

Poverty: Affordable housing needed

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Healthcare counselor who works with students and their families.

“We’re doing more than just academics these days than we ever have done before,” Hoppes said. “We worry about a kid coming to school and learning to read, but we have to make sure they’re in a good place when they come to school to read.”

Although the school district is willing to do whatever it needs to support students, Hoppes said schools don’t have enough resources to help. He said the Student Success Act will offer better support next year, especially for counseling and mental health. The district plans to focus on supporting underserved students.

Tom Rogozinski, the superintendent of the Warrenton-Hammond School



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
Chicken nuggets and slices of pizza wait under heating lamps just before lunch in the high school cafeteria.

District, said the challenge will be long-term sustainability.

The Warrenton school district supports the largest number of homeless students.

“A lot of our initiatives we would like to put in place and the programs we already have that we want

to bolster are largely around social, emotional, mental, behavioral and physical health needs,” he said.

For long-term support, Rogozinski said schools need significant investment in specialists to help students regulate their emotions and mental health.

“If they’re going to

charge school districts with doing more, then yes, please give us more resources to do that,” Rogozinski said. “If it is not the school district doing the work, then who is it going to be? And to that very question, that is why we are here. That is why we are in education. That’s what we’re here to do.”

Although school districts are committed to doing everything they can to help, Hoppes said the community needs affordable housing and good-paying jobs.

“We’re a service industry community and those are the type of jobs that are available to people who live here, and some of the jobs don’t get them above the poverty rate,” Hoppes said.

“It’s hard,” he said. “Our community, I mean communities everywhere, have more needs than we ever have before.”



Rob Davis/The Oregonian

Ballot initiatives are planned on forestry practices.

State approves narrower forestry ballot measures for signature gathering

By **TED SICKINGER**
The Oregonian

gathering.

“The meat of what we’re trying to address is still in there, but it’s unfortunate that (some of these other provisions) won’t be included now,” said Steve Pedery, a spokesman for Oregon Wild.

A week after winning a legal challenge to her rejection of three forestry-related ballot initiatives filed by an environmental group, Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno approved three replacement initiatives that would prohibit most of the same practices.

Clarno’s said she rejected initiative petitions 35, 36 and 37 because they violated a provision in the Oregon Constitution that says individual measures can only deal with a single subject.

Environmental groups filed the three measures this year to tighten aerial herbicide spraying rules, increase forest stream buffers, prohibit logging in steep landslide-prone areas and prohibit conflicts of interest for state forestry board appointees.

The new versions deleted passages in the petitions that Clarno found had violated the single subject clause, getting rid of restrictions on conflicts of interest on the Board of Forestry and aerial spraying of herbicides near schools.

Clarno’s lack of process and explanation for the rejection led to the legal challenge by Oregon Wild, a political dustup with Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, and accusations that Clarno and her deputy, Rich Vial, had rejected the initiatives on political grounds.

Meanwhile, Oregon Wild filed a new set of petitions — 45, 46, and 47, dubbed the Oregon Forest Water Protections — without the language Clarno felt was problematic. Clarno approved the three new initiatives Thursday to move forward with signature

Clarno said she appreciated that “the chief petitioners of these initiatives amended their proposals to meet the constitutional requirements. Voters will now be able to read and decide for themselves on these issues.”

The proposed forestry restrictions are wildly unpopular among timber interests as they would restrict clearcutting on steep slopes and aerial herbicide spraying.

Three retired loggers backed by the timber industry have filed three of their own initiative petitions to counter what they say are “radical anti-forestry ballot initiatives being pursued by environmental extremists.”

Rosenblum refused to represent Clarno in the court challenge filed by Oregon Wild. That forced Clarno to hire outside counsel. But last week, a Marion County judge sided with Clarno, saying she was right to reject the petitions.

The controversy is ongoing as Rosenblum feels that judge’s decision, if upheld, could profoundly disrupt the initiative process, opening up measures filed by voters and referred by the Legislature to legal challenge.

