Fee increase would pay for drinking water testing

A \$1.8M bump in state fees

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE Capital Bureau

SALEM — Under a proposal from state health officials, most public water systems — from small housing developments to bigger cities serving thousands of residents - may have to pay higher monitoring fees to the state.

Officials are asking for a \$1.8 million bump in fees in the state's next two-year budget to cover the costs of monitoring public water systems, an area they say has long been underfunded at a risk to public health and public trust in the safety of drinking water.

"Smaller drinking water systems in Oregon are vulnerable," agency officials wrote in their agency budget request, which was submitted for review by the governor's office and the Legislature, which will hammer out the final budget.

They say that lack of staff and money is "jeopardizing the program's ability to fully meet its mission."

request follows The renewed public interest in the safety of Oregon's drinking

This summer, toxic algae at Detroit Lake prevented vulnerable groups, including people with liver conditions, pregnant women and young children, from safely drinking Salem city water.

The state regulates the roughly 900 public water systems that fall between small, private systems with fewer than 10 customers and larger systems subject to more stringent federal Safe Drinking Water Act standards.

The state wants to improve monitoring of systems ranging from the Aching Acres Mobile Home Park in Oregon City, serving six people, to the Big Woods Water District in Roseburg, serving 20.

Together those small systems serve about 15,500 Oregonians, according to state

Those state-regulated systems aren't inspected, but they do have to test water samples

About a fifth of those systems aren't doing that, though, said Jonathan Modie, Oregon

Health Authority spokesman. "The problem state-regulated systems is that

we don't have staff to ade-

Oregon Army National Guard Spc. Joshua White and Andy Smetana, with the Salem Public Works Department, conduct water distribution operations in Salem in June. doesn't have enough money. quately enforce the regulations when a system stops submit-Agency data shows that federal money to supervise public ting required monitoring data," Modie wrote in an email. "We water systems has stagnated

Quarterly monitoring

required to monitor quarterly

for coliform bacteria, nitrate

annually, and arsenic at least

than 180,000 lab analyses from water systems every year,

and most of those are entered

manually into a state database.

pared to safe standards and if a contamination is detected, an

email alert is sent to state or

county officials to investigate

tems subject to federal Safe

Drinking Water Act standards,

and inspects those every three

or five years; those systems

would also face fee increases

under the health authority's

an annual fee based on the

number of connections the

water system has, regardless

of whether it is subject to regu-

increased fees would pay for

five jobs at the state drinking

water program. Local public

health authorities who do sur-

veys and respond to contami-

nation alerts would see 25 per-

Even before the Salem

water crisis unfolded in May,

the state's health agency has

been saying that the drink-

ing water services program

cent more state money

The money from the

The agency wants to charge

The state also monitors sys-

the contamination.

proposal.

lar inspections.

That information is com-

The state receives more

once.

State-regulated systems are

since 2014, hovering at about also lack the staff to provide technical assistance to systems \$1.6 million annually. that need help." David Emme, the health

vices program manager, said in a January newsletter that the program "has been on a bit of a roller coaster over the last decade."

Oregon Army National Guard

The program lost a third of its staff since 2009 due to a lack of money, Emme wrote.

"The strain on our staff, managers and county partners is noticeable and we can't continue this erosion," Emme wrote. "While we all recognize the need to prioritize and adapt to limited resources, we also need a sustainable base program."

Bruce Sargent, owner of the Buckhorn Springs Resort in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in southern Oregon, said he doesn't have an issue with what he says is a monthly cost of about \$35 to test the water in the resort's system.

In the months that the resort is open and operating, he sends samples to a testing company, which forwards the samples to the state, Sargent said.

Buckhorn's system, which serves 11 people, is regulated by the state but isn't inspected, according to state data.

Sargent doesn't want to pay an additional fee for water monitoring. Under the proposal, systems like his would have to hand over \$75 to the state every year.

"I don't think they do very

much for us, so if there was a fee, it wouldn't be a good thing from my point of view," Sargent said.

Better enforcement

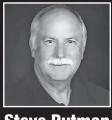
The state agency said that the money would step up enforcement of the systems that aren't testing water for health hazards.

The agency has already received some additional money for drinking water issues in the current budget.

Last month, the Legislature's Emergency Board approved an extra \$160,450 for personnel costs in the drinking water services program.

"Colleagues, the issue of contaminants in drinking water in Salem was huge, said state Sen. Jackie Winters, R-Salem, during the Emergency Board meeting. "I'm sure you've read a lot about it and this will help the agency in order to work on some of those issues.'

