

Fred Meyer to stop selling guns, ammunition

Associated Press

PORTLAND— Superstore company Fred Meyer will stop selling guns and ammunition.

The Portland-based chain in a statement Friday said it made the decision after evaluating customer preferences. The company sells guns at nearly 45 of its 132 stores in Oregon, Washington state, Idaho and Alaska, including the store in Warrenton.

“Fred Meyer has made a business decision to exit the firearms category,” the company said. “We are currently working on plans to respon-

sibly phase out sales of firearms and ammunition.”

The company, a subsidiary of Cincinnati, Ohio-based Kroger Co., didn’t give a timeline in the statement. Fred Meyer spokesman Jeffery Temple in an email to The Associated Press on Saturday said the company wasn’t offering interviews.

Fred Meyer stores sell a range of goods that include groceries, clothing, electronics, outdoor equipment, furniture and jewelry. Stores also include pharmacies.

The company said the



Luke Whittaker/EO Media Group
The Warrenton store is among several that sells guns.

firearms category represents about \$7 million annually of its revenue and sales have been declining.

“We made the decision early last week after evaluating changing customer preferences and the fact that

we’ve been steadily reducing this category in our Fred Meyer stores over the last several years due to softening consumer demand,” the company said. “More recently we have been transitioning away from gun departments as a result of our ongoing work to optimize space in our Fred Meyer stores.”

Following last month’s high school shooting in Parkland, Florida that left 17 people dead, Fred Meyer said it would stop selling firearms to anyone under 21. The company had already stopped selling assault-style guns

several years ago, except in Alaska.

Fred Meyer did not mention the school shooting in its statement Friday.

Other stores announced in the wake of that shooting that they would stop selling guns to anyone under 21, including Walmart Inc. and L.L. Bean. Dick’s Sporting Goods recently banned sales of assault rifles.

Several outdoor chains, including Bass Pro Shops, Cabela’s, Gander Outdoors and Academy Sports, continue to sell assault-style rifles.

Engineer resigns from transportation commission

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — State Transportation Commissioner Paula Brown, the only engineer on the Oregon Transportation Commission, has resigned her position less than halfway through her first term.

Brown, who was appointed by Gov. Kate Brown in November 2016, said she is leaving the commission because of work and family obligations.

The volunteer transportation commissioner recently accepted a paid full-time position as public works director for Ashland, where she lives, and her elderly father recently moved in with her from Hawaii, she said in a phone interview Friday.



Paris Achen/Capital Bureau
Oregon Transportation Commissioner Paula Brown has resigned.

missioner Brown for her leadership on OTC and service to the state of Oregon,” Hockaday said.

Paula Brown had to travel from Ashland to Salem — a more than four-hour drive — the night before to make the meetings.

Her engineering background added an extra level of scrutiny to the transportation commission’s oversight of the transportation department.

She said she appreciated Transportation Department Director Matt Garrett’s willingness to be more open and accountable for agency actions, when the commission decided to take a more hands-on role in oversight in the past year. Part of the scrutiny of the department stemmed from legislation last year to fund \$5.3 billion in transportation projects over

the next several years.

“I have a high level of trust and confidence in Matt Garrett and his management team, and I think they will fulfill the legislative requirements of House Bill 2017,” said Brown, referring to the transportation-funding package.

Brown succeeded former Douglas County Commissioner Susan Morgan on the transportation commission after Morgan resigned to take a position as a lobbyist for the Association of Oregon Counties.

Brown and her husband, Patrick Flannery, own the Dana Campbell vineyards in Ashland. Brown has worked extensively on federal and local infrastructure projects and government contracting. She served as deputy chief of civil engineering at Naval Facilities Engineering Command in Washington, D.C., from October 2013 to September 2016.

Before that, she worked at the Navy First Naval Construction Division in Norfolk, Virginia, from October 2010 to September 2013, and served previously as the public works director for Ashland from June 1997 to December 2008. She also worked at the Rogue Valley Council of Governments from fall 1993 until June 1997.

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

Washington state moves to protect endangered killer whales

By **PHUONG LE**
Associated Press

SEATTLE — With the number of endangered orcas that frequent the inland waters of Washington state at a 30-year low, Gov. Jay Inslee has directed state agencies to take immediate and longer-term steps to protect the struggling killer whales.

The fish-eating mammals that spend time in Puget Sound have struggled for years with a lack of food, pollution, noise and disturbances from boat traffic. There are now just 76 of the orcas, down from 98 in 1995.

Inslee said the orcas are in trouble and called on everyone in the state to do their part. His executive order aims to make more salmon available to the whales, give them more space and quieter waters, ensure they have clean water to swim in and protect them from potential oil spills.

“The destiny of salmon and orca and we humans are intertwined,” the governor said at a news conference Wednesday at the Daybreak Star Cultural Center in Seattle. “As the orca go, so go we.”

An orca task force forming now will meet for the first time next month and will come up with final recommendations by November.

“This is a wake-up call,” Suquamish Tribal Chairman Leonard Forsman said, adding, “It’s going to take some pain. We’re going to have to make some sacrifices.”

Many have been sounding the alarm for years about the plight of the closely tracked population of southern resident killer whales. The federal government listed the orcas as endangered in 2005, and more recently identified them as among the most at risk of extinction in the near future.

A baby orca has not been born in the past few years. Half of the calves born during a celebrated baby boom several years ago have died. Female orcas also are having pregnancy problems linked to nutritional stress brought on by a low supply of Chinook salmon, the whales’ preferred food, a recent study said.

“We are not too late,” said Barry Thom, West Coast regional administrator for NOAA Fisheries. “From a biology perspective, there are still enough breeding animals,

but we need to act soon.”

Whale advocates welcomed the statewide initiative, saying it creates urgency and calls attention to the issue. But some also said it was long overdue.

“I think that everybody would have loved to have seen this five years ago,” said Joe Gaydos, science director for the SeaDoc Society. “It is a crisis. The fact that we’re responding is good.”

Under the order, state agencies will find ways to quiet state ferries around the whales, train more commercial whale-watching boats to help respond to oil spills and adjust fishing regulations to protect key areas and fish runs for orcas.

The whales use clicks, calls and other sounds to navigate, communicate and forage mainly for salmon, and noise from vessels can interfere.

Lawmakers also passed a supplemental budget this month that includes \$1.5 million for efforts such as a boost in marine patrols to ensure that boats keep their distance from orcas and an increase in hatchery production of salmon by an additional 5 million.

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Dr. Robert Pyle

A Columbia Forum Presentation



One of the Pacific Northwest’s most acclaimed nature writers, Dr. Robert Michael Pyle of Grays River, Washington, is a lighthearted, insightful and amusing speaker on topics ranging from Bigfoot to butterflies. He literally wrote the book on both topics, and is the author of “The Butterflies of Cascadia,” the comprehensive field guide to all the species of Oregon and Washington.

A graduate of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, Pyle’s 1987 book, “Wintergreen” won the John Burroughs Medal for its insights about how industrial forestry damaged the land, waters and people of the Willapa Hills of Southwest Washington. He and his Wahkiakum County neighbor Krist Novoselic, co-founder of the legendary rock group Nirvana, are currently collaborating on a mélange of acoustic guitar music and poetry.

TO ATTEND:

For Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$25 each; Lecture only: no charge

For Non-Members: Dinner & Lecture: \$35 each; Lecture only: \$15 ea.

Appetizers will be available at 6 p.m. • Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.

The speaker will begin after the dinner service is complete and non-dinner members and guests of the audience take their seats.

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