Buses: ‘We have to keep cars off the road’

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“These children are coming to adulthood in 2030, 2035, and we need to have them thinking in terms of mass transportation and getting cars off the road,” Commissioner Charles Withers said. “Ultimately, we have to keep cars off the road, so if you start young training them that way, I think that bodes well for the future.”

Withers questioned how the transit district’s bus drivers would keep a handle on new juvenile riders.

Children younger than 6 already ride the bus for free. Those younger than 9 need to be accompanied by an adult. Hazen said the dis-

trict’s drivers are good at watching out for children.

Older children often accompany their younger siblings while parents work, Commissioner Tamra Taylor said. She is director of dining services for food service provider Chartwells and helps with the summer food service program.

“This would be — during the summer — another option to help feed our youth in the county,” she said. “I don’t think we realize how many kids are at home.”

Hazen, meanwhile, reported an average ridership of 126 per week-end for a new route expansion in Astoria paid for by the improvement fund.

The route is on Saturdays and Sundays east through Alderbrook to the Emerald Heights Apartments, where roughly 1,000 people live.

Hazen hopes to begin a direct route from Astoria to Portland next month. The route was paid for by a \$738,000 competitive grant Sunset Empire applied for in the improvement fund and matched with \$82,000. A bus will run once each morning, afternoon and evening between the Astoria Transit Center and Union Station in downtown Portland.

Sunset Empire had been covering the cost of the Lower Columbia Connector Route between Astoria and Rainier as Columbia County

Rider struggles with funding. Around one-third of the 4,100 people who rode the Columbia Connector Route last year continued to Portland. Sunset Empire also agreed to loan Columbia County a bus through March to replace a bus from the neighboring agency’s that broke down.

The Sunset Empire board approved a new operating agreement with NW Navigator Luxury Coaches, which took over a twice-daily bus route between Astoria and Portland from the previous operator, MTR Western. The route is funded by the state. Sunset Empire sells tickets and receives a 15% cut.

Ban: County’s focus on tobacco license

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Over the past several weeks, Michael McNickle, the county’s public health director, has gone back to cities with a revised ordinance that excludes the flavor ban.

The ordinance would give the county the authority to license and inspect tobacco retailers to ensure they follow Tobacco 21 rules, which outlaw the sale of tobacco products to people under 21 years old. The goal of the flavor ban was to help prevent teenagers from starting to use tobacco.

“I went around to all the cities with the exception of Warrenton, I’m going to meet with them next week ... and reintroduced the concept of the (ordinance) without the flavor ban looking for support, and I heard no push-back whatsoever,” McNickle said.

He said county commissioners told him they could unanimously get behind the ordinance if it excludes the flavor ban.

“It was just the flavor ban that was causing some consternation,” McNickle said. “So at this point, we’re happy with the (ordinance), making sure people are following Tobacco 21 rule — that’s our focus right now.”

Depending on how the state acts on flavored vaping products, McNickle said he may approach commissioners about a flavor ban after they see results of the tobacco retail license ordinance.

Gov. Kate Brown announced a six-month ban on flavored nicotine and marijuana vaping products in October following reports of vaping-related illnesses and deaths nationwide.

The Oregon Court of Appeals blocked the ban

amid legal challenges from businesses.

“I think the problem with us doing a flavor ban on our own is that we would be the only one, in this part of the region anyway,” McNickle said. “And now that the executive order for the governor was stayed, obviously there are some reasons behind that. So, it would be best if the state took on that issue ... it may be bigger than Clatsop County.”

John Harper, a local tobacco retailer, said he hasn’t had the chance to look over the revised ordinance,

but called the decision to remove the flavor ban “a step in the right direction.”

Harper asked county commissioners at the October meeting to delay their vote on the ordinance until the county, cities and tobacco retailers could discuss the flavor ban.

He said the ban would hurt local businesses. However, he said he is supportive of the tobacco retail license if it helps enforce Tobacco 21.

“I do appreciate the changes,” Harper said. “I think it’s overall better for everybody.”

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