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



authority's drinking water ser-

Steve Putman

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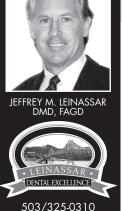
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Q: I just got my new Medicare card with my new Medicare number. Should I let my insurance company know?

A: If you have a Medicare Supplement policy the answer is yes. Those with an Advantage Plan or a stand-alone Part D plan don't need to but it isn't a bad idea just to make sure.



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Q:How does sensitive toothpaste work?

A: Imagine one of your teeth. It has two main sections: the crown above the gum line and the root below. People with sensitive teeth experience pain when their teeth are exposed to something hot, cold or when pressure is

The layer of enamel may be thinner and the gum line may have receded, exposing more dentin. Therefore, the recession makes teeth more sensitive. Sensitive toothpaste works by blocking the tubules in the dentine usually contain a chemical called strontium chloride. Repeated use builds up a

strong carrier by plugging the tubules more and more, leading to less-sensitive

Q:Should I use heat

a joint, use ice; it reduces

inflammation and pain and

shortens healing time. You can get a burn from ice just like with heat.

so don't leave it on for more than

better more quickly with ice. Heat

20 minutes. Most problems get

feels good, but may seriously

make problems worse. As long as there is pain and/or swelling,

continue ice; it can be done as

keep bleeding—that is what

often as once an hour. Would you

heat a cut? No, because it would

happens inside where you can't

or cold?

A: If you hurt, especially in



Patrick Webb/Chinook Observer John Ramage, project manager, left, and Brett Malin, longtime Seaview resident, are all smiles as they check over the installation of the Seaview sign.

In Seaview, the sign points to teamwork

By PATRICK WEBB Chinook Observer

SEAVIEW, Wash. — It's up! The Seaview sign is back in its rightful place, two years after a car accident damaged it so badly it had to be removed.

And Nansen Malin, who led the campaign to get it replaced, is happy

But she's not taking much of the credit — there is a list of people to thank, proving community projects are a team effort.

The old sign had been in place at 38th Place for 16 years. When it was hit by a vehicle two years ago, Pacific County crews had to remove it because the damaged, termite-ridden structure was a hazard. That version was one of many incarnations greeting visitors to the Seaview beach approach in the past 145

As designs were considered for a new sign, the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum showed project supporters photos of earlier versions, some of which were constructed from whale bones or driftwood.

Malin and members of the Seaview Historical Preservation Society decided replacing it was a priority. Getting that accomplished took two years because of the need to raise funds and create a new design that met changed government requirements.

For her project manager, Malin recruited John Ramage, a civil engineer who had retired to Seaview. He embraced the concept, led the planning and provided the technical expertise to make it happen, Malin said.

Together they brought architect David Jensen on board. Jensen, whose grandparents lived close to the sign decades ago, worked through design concepts, engineering requirements and safety regulations. "He helped us refine the design to fit 'Historic Seaview,'" Malin said.



A: If you have Spectrum internet, log into Spectrum. net, click Internet, then Security Suite for their free program. If you do not use Spectrum, to purchase an anti-virus program, we recommend Norton. A free antivirus program we recommend is Avast. Malwarebytes also offers an excellent antivirus, that comes with a free 14-day trial offer. We include anti-virus protection with all of our tune ups.

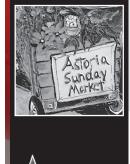


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O:My vegetable garden is pretty much done and looks like a wreck. How can I make it more productive for next year?

Clean out all the diseased plants and remove the weeds. Bait for slugs and add compost and lime. Plant a blended winter cover crop to enrich the soil. Our seed blend has legumes such as vetch and Austrian peas that will fix nitrogen in the soil. In the spring the cover crop gets turned into the soil for a green manure that adds organic matter. During the winter, your garden should be an attractive green oasis instead of an ugly weed patch. Another option is to mulch heavily with straw which will keep weeds out and break down into a nice organic addition to the soil. A quick and easy step that is also inexpensive and chemical-free!



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Q: When is the last Astoria **Sunday Market** day the year?

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Mortuary

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Q: Can a person be buried on private property?

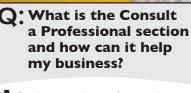
A: Yes. In the State of Oregon a property owner must obtain written consent from the city or county planning commission (or governing body in the absence thereof). The property owned will agree to maintain interment records of who is buried there & provide full disclosure of human remains buried there in the event of property sale. The proposal will be submitted to the State Mortuary & Cemetery Board for approval. All is pursuant to ORS 92.042 and the requirements in their entirety can be found in ORS 97.460.



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