

# Governor signs 'landmark' college bill, tours businesses

By **PATRICK MULVIHILL**  
News staff writer

Oregon Governor Kate Brown rolled into Hood River Friday morning. Her first stop: CGCC's Indian Creek Campus, where she signed the affordable college bill, Oregon Promise, and met with local representatives in education.

Brown arrived at the college shortly before 9:30 a.m. On her way, a sign posted at a Heights business greeted her, "Welcome to Hood River, Governor Kate Brown!"

The Governor shook hands and chatted with education leaders including Dan Goldman, Superintendent of Hood River County School District, Dr. Frank Toda, CGCC President, and Dan Spatz, Executive Director of Hood River Education Foundation.

Also present were local representatives Rep. Mark Johnson (R-Hood River) and Rep. John Huffman (R-The Dalles), as well as Sen. Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), who spearheaded the Oregon Promise bill.

Johnson launched the signing event by introducing Brown, prefacing her executive action with a short speech praising state policy makers for crafting the "landmark piece of legislation." He said the new bill, which he had co-sponsored, would allow the "seamless, productive pass-off of students" from high school to college.

Brown thanked Hood River leaders and said, "I'm very grateful to be speaking

here in sunny Hood River."

Brown praised the "bipartisan leadership" that had paved away at the Oregon Promise. She indicated the bill was specifically targeted at students from "working families out there trying to make ends meet."

Oregon Promise, SB 81, is a bill sponsored by Hass, and co-sponsored by local representative Rep. Mark Johnson and Rep. Tobias Read (D-Beaverton). The legislation allows for Oregon high school students who graduate with at least a 2.5 GPA — and maintain it through college — to enroll in community college to get waived tuition, paid by the state. To reap the rewards, students have to be fresh out of college (enrolling within six months of graduation) and they must apply for all federal and state grants they're eligible.

Students can earn an associate's degree or a career technical certificate for free via Oregon Promise, as long as maintain a 2.5 GPA and stay continuously enrolled. The max is 90 credits.

Some supporters have lauded the bill as "free college," but Brown described it as a means of waiving tuition for certain students fresh out of college.

"With the legislation that I'm going to sign in just a few moments, known as the Oregon Promise, we are opening the doors of opportunity even wider, by providing tuition waivers to academically eligible students," said Brown.

"Recent high school grad-

uates will now be able to earn their undergraduate education tuition free at their local community college."

Hass described the bill as a way for students who "work hard and stay out of trouble" to access college.

After Hass's final words, Brown signed the bill, posing with the representatives. Then, she spoke in a short, private roundtable discussion with the education leaders.

After the college stop, Brown spoke at the Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) brunch at the Best Western Plus Hood River Inn. The organization is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a lineup of alumni speakers.

Brown spoke to future business leaders, her topics including women who had inspired her in the past, especially Oregon's first female governor, Barbara Roberts.

After the speech, Brown planned to visit Hood River businesses on an economic development tour, including pFrien Family Brewers and Dakine.



Photos by Kirby Neumann-Rea

**GOV. KATE BROWN** meets Kelcie Rigel, 15, and her Big Sister Barb Young of Hood River, who were among community members attending. "It's nice to be in sunny Hood River, but today I think it is sunny all over Oregon," Brown said before signing the education bill.

## HOUSING

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zones.

"This is definitely the last meeting," she said.

The commission will also look at the "political things the city council can do" such as state tax deferrals and

real estate taxes;

"The meaty part is the land use and possible limitations on particular uses for 30 days or less or more," she said. "I do see a lot of people getting interested in this, now that they hear the housing strategies, and I think we will hear from folks on the short term rentals as well as those who will speak on affordable housing," she said.

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## HEIGHTS CRASH, NONE HURT

Two passenger vehicles collided Wednesday at the intersection of Belmont and 12th Avenue, next to Heights Fuel Stop. There were no serious injuries. Hood River Police Sergeant Andrew Rau said a Stevenson woman driving a blue sedan failed to yield when turning left onto the 12th, and crashed into a green Dodge truck driven by a Hood River man. The woman was transported to Providence Memorial Hospital with minor injuries. Hood River Police and Hood River Fire and EMS responded, closing off the right lane on 12th for about an hour. Photo by Patrick Mulvihill.



## CALLING ALL SOFTBALL PLAYERS

**12U ASA Tryouts for the NEW Gorge Softball team will be held August 1st at 6pm on the softball field on Nix Drive in Hood River.**

**To Register or for information Contact Tonya at (541)705-7217 or gorgeshadows@gmail.com**

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