

Hazardous waste facility expected to open in May

By **BRENNNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian

A hazardous waste facility is expected to open this May.

Earlier this week, Clatsop County broke ground on the 1,600 square-foot facility next to the Astoria Transfer Station on Williamsport Road.

The facility will let residents and some small businesses drop off hazardous waste. The project, which has been in the works since 2009, was originally prompted by the fact there are few options on the coast for people to dispose of dangerous materials.

The county will contract with Clean Harbors, a company which specializes in handling and removing hazardous waste, to staff the operation.

The facility is required to be open at least eight times a year, said

Michael McNickle, the county's public health director, but will likely be open more frequently.

"There's a pent-up need here," McNickle said. "We haven't had any hazardous waste events for at least four years."

The project has taken a while due in part to the time it takes to acquire special permits through the state Department of Environmental Quality to run a hazardous waste

facility, McNickle said. Engineering a special system to capture methane gas from a former landfill at the site also had to be considered.

The project will cost more than \$1.1 million, which is mostly being supported by loans and a grant. A \$1.50 per ton fee increase at the transfer station, which is expected to generate about \$175,000 a year, will also help pay for operations.

Campaign finance could be on the ballot in Oregon in 2020

Push comes after record spending

By **SARAH ZIMMERMAN**
Associated Press

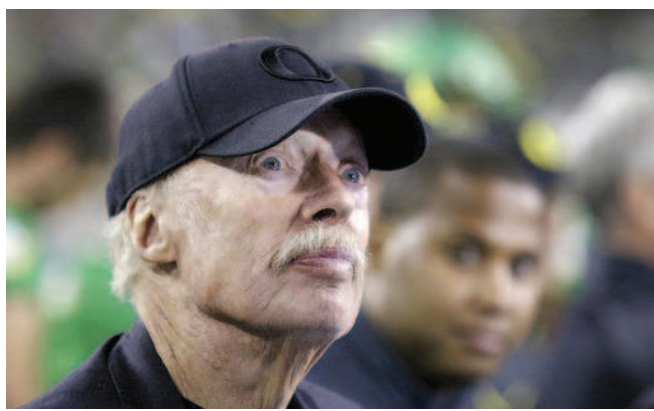
SALEM — Months after a governor's race that shattered state fundraising records, Oregon lawmakers want to rein in rampant spending from large donors and political action committees.

But first they have to change the constitution.

Oregon is one of five states to have no limits on campaign contributions, and lawmakers have long complained that they have to raise exorbitant amounts of money to remain competitive in campaigns.

"There are no rules in Oregon," said state Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton. "This is the Wild West."

Although legislators have tried to implement campaign finance reform, they've run into legal complications



The Associated Press

Nike co-founder Phil Knight donated a record \$1.5 million to former state Rep. Knute Buehler's Republican campaign for governor last year.

thanks to the Oregon Constitution's free speech provision. The state's Supreme Court ruled in 1997 that campaign donations are a form of free speech and can't be limited.

The high-priced governor's race last year rekindled the debate over spending limits and has prompted lawmakers to pursue a ballot measure amending the constitution that would explicitly give them the authority

to enact campaign finance reform.

Gov. Kate Brown secured re-election over former Republican Rep. Knute Buehler in a race that broke fundraising records when candidates raised a combined total of \$30 million. Buehler received a \$1.5 million donation from Nike co-founder Phil Knight, the largest donation by an individual to a candidate in Oregon history.

Brown, who received a \$500,000 donation from the D.C.-based nonprofit EMILY's List, has made political spending limits a priority and expressed support for the constitutional change. She told reporters on Thursday that individual donors shouldn't be able "to buy a megaphone so loud that it drowns out the other voices."

A constitutional amendment would have to be approved by the voters in the 2020 election.

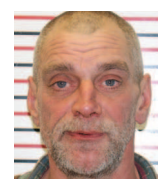
Voters have previously sent mixed messages about campaign finance reform. Oregonians shot down the idea of a constitutional amendment before, rejecting a 2006 ballot measure that would have empowered lawmakers to set political spending limits. But the same year, they passed a companion measure that set in law contribution and spending rules.

The latter law was not implemented, as it was contingent on voters approving the constitutional change.

Man sentenced to prison for chainsaw attack

Knapp pleaded no contest to attempted murder

By **BRENNNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian



Loren Shaun Knapp

A Fern Hill man was sentenced to 7 1/2 years in prison on Thursday for attempting to murder a Westport woman in her house with a chainsaw.

