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Schools face grim budget projection

'Disappointed'
Supt. Goldman
heads to Salem

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA
News editor

A cold million. That's how much less the Hood River County School District can expect to receive in State School funding in the next biennium, based on current spending projections out of the Oregon Legislature.

In statements to the Hood River County School Board Monday, Superintendent Dan Goldman said he was "really disappointed" at the forecast, adding that it appears he will need to go back on his statement to the board in its last meeting that there would be "no district budget cuts for the first time in a decade".

The latest state budget framework currently presented to the Legislature, now in session in Salem, is for \$7.235 billion in

See SCHOOLS, Page A2



Superintendent Goldman will hold the second of two "listening sessions" on the district budget, Wednesday at Wy'east Middle School from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Goldman will give a short presentation and take input from community members. Spanish translation will be provided at each forum.

Vaccine exemptions jeopardizing 'herd immunity' in local schools

By BEN MITCHELL
News staff writer

The state of Oregon has the highest percentage in the U.S. of people seeking non-medical exemptions for childhood vaccinations and new data shows that some schools in Hood River County are above that already high state average.

A report released last week by The Oregonian of com-

plied data from the Oregon Health Authority shows Oregon's rate of non-medical childhood vaccine exemptions — sometimes referred to as personal or philosophical belief exemptions — was 7.1 percent as of the 2013-14 school year. The Oregonian's study only included both public and private schools and child care facilities that enrolled 50 or more students, which still amounted to more than 1,700 institutions.

At Hood River Middle School, the non-medical exemption rate is just under the state average at 6.5 percent. But at May Street Elementary, the opt-out rate is 8.6 percent. At Horizon Christian School, it's 12.9 percent. And at Bright Beginnings, a preschool and kindergarten childcare facility located on

State Street in Hood River, the non-medical exemption rate is 23.1 percent, which would put it as the 54th-highest non-medical exemption rate in the state.

Oregon is one of 18 states that allow philosophic exemptions, according to the Centers for Disease Control, with more still allowing for religious exemptions, which Oregon also allows. The OHA requires parents seeking a non-medical exemption submit a "Vaccine Education Certificate" to their child's school, which is obtained by either receiving education from a healthcare provider or by completing a module on the OHA's website and then printing out the certificate at home. However, currently there is a bill in the state legislature that could remove those philosophical exemptions in an attempt to increase vaccine rates.

