

Employers weighing benefits of pension liability payments

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — It’s not yet clear how many of the state’s public employers will use a new state program meant to address the state’s public pension debt.

A little time, and a lot of math, stand between now and the answer.

Oregon has an unfunded public pension liability of about \$25.3 billion. Gov. Kate Brown has been seeking ways to pay down that debt, largely benefits already earned by retirees that can’t legally be altered.

A bill requested by Brown and passed by lawmakers in

the recently concluded legislative session, Senate Bill 1566, established a special incentive fund. Qualifying public employers are to receive a match of 25 percent of a one-time, lump-sum payment they make toward their share of the \$25.3 billion liability.

The bill also created a separate School Districts Unfunded Liability Fund, which will distribute money to a new account to help school districts offset growing pension costs.

Both are funded by one-time revenue sources expected to generate about \$140 million — \$25 million for the match and \$115 million for the school fund.

Rob Bovett, legal counsel

for the Association of Oregon Counties, says many counties are interested in the match program, though he has yet to hear of any that have decided whether to use it or not.

Bovett says the 25 percent match makes a difference in the face of skyrocketing percentage of payroll that public employers devote to the Public Employees Retirement System.

“With six years of really dramatic employer rate increases, there is going to be a significant loss of public services, and this is a way to stem the tide,” Bovett said.

It will also take some time for school districts to figure out whether the matching program will work for them, says

Jim Green, executive director of the Oregon School Boards Association.

For a small or medium-sized district, the program could help to temper those dramatic rate increases from year to year — say, instead of leaping from 26 percent of payroll to 33 percent, they might go from 26 to 30 percent.

“It’s not just pure math,” Green said. “It’s also, what could we do in our district if we had that money that goes to that PERS increase?”

Under the new bill, public employers that want to get the matching funds would have to contribute a minimum of \$25,000.

That will mean that employers will also have to

evaluate whether making the contribution to the matching fund is worth the cost of the contribution, Green said.

Green rattled off a list of potential needs that \$25,000 could help pay for, especially in a small school district: a new part-time special education aide, career and technical education programming, a new school bus or roof.

“At each and every turn we need to do what will have a bigger impact on students,” Green said.

Public employers will know more about whether the program suits them once PERS rates are set later this year, and more still in mid-2019, when the state’s next two-year budget will be finalized.

And in the meantime, the PERS board still has to go through a rule-making process, which is expected to lay out more details, including how the special school districts liability fund is distributed among districts.

While it’s a good initial step, Green says, tackling the debt in the long run is going to require a lot more than the roughly \$140 million Senate Bill 1566 has laid out.

“It’s a lot of money, but as I’ve said before, this problem has a lot more zeroes behind it,” Green said.

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

Booze ban approved for Sauvie Island

By **ZANE SPARLING**
Pamplin Media Group

Boozers will be required to stay off the beach at Sauvie Island this summer.

Commissioners with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have banned alcoholic beverages between May 1 and Sept. 30 in the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area.

The ban takes effect this year, and is expected to be permanent.

In 2017, police officers

arrested at least 17 people for driving under the influence of intoxicants as they puttered away from some of Sauvie Island’s most popular beaches — including Collins, Walton, Willow Bar and North Unit.

About one-third of all DUII arrests made in Columbia County between April 1 and Aug. 3 stemmed from tipsy visits to the island, according to a press release.

“The last couple of years we’ve noticed a lot of issues ... We’ve documented all

of that. And it’s got nothing but worse,” ODFW spokesman Rick Swart recently told KOIN.

Sauvie Island’s scenic sands lure up to 16,000 visitors a day during the peak season and more than 488,000 people total between May and September, which effectively overwhelms local law enforcement.

Oregon State Police troopers believe the ban will decrease the amount of crime as well as calls for emergency medical help.

Lewis and Clark Bridge reopens after backpacks investigated

Associated Press

LONGVIEW, Wash. — Authorities reopened a bridge between Longview, Washington, and Rainier that had been shut down for hours because of suspicious backpacks on the Oregon side.