Loren Shaun Knapp, 57, was charged with attempted murder, attempted first-degree assault, first-degree burglary and other charges related to the attack last May.

Earlier this month, Knapp pleaded no contest to attempted murder, and, in exchange, had the rest of his charges dismissed.

Knapp apparently drove to the Westport home in search of a man who he believed stole his rifle, Deputy District Attorney Beau Peterson said. He entered the home and began chasing the woman inside with the chainsaw.

The woman, who spoke during the sentencing hearing, said she had never met Knapp before in her life. She remembers Knapp calmly telling her he was going to kill her, and feeling petrified as he sawed through the bedroom door she was standing against.

"I could feel my hair blowing," the woman said. "I was just frozen ... I don't know why, but I couldn't move."

When Knapp's chainsaw got stuck in a jacket hanging off the door, the woman had a chance to escape, she said.

He left the house and began confronting the man outside before deciding to leave, Peterson said

during the hearing. Sheriff's deputies arrested Knapp near the home shortly after.

Almost a year later, the woman still feels fear and confusion. The attack feels surreal, she said, as if it were a scene out of a horror film.

"Displaced anger is one thing, but to plan to carry a chainsaw down and attack somebody that's not even the person they're angry at ... I mean, I don't even know this man," she said.

Knapp confirmed she was not who he was originally looking for, but chose not to say anything else at the hearing.

Attempted murder is a Measure 11 crime that carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 7 1/2 years in prison.

Knapp also was sentenced to two years in prison on Thursday for an unrelated crime, where he cut down more than \$5,000 worth of trees on state land with a chainsaw.

"I hope you feel some shame, I hope you feel some regret, and I hope you feel some sorrow ... and I'm not sure if you do or not," said visiting Judge Ronald Stone. "But the reason I went along with this ... is you're accepting responsibility for this, and that means something to me, rather than put her through a four or five day trial."

Knapp has been arrested in Clatsop County more than 25 times, including for charges of burglary, criminal mischief, menacing, assault, animal abuse and stalking.

Courtney apologizes for sexual harassment at Capitol

Senate president was criticized for his response

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Oregon Capital Bureau



"I MUST DO BETTER. AND THAT IS WHY I MADE SURE TODAY I WAS COMING HERE TO VOTE 'YES' ON THIS."

Peter Courtney, state Senate president

issue of sexual harassment at the Capitol, which became public as the #MeToo movement unfolded nationwide in 2017.

Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, who carried the measure, spoke movingly on the Senate floor about her experience reporting sexual harassment, and the challenges women at the Capitol still face now that the issue of sexual harassment is better known.

She said some women stopped working in the Capitol because they didn't feel safe, or didn't want to accept unwanted touching as a condition of employment.

Legislative leaders recently agreed to pay \$1 million to nine victims who claimed harassment while on the job at the Capitol.

"And yet, every person in power still has their job," Gelser said.

She also read testimony from an anonymous lobbyist, who was harassed at the Capitol and was told by a lawmaker that he didn't want her work contact information because he didn't want to "get '#MeToo'd,'" or accused of harassment.

Gelser noted that survivors of harassment hadn't received an apology from the Legislature.

Speaking from the dais, Courtney then apologized to "any and all survivors" who have experienced any form of harassment at the Capitol.

"We must do better," Courtney said. "I must do better. And that is why I made sure today I was coming here to vote 'yes' on this."

Courtney has Graves' disease, an autoimmune disorder affecting the eyes, and went on medical leave last week due to a flare-up of that condition, according to his office.

He was scheduled to return full time to his Senate duties on Monday.

In late 2017, Gelser filed a complaint against then-Sen. Jeff Kruse, a Republican from Roseburg, more than a year after initially raising her concerns with leadership and administrative staff about unwanted touching by him.

"It's been three years since the first time that I went to leadership to ask for help with that situation," Gelser said on the floor. "Despite that, my perpetrator was able to hurt other people in much more significant ways. We've had a lot of fractured relationships over this issue, we have had difficult conversations. I have spent a lot of time con-

sidering whether or not I even want to continue being a member of this body."

People who experienced sexual harassment and violence wrote the resolution, Gelser said, and the focus should be on supporting them.

"It's not about a bill," Gelser said. "It's not about voting 'yes' on a resolution. It's about what we do every day."

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