

MARIJUANA: Roberts said taxes and fees will not be enough to offset police, emergency and social costs

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even then, he said, the short-staffed agency would not be able to enforce the rules. “So it will fall on local law enforcement,” he said. He anticipated the law will result in more people driving while high, just as it has in Washington state. Roberts said according to the Washington State Toxicology Laboratory, 1,000 drivers in 2012 tested positive for tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the stuff in pot that makes you high. Then during the first six months of 2013, after the state’s legalization went into effect, 745 drivers tested positive. And more than half of those tested, he said, exceeded the state’s legal limit of 5 nanograms of THC per milliliter of blood. Oregon already has a problem of people driving while high, he said. Data from the Oregon State Police Crime Laboratory from January 2012 to November 2013 indicates that out of 4,645 toxicology reports, marijuana, either alone or in combination with another substance, was in 2,321 of the samples, the most of any drug detected. And data from September 2013 through September 2014 indicates THC was in 51 percent of all cases analyzed. And he said the tax reve-

nue and fees a state can make from legal selling of pot will not be enough to offset the police, emergency and social costs of the drug. Roberts also discussed the shortcomings of marijuana dispensaries and the state’s medical marijuana program. In short, he said, regulations are too loose for getting a medical marijuana card and the state lacks the ability to ensure the dispensaries are operating legally. Pendleton City Manager Robb Corbett said he trusts the police chief on what could be coming down the pike, and given the vote in the county the community should be able to ban pot in Pendleton. Measure 91 allows cities and counties to opt out of the law if just 10 percent of registered voters petition to put it to voters in a general election. Corbett said he heard some groups in Pendleton are considering that move. Pendleton Mayor Phillip Houk said he has no doubt that pot leads to plenty of societal ills and he does not want pot shops in the city. Progress board chairwoman Susan McHenry urged fellow members to help spread the notion of a petition.

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IMMIGRATION: Program could be operational before the end of March

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N.C., said a deal on immigration is unlikely and that it will be a big issue in 2016. “We need to get something, but it’s critical it’s workable and sustainable. This issue is so difficult that we only see action every generation or so. It’s critical we get it right,” Wicker said. “If we get it wrong it could hasten the decline of labor intensive agriculture and production of fresh fruits and vegetables in the U.S.,” he said. North Carolina leads the nation in usage of H-2A visa foreign guestworkers at 14,500 and has been steadily increasing for labor intensive tobacco, fruits and vegetables. Whether or not illegals come forth to sign up for temporary legal status granted by an executive action that could be rescinded by the next president, depends on

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what happens in the next few months in Washington, D.C., Wicker said. “If there’s a lot of negativity the numbers will be smaller,” he said. Obama’s program, announced Nov. 20, defers deportation of illegals who have been in the U.S. more than five years, have children who are legal residents, pass a criminal background check and are willing to pay taxes. It does not grant citizenship. Fazio said it grants Social Security cards, unemployment eligibility and three-year work authorization. “I think people will sign up for it. I would if I were undocumented,” he said. Some people may be

afraid to sign up but Congress has never rescinded an immigration order of such magnitude, Cunha said. Stone said he doesn’t know if people will come forward or not but that he thinks people want to do things the right way, get authorization and pay taxes. Obama’s order is suppose to be implemented within 180 days of its announcement which is May 15, Fazio said. Cunha, who has advised Obama on immigration issues, said the program could be operational before the end of March. Cunha and Wicker fear the executive order will accelerate migration of workers away from agriculture to less

strenuous and more certain work in other sectors. But Fazio and Stone said that trend is already strong and they don’t see the order boosting it much. Fazio said the Obama administration has made things worse by making it harder to do things legally and encouraging illegal immigration. “The biggest problem we have in ag is we don’t have a long enough season. Only five good months (in tree fruit and certain crops),” Fazio said. When people could go back and forth from Mexico it worked because they could live there for less when they weren’t working here, he said. Now they have to stay and they need work year-round, he said. Landscape nurseries, dairies and, to a lesser degree, tree fruit growers who need year-round workers end up paying more to keep them, Stone said.

COLLEGE: Students would be expected to maintain a modest GPA

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would come out later with the president’s budget. The White House did say that if all states participated, that nine million students could benefit — saving on average \$3,800 in tuition per year for a full-time student. That means the program could cost in the billions of dollars. In a Republican-led Congress, the proposal likely faces a tough legislative fight to be passed. “With no details or information on the cost, this seems more like a talking point than a plan,” said Cory Fritz, press secretary for House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio. Under the proposal, participating students would be expected to maintain a modest grade point average and participating schools would have to meet certain academic requirements. States would opt in to the program and put up a fraction of the funding. “Put simply, what I’d like to do is to see the first two years of community college free for everybody who is willing to work for it,” the president said. David Baime, vice president for government relations at the American Association of Community Colleges, called the plan an “extraordinary” investment. He said the essence of the

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proposal is to reduce the cost of attending community college and “that is a concept that we heartily endorse.” Last year, Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam signed into law a scholarship program using lottery funding that provides free community and technical college tuition for two years to the state’s high school graduates. The scholarship program faced opposition in Tennessee from some of the state’s private colleges and legislators concerned that the program could potentially divert students and scholarship dollars from four-year schools. Haslam has said the program will increase the pool of students going to college. The White House said its proposal was inspired by the Tennessee plan and another similar program in Chicago.

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ATHLETE
— OF THE WEEK —

JANSEN EDMISTON
Junior - Hermiston Girl's Basketball

Junior guard Jansen Edmiston shattered the Hermiston school-record for three point makes in the Bulldogs 85-56 victory over Kennewick (WA) on Saturday. Edmiston nailed 10 of 14 attempts from behind the arc to finish with 34 points. The Bulldogs also set a school best mark as a team, making 17 three point shots.

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