

MARIJUANA: Opting out of Measure 91 would be a step backward

Continued from 1A

those four commercial operations.

Winkles said that vote would not affect medical marijuana dispensaries, which fall under House Bill 3460 from the 2013 Legislature, nor could such a ban infringe on the right to possess marijuana.

Pendleton police Chief Stuart Roberts disagrees, however, and said an opt out would do just that.

Under Oregon law now, Roberts said, possession of less than an ounce of marijuana is a violation, akin to a traffic ticket.

"You don't go to jail for a ticket," he said.

But a cop can arrest you if you have an ounce or more of pot in your possession. Roberts said that's the level the law looks at for delivery purposes. The circumstances of the arrest and the prosecu-

tor can determine if the crime is a felony, misdemeanor or a violation.

Pendleton Mayor Phillip Houk said he sees the opt out as a means to prohibit all retail sales of pot and pot products in the city. He said there are growers in town who could provide the drug for medical marijuana card holders, but he saw no reason for a pot shop or dispensary on Main Street.

Pendleton attorney Will Perkinson sits on the Umatilla County committee that is studying how to regulate sales of marijuana. Prohibiting it, he said, only keeps the status quo, and that means allowing the black market to operate unchecked and giving minors easy access to the drug.

"I think ... preventing adolescents and teens from having access to marijuana is a good social value," he said.

Opting out of Measure 91 would mean a step backward, he said, and while a dispensary system would not be foolproof, it would establish barriers to help keep the drug away from youth.

Rick Jackson, director of the BENT narcotics enforcement team, said it is currently much easier for Pendleton High School students to get marijuana than alcohol.

Perkinson also said the social stigma around pot will continue, particularly in Eastern Oregon, and legalizing it may not be that big of a deal on a local level. He said the deeper issue is how easy the stuff is to get now, in spite of any law.

Winkles said all the opt out talk could be for naught. Marijuana bills are already piling up for the 2015 Legislature that starts in February. And the timeline for opting out seems to favor the law. Measure 91 goes into effect

July 1, but the Oregon Liquor Control Commission in January 2016 will review licenses for marijuana retail shops and deliver regulations for their operation. If voters get a local opt-out initiative on the ballot, the first time they can vote is November 2016.

"There is a lot to talk about, a lot to discuss," Winkles said. "But from the city perspective, the one thing we want to impress is that most of the burden of implementation of 91 will fall on local government."

That is something Roberts also has stressed. And it may be much of what the state liquor commission hears about during its public listening session Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

DOWNTOWN: District received return of \$62,100 from Jump Start loans

Continued from 1A

Before moving to Pendleton, Denight worked at various marketing firms in Portland and Honolulu and worked with clients like the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau and the precursor to Travel Oregon.

Wood said Denight's extensive marketing resumé made him the most attractive candidate.

"He's used to working with high profile developers who could be coming to town," Wood said.

Even though his day job for the past 13 years required he work outside city limits, Denight's fingerprints are all over recent urban renewal projects.

As the chairman of the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce's tourism marketing committee, Denight helped coordinate the development and installation of a series

of signs around town that direct visitors to Pendleton attractions. In addition to the chamber, Denight has also volunteered with the Pendleton Farmers' Market, the Pendleton Arts Commission and Pendleton Friends of the Library.

Although no stranger to downtown development, Denight has a fresh set of challenges in growing the district.

After investing more than \$1.3 million in the Façade Restoration Program from 2006 to 2013, the commission only dispersed a meager \$2,703 last year.

Anticipating a slow stream of applications for the façade grant over the second half of the fiscal year, the commission reallocated \$10,000 of its budget to fund a new grant to reimburse businesses for city permit fees.

Denight said that since

many of the façades have already been improved, the next step for the district is filling those buildings with businesses.

He pointed toward the district's Jump Start loan program — which provides funding for new or expanding businesses — as an area that could receive more focus. The district received a return of \$62,100 last year from Jump Start loans after investing \$122,688 in 2013.

While Main Street's growth has been strong over the past few years, the decline of the surrounding area makes filling those spaces one of Denight's top priorities.

"That's how I'll measure my success," he said.

Another area of interest for the commission could be development of the land surrounding the Umatilla River.

Although multiple city officials have said the river-

front area is prime real estate for housing and commercial businesses, the land has yet to see any major developments.

Denight said the work ahead of him is made a lot easier by the connections and planning the commission has already done.