According to Ellen Larsen, di-

See SHOTS, Page A10

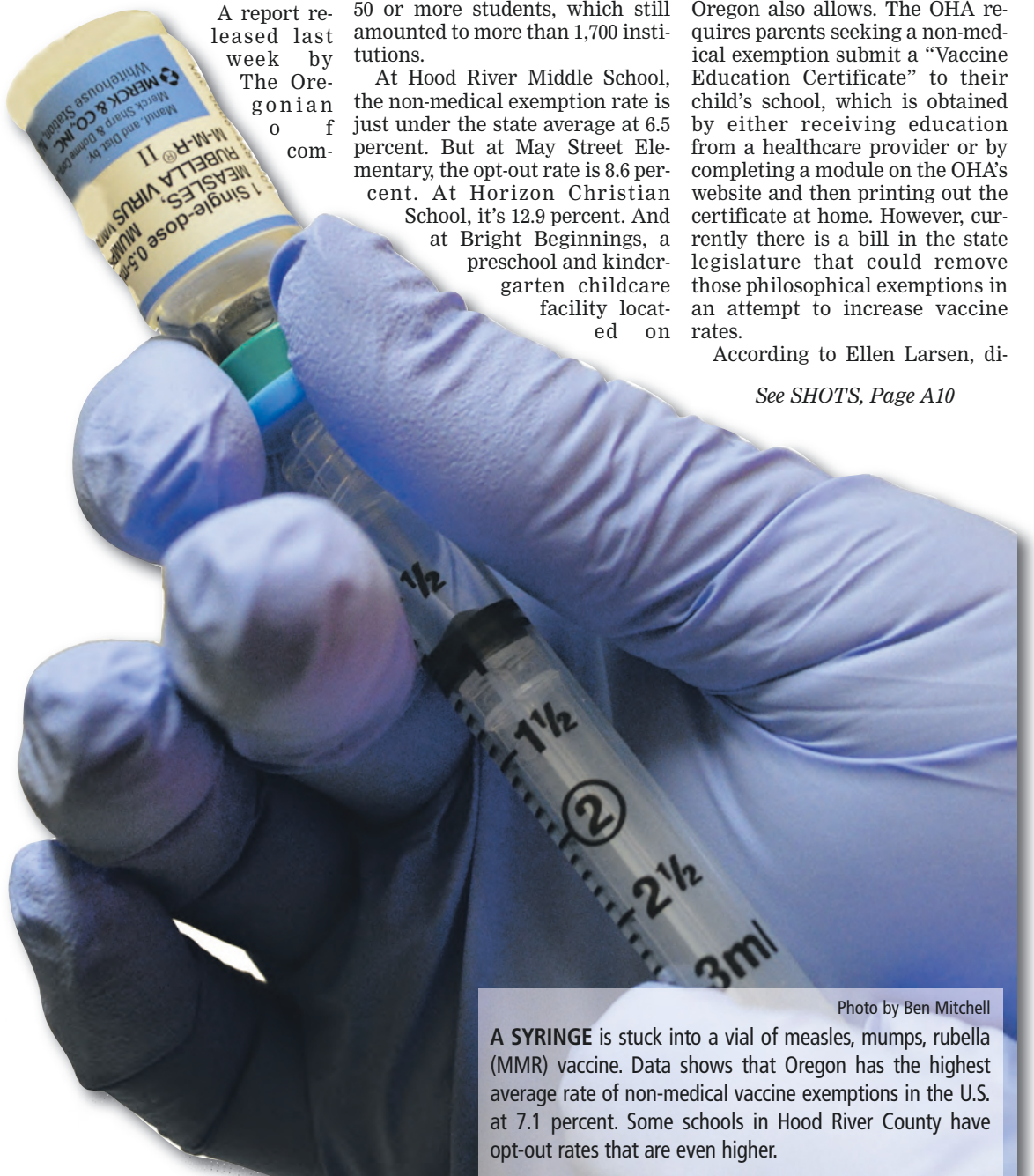


Photo by Ben Mitchell

A SYRINGE is stuck into a vial of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine. Data shows that Oregon has the highest average rate of non-medical vaccine exemptions in the U.S. at 7.1 percent. Some schools in Hood River County have opt-out rates that are even higher.

Maxam Nutraceuticals' Jim Cole hit with injunction

Court order results
in shutdown of
HR business

By BEN MITCHELL
News staff writer

A U.S. District Court judge has ordered a permanent injunction

against Hood River businessman James Cole, who has been accused by the federal government of selling "adulterated" and "unapproved" dietary supplements under his company Maxam Nutraceuticals.

The injunction was entered by Judge Michael Simon in U.S. District Court in Portland on Feb. 5,

See MAXAM, Page A6

Spotlight

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A weekly series about a day in the life ...

Sebastian Barajas 'super dedicated' in school, sports

BY TRISHA WALKER
News staff writer

To say Hood River Valley High School junior Sebastian Barajas, 17, is busy would be an understatement. He just finished his Extended Application — or EA — project, has started volunteering with Special Olympics, works Saturdays at Wy'east Orchards and is gearing up for the start of track season with daily workouts.

And then there's school.

Barajas is taking many higher level classes this year, but that wasn't always the case. He describes himself as "an average guy" when it came to schoolwork as a freshman. By his sophomore year, his guidance counselor had helped him get into higher classes, which he finds challenging, but not hard. "In honors and AP everything is quick," he said. "You learn so much; the teacher is constantly talking and you're constantly learning new material."

He's taking zero period athletic development — weight training — and AP U.S. History, Honors Junior English, health, chemistry, yearbook and geometry. A teacher's aide position gives him time to practice discus with teammate

See SEBASTIAN, Page A2



Photo by Trisha Walker, submitted

SEBASTIAN BARAJAS, HRVHS junior, is a hard-working student, student athlete and Special Olympics assistant coach. He's a two-time state discus champion, seen here on the podium his freshman year.

Three To Go

'Remember Nhu' benefit concert Feb. 28

Local musicians will perform from 6-9 p.m. Feb. 28 at The Pines Tasting Room, 202 Cascade Ave., Hood River, to raise funds for teams traveling to Kenya to serve the international program Remember Nhu. Chris Stewart, Avery Hill, Kelly Bosworth and Kit Garoutte will perform in the benefit. Remember Nhu is a non-profit organization that works in developing nations to prevent children from falling victim to the scourge of sex trafficking.

Alzheimer's class Feb. 20 at Adult Center

The Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter holds a class, "Living with Alzheimer's: For Caregivers — Early Stage," from 1:30-5 p.m. Feb. 20, in the multipurpose room of Hood River Valley Adult Center, 2010 Sterling Pl. In the early stage of Alzheimer's disease, families face new questions. What does the diagnosis mean? What kinds of plans need to be made? What resources are available to help? The class provides practical answers to the questions that arise in the early stage. Hear from those directly affected and learn what you can do to cope with the changes that come with an early-stage diagnosis. This class is free, but registration is required. To register, call 800-272-3900. For a full list of upcoming classes, visit alz.org/oregon.

Gorge Kids Soup deadline extended to Feb. 17

With Gorge Kids Soup, students have a chance to win \$3,000 or so for a business or project start-up, but more applicants are needed to make the 2015 Kids Soup a go. As of Friday, Kids Gorge Soup had too few applicants for the Feb. 26 dinner at Springhouse Cellar. Therefore, organizers are extending the deadline for applications to Gorge Soup for Kids to Tuesday, Feb. 17; applications must be postmarked by this date. Students who are working on a business idea, or community project, or a program that they would like to implement at their school, in their neighborhood, among their peer group, whatever the case or need. Past Gorge Soup for Kids events have given away roughly \$3,000 a night. "We want to help make these students' dreams a reality," said Julie O'Shea of Gorge Soup. For questions, please email gorgesoup@gmail.com