Oregon State Police say that authorities responded at about 10:20 a.m. Monday to reports of a man lowering

backpacks from the bridge over the Columbia River.

Police say the Oregon State Patrol Bomb Unit deployed a robot which was used to X-ray the bags but the results were inconclusive. The team then used a high pressure water cannon mounted on the robot to reveal the contents. Police say the bags contained clothing and miscellaneous personal property.

Police say 61-year-old Samuel Owen of Rainier was arrested on suspicion of disorderly conduct, possession of a user quantity of methamphetamine, second-degree theft, third-degree criminal mischief and felon in possession of a restricted weapon. Police say the incident was related to a dispute between Owen and another person.

FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TONIGHT
35
Mostly cloudy

WEDNESDAY
53
39
Occasional rain

THURSDAY
48
37
Cloudy and chilly with occasional rain

FRIDAY
46
34
Chilly with rain

SATURDAY
48
36
Mostly cloudy, a little rain; chilly

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ALMANAC

Astoria through Monday.

Temperatures
High/low 54°/35°
Normal high/low 54°/39°
Record high 72° in 1914
Record low 26° in 1965

Precipitation
Monday 0.00"
Month to date 1.89"
Normal month to date 4.71"
Year to date 20.50"
Normal year to date 22.10"

SUN AND MOON
Sunset tonight 7:28 p.m.
Sunrise Wednesday 7:17 a.m.
Moonrise today 9:15 a.m.
Moonset today 11:14 p.m.

First
Mar 24

Full
Mar 31

Last
Apr 8

New
Apr 15

UNDER THE SKY
Tonight's Sky: Spring begins with the vernal equinox at 9:15 a.m. PDT.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

TOMORROW'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks		Time	High	Low
4:21 a.m.	9.1 ft.	11:03 a.m.	0.2 ft.	
5:16 p.m.	7.6 ft.	10:57 p.m.	1.7 ft.	

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Hi	Lo	W	Wed.	Hi	Lo	W
Atlanta	67	37	pc	54	34	s		
Boston	38	30	pc	36	32	sn		
Chicago	39	29	pc	41	26	pc		
Denver	54	28	pc	61	36	pc		
Des Moines	41	27	c	48	34	pc		
Detroit	42	26	pc	42	25	s		
El Paso	71	49	s	82	58	pc		
Fairbanks	31	5	sn	23	0	pc		
Honolulu	81	71	pc	81	72	c		
Indianapolis	42	27	c	42	23	pc		
Kansas City	48	29	c	58	40	s		
Las Vegas	69	57	pc	76	59	c		
Los Angeles	70	58	c	66	60	r		
Memphis	49	38	sh	57	38	pc		
Miami	89	68	s	80	54	s		
Nashville	51	34	c	49	32	s		
New Orleans	70	51	pc	69	52	s		
New York	39	31	c	34	30	sn		
Oklahoma City	60	37	s	67	48	s		
Philadelphia	44	30	sn	33	28	sn		
St. Louis	44	31	c	50	32	pc		
Salt Lake City	59	43	pc	63	51	c		
San Francisco	59	55	r	65	56	r		
Seattle	56	37	pc	58	43	c		
Washington, DC	39	34	sn	38	29	sn		

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

REGIONAL WEATHER

Shown is tomorrow's weather. Temperatures are tonight's lows and tomorrow's highs.