Through the commission's various programs and committees, Denight has easy access to bankers, contractors and business owners.

While the business environment is important, Denight said other factors like infrastructure, education and housing are significant in convincing businesses to move to Pendleton.

"There's a saying in marketing," he said. "More goods are bought with the heart than with the head."

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

HANSELL: Senator is group's first target, but won't be the last

Continued from 1A

grants to apply for driver's cards. The ad, paid for by Capitol Watch PAC, also roasts Hansell's support of Cover Oregon, the Columbia River Crossing project and a bill to release certain criminal offenders early as a strategy to save state money.

Hansell said, via email, that the attack blindsided him.

"To my knowledge I have never had one visit from Jeff Kropf or his group in my office," Hansell wrote.

Kropf, who was elected in 1999 to the Oregon House for District 17, founded the PAC. Kropf dropped out of his re-election race in 2006 after learning the radio station where he had a conservative radio show would be required to give equal time to his Democratic challenger, Dan Thackaberry, a Democrat from Lebanon. The seat is now held by Republican Sherrie Springer from Scio.

Kropf now operates a small grass seed farm in Sublimity, about 15 miles east of Salem, with his wife. He is executive director of the Oregon Capitol Watch Foundation, a watchdog group that gives the annual Petunia's Porker Award to people or public entities the organization deems wasteful.

"The PAC's purpose is to make sure the voters and constituents of legislators know how the legislators are voting," Kropf said. "Especially, if we see that they are out of sync with the constituency."

Hansell, Kropf said, is the group's first target, but he won't be the last.

"We're going to keep it up," he said. "We are working on a couple of other legislators right now."

Kropf wouldn't say who, nor would he divulge how the group financed the ad campaign. A look at the Oregon Secretary of State website shows that the PAC formed last month and has reported no contributions or expenditures yet. The group must declare contributions within 30 days.

Hansell refuted the PAC's accusation that he doesn't care about opinions of people in District 29. Regarding the driver's card, Hansell said he talked extensively with constituents, receiving encouragement from the Umatilla County

Board of Commissioners, the agriculture community, a Milton-Freewater judge, Hispanic leaders and even tea party leader Larry Nye in Milton-Freewater.

"There was strong support across the spectrum for the need of such a card," Hansell said.

The bill was passed by both houses and signed by Gov. John Kitzhaber in spring 2013, but sent back to the voters in a referendum and shot down in the November election. In the Senate, six Republican senators voted for driver's cards, while seven voted against. In the House, 15 Republican representatives supported the cards, while seven voted no.

Hansell wrote an op-ed for the *East Oregonian* after passage explaining his vote, noting he "did not receive a single negative comment or phone call."

"Having been elected to represent the needs of my constituents, it is imperative that I seek their opinions prior to a vote," he said.

Kropf also jabbed Hansell about rubbing shoulders with Democrats.

"It's become painfully obvious that on some of our core issues, Sen. Hansell is voting with the Democrats," Kropf said. "We formed the PAC to inform him."

Hansell doesn't apologize about working with Democrats. He said he expects a major water bill that would benefit Northeast Oregon to pass with bipartisan support during the upcoming legislative session.

"I think it is very important when possible to collaborate across the aisle," he said. "The fact of the matter is that the Republicans are in a super minority in both houses. There is not a single bill of importance to the good people of District 29 that can pass without support of members from across the aisle."

Kropf, a tea party leader and former director of Americans for Prosperity, isn't a fan of collaboration that goes against what he calls the party's core values. He remains unimpressed with Hansell on this front.

"We're watching him," Kropf said. "We're watching him very closely."

Contact Kathy Aney at kane@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.

SPILL: 3,278 carloads of crude oil shipped through Oregon in 2013

Continued from 1A

a lot of help, but we are the technical specialists on this team."

What they don't have available is a large stockpile of foam and personal protective gear on hand to account for the dramatic rise of oil-by-rail coming through Oregon. That's something the state fire marshal would like to see change.

A survey conducted by the fire marshal's office, in conjunction with the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association, polled 127 fire chiefs statewide and found 81 percent did not have the necessary equipment to respond to a crude oil incident. Of those who took the online survey, 88 percent said the most effective solution would be for the hazmat teams to create their own regional caches of material.

A committee of hazmat team members recommended they locate six foam trailers and personal protective gear throughout the state. Along with training, personnel and support, their proposal would cost a little more than \$2.7 million. And that's just for the start-up expenses; further maintenance costs would likely require a bigger budget for future years.

