free, along with good-neighbor zones.

"While we know that smoking is bad, we also know your policy will not curb all smoking, all smokers from smoking," Martin said.

Rinda Johansen, a program assistant with Lives in Transition, said the college does not have the staff to enforce a smoke-free campus without the zones.

Technical Services Specialist Mariah Manners said she doesn't want to tell students to leave campus or have them smoking on surrounding sidewalks, trails and in the woods.

Anatomy and Physiology instructor Nichole Warwick said she worked in Towler Hall during a short-lived previous campuswide ban and had to walk past smokers on the sidewalk with her asthma inhaler. She and others remembered the time someone dumped discarded cigarette butts on a previous vice president's desk.

"My idea would be to have a safe area for students to smoke, if they're in crisis," Warwick said.

Lawmakers look to help first-time homebuyers

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Some state lawmakers are making another push to create a first-time homebuyer savings account program.

The program would allow Oregonians who haven't owned a home in the past three years to save up to \$50,000 in a 10-year period without paying state income taxes on the principal and interest. The money could be used to pay for a down payment on the purchase of a single-family home.

Lawmakers on the House Committee on Human Services and Housing plan to submit a bill to create the program as early as the next legislative session in February.

Similar legislation stalled in the House and Senate revenue committees earlier this year and never received votes on those chambers' floors.

Despite a surge in home sales in Oregon, the percentage of first-time homebuyers has declined precipitously since 2009. They represented about 44 percent of the sales in

the state that year, but by last year, they accounted for only about 28.8 percent, according to the National Association of Realtors.

Offering the tax exemption would cost the state nearly \$4 million in income tax revenue, according to an analysis in March by consultants Lisa Sturevant and Dean Bellas and commissioned by Oregon Realtors.

The program would ultimately boost first-time home purchases and result in positive gains to the statewide economy, the consultants concluded. Farther down the line, the economic prosperity could translate into greater income tax revenue from additional jobs in the construction industry. The study estimated that more than 3,200 Oregonians would start one of the savings accounts, and that at least 161 of those households would purchase a newly-built home in the first five years of the program. The state could expect a \$1.26 return for every dollar it invested, the consultants estimated.

Detractors see the program

as a tax shelter for wealthy Oregonians.

Chuck Sheketoff, executive director of the Oregon Center for Public Policy, went as far as dubbing it the "Rich Fam-

ilies' Down-Payment Assistance Program."

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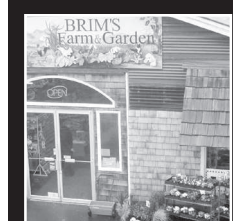
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