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2018

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Hi	Lo	W	Wed.	Hi	Lo	W
Baker City	53	34	c	53	46	c		
Bend	53	34	sf	55	39	c		
Brookings	57	46	c	53	40	r		
Eugene	58	41	c	53	39	r		
Ilwaco	51	37	pc	51	41	r		
Klamath Falls	51	35	c	52	39	sh		
Medford	60	43	c	63	45	r		
Newberg	60	39	c	53	41	r		
Newport	55	41	c	51	40	r		
North Bend	59	44	c	53	41	r		
Olympia	57	30	pc	56	40	c		
Pendleton	58	38	c	60	50	c		
Portland	61	40	c	56	44	r		
Roseburg	61	45	c	58	42	r		
Salem	60	40	c	54	42	r		
Seaside	54	36	pc	53	40	r		
Spokane	51	32	pc	51	42	c		
Springfield	59	41	c	54	39	r		
Vancouver	60	38	c	54	43	r		
Yakima	63	32	pc	60	42	c		

PETA billboard to memorialize cattle killed

Associated Press

MADRAS — An animal-rights group says it’s buying billboard space along U.S. Highway 26 to memorialize 14 calves that died last week when the truck they were riding in rolled onto its

side outside Madras.

The billboard will feature a cow next to the words “I’m ME, Not MEAT. See the individual. Go Vegan.”

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals spokeswoman Amber Canavan tells The Bulletin newspaper that the bill-

board space will be rented for one month, and the organization hopes the advertisement gets at least one person to consider going vegan.

She says the nonprofit bought similar billboards following recent cattle truck crashes in Tennessee and Louisiana.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

- At 11:58 p.m. Monday, Olivia Tess Hinson, 28, of Cannon Beach, was arrested by Oregon State Police on U.S. Highway 101 near Gearhart and charged with driving under the influence of intox-

icants, reckless driving and attempting to elude police with a vehicle. After a trooper tried to pull her over just south of Warrenton, she allegedly continued southbound before police eventually were able to stop her. Hinson, the only per-

son in the car, allegedly then moved over to the passenger seat and denied driving when she was arrested. She later refused to take a breath test at the Clatsop County Jail, where she was restrained in a chair for a blood draw.

BIRTH

Feb. 22, 2018

MARTINEZ, Argelia and Victor, of Warrenton, a girl, Salma Eleanor Martinez, born at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria. Grandparents are Placido Martinez of Los Angeles, Josefina Dominguez of Puebla, Mexico, Porfirio Mendez of Long Beach, Washington, and Carolina Alvarez of Seaside.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Port of Astoria Commission, 4 p.m., Port offices, 10 Pier 1, Suite 209.

Astoria Library Board, 5:30 p.m., Flag Room, 450 10th St.

Seaside School District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 1801 S.

Franklin, Seaside.

Clatsop Community College Board, 6:30 p.m., South County Campus, 1455 N. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside.

Shoreline Sanitary District Board, 7 p.m., Gearhart Hertig Station, 33496 West

Lake Lane, Warrenton.

Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., work session, City Hall, 989 Broadway.

WEDNESDAY

Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., 989 Broadway.

LOTTERIES

OREGON

Monday's Pick 4:

- 1 p.m.: 4-0-5-8
- 4 p.m.: 6-9-5-2
- 7 p.m.: 6-8-2-2
- 10 p.m.: 8-6-4-7

Monday's Lucky Lines: 04-07-10-14-18-24-27-29

Estimated jackpot: \$11,000

Monday's Megabucks: 1-12-16-34-41-46

Estimated jackpot: \$1.8 million

WASHINGTON

Monday's Daily Game: 9-3-7

Monday's Hit 5: 06-10-13-24-33

Estimated jackpot: \$190,000

Monday's Keno: 04-05-10-13-27-30-37-40-45-50-51-54-56-59-63-69-72-74-75-79

Monday's Lotto: 01-05-19-39-45-47

Estimated jackpot: \$3.1 million

Monday's Match 4: 03-10-13-16

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Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style. Death notices and upcoming services will be published at no charge. Notices must be submitted by 9 a.m. the day of publication.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at www.dailyastorian.com/forms/obits, by email at ewilson@dailyastorian.com, placed via the funeral home or in person at The Daily Astorian office, 949 Exchange St. in Astoria. For more information, call 503-325-3211, ext. 257.

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