A funding source has yet to be determined. The report was submitted to Gov. John Kitzhaber as part of his statewide review of rail safety ordered last year.

It is not certain whether one of the trailers also would be located in Hermiston, but Phillips said having more equipment would clearly be a good thing for first responders.

"From my standpoint, the Fire Marshal's Office is doing everything it can to make sure our teams have everything they need to respond to any incident," he said.

Union Pacific shipped 3,278 carloads of crude oil through Oregon in 2013. Oil moved along both primary routes through the state, including the Interstate 5 corridor through Portland and along the Columbia River Gorge where lines meet at Hinkle Yard near Hermiston.

Cancer-causing agent detected in water after Montana pipeline spill

GLENDIVE, Mont. (AP) — Eastern Montana residents rushed to stock up on bottled water Tuesday after authorities detected a cancer-causing component of oil in public water supplies downstream of a Yellowstone River pipeline spill.

Elevated levels of benzene were found in water samples from a treatment plant that serves about 6,000 people in the agricultural community of Glendive, near North Dakota.

Scientists from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the benzene levels were above those recommended for long-term consumption, but did not pose a short-term health hazard. Residents were warned not to drink or cook with water from their taps.

Some criticized the timing of Monday's advisory, which came more than two days after 50,000 gallons of oil spilled from the 12-inch Poplar pipeline owned by Wyoming-based Bridger Pipeline Co.

Adding to the frustrations was uncertainty over how long the water warning would last. Also, company and government officials have struggled to come up with an effective way to recover the crude, most of which appears to be trapped beneath the ice-covered Yellowstone River.

A mechanical inspection of the damaged line Tuesday revealed the breach occurred directly beneath the river, about 50 feet from the south shore, Bridger Pipeline spokesman Bill Salvin said.

The cause remained undetermined.

By Tuesday, oil sheens were reported as far away as Williston, North Dakota, below the Yellowstone's confluence with the Missouri River, officials said.

The company claims to have identified 38 primary fire departments, and provided training for more than 1,280 first responders. Phillips said the railroad has been good to work with, and has provided information on basic tank car recognition, planning and damage assessment.

"Whatever information they can pump out to us and whatever we can learn about this, the better off we'll be," he said.

Pendleton Fire Chief Jason Walker said he is likewise confident in their training and ability to work together to keep communities safe. Four hazmat technicians work in Pendleton, and firefighters spend 10 hours every month working on hazmat response.

The primary areas of concern are downtown Pendleton and the Umatilla River, Walker said, where an oil spill could cause the most damage to people and the environment. When disaster strikes, you always wish for more resources, he said. But they are "absolutely" ready to handle an incident.

"I believe we have a very professional crew that takes

this task very seriously," Walker said. "The whole idea is to prepare for the worst that could happen."


Oil train derailments can come with devastating consequences. In 2013, a crash and explosion outside of Lac-Mégantic in Quebec, Canada, killed 47 people and caused more than \$400 million in damage. Another derailment last year in West Virginia spilled up to 25,000 gallons into the James River.

Umatilla County Emergency Manager Jack Remillard said Pendleton and Hermiston can call for mutual aid from across the county if they are overwhelmed in their initial response. In the case of the 2013 bus crash on Deadman Pass that killed nine people and injured 39 others, he said they also got help from as far as Walla Walla and Union County.

"Overall, I feel fairly comfortable with our situation here," Remillard said. "If we have trouble, we're going to get some help, I'm sure."

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4547.


STUDENT OF THE WEEK



Tony Papol
PENDLETON HIGH SCHOOL

Tony is an outstanding citizen and student leader at PHS. He is currently our ASB president, actively involved in student leadership, National Honor Society and ASTRA. Tony has achieved a 4.38 accumulative Weighted GPA while taking the most difficult courses PHS and BMCC have to offer. Tony will graduate high school with 68 college credits. He also participates in varsity football and baseball. Upon graduation Tony plans to attend an Ivy league school and major in physics. The school is yet to be determined.

Proudly Sponsored by



CHI St. Anthony Hospital

2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR • 541-276-5121

Dad keeps forgetting how to get home ... Mom is beginning to get worried.

IT'S NOT LIKE HIM.



WE CAN HELP.

Call us with questions about aging and Alzheimer's.

1-855-ORE-ADRC

HelpForAlz.org



ADRC
Aging and Disability Resource Connection
www.adrc.or.gov

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM