

HIGHWAY: Repaving will start in summer 2016

Continued from 1A

Umatilla’s urban growth boundaries and is under control of the county. But Umatilla County is also working with both cities to look for solutions that stretch the length of roadway.

Eric Hovee, an economic consultant who helped the committee put together a report paid for by a state grant, said the area he looked at was comprised of 861 acres, worth \$51.7 million and containing nine percent of the jobs in the Hermiston zip-code.

He said in the short term (one to three years) there were several solutions the committee could tackle to capture some of the corridor’s untapped potential.

One was to create a business association that would look at branding and marketing and spearhead cleanup and beautification efforts. Another was to review zoning in the area to see where improvements could be made.

“You need to address the need for greater flexibility but also good design,” he said.

Hovee said government jurisdictions along 395 need to address a need for wastewater treatment and need to cooperate to get more water for fire suppression to the area. Businesses located there currently face problems getting fire insurance.

As for safety concerns, Hovee said the committee has an opportunity to act. The Oregon Department of Transportation will be gathering input this year on a repaving project for 395 that will start in the summer of 2016. Hovee said if the committee and the county reached out to ODOT and asked for a “refinement plan” the department could implement changes to dangerous intersections as part of the repaving project it would be doing anyway.

Father down the road, if there was support for it, Hovee said the area could eventually be annexed into either Hermiston or Umatilla’s urban growth boundaries. The move would come with higher taxes but also an increase in services, he said.

Responding to comments from the audience that were primarily focused on safety

and cleanup, county planning director Tamra Mabbot said the county had some success in the past with efforts that included giving out vouchers for free dumping at sanitary disposal sites. She also said that if the suggested business association formed, requests to clean up property might be better received coming from a group of neighbors than from county code enforcement.

County commissioner Bill Elfering said considering how fast people drive once they are north of Punkin Center, talking to ODOT about decreasing the speed limit might not be the solution to safety concerns.

“The speed limit itself may not be the problem but enforcing it might be the issue,” he said. “We could work with the sheriff’s office with that.”

Elfering said he was excited to see a full house at the meeting and hoped to get more public input.

“Hang in there and keep your interest up,” he said.

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KITZHABER: Most recent mid-term governor vacancy was in 1956, when Paul Patterson died of a heart attack

Continued from 1A

sworn in for a record fourth term as governor.

Kitzhaber’s political career spanned decades, from his first election from a Roseburg-area district to the Oregon House in 1978, when he was an emergency room physician. He was in the Oregon Senate 12 years, eight of them as its president, and served two terms as governor, from 1995 to 2003. He won a record third term in 2010, and was elected again Nov. 4, but by just under half the votes cast in a six-way race.

In 1998, Kitzhaber won his second term by the largest margin in 48 years. But in 2010, he won a third term by the smallest margin since 1956.

In recent times, only Mark Hatfield (46 years), Ted Kulongoski and Vic Atiyeh (28 years each) have been on Oregon’s public stage longer.

The most recent mid-term vacancy for governor was in 1956, when Paul Patterson died of a heart attack. Elmo Smith, the Oregon Senate president who was then next in line of succession, took over. But Smith — father of future U.S. Rep. Denny Smith — lost to Democrat Robert Holmes for the two years remaining in the term. Holmes, in turn, lost to Mark Hatfield in 1958.

Kitzhaber turns 68 on March 5.

Kitzhaber’s fall

After a tumultuous week, Kitzhaber announced his resignation via a news release. He did not appear in person in his ceremonial office, where a gaggle of reporters and photographers waited.

In his statement, he spared no criticism of the news media or legislative leaders who

had called publicly for his resignation.

His statement in part: “I must also say that it is deeply troubling to me to realize that we have come to a place in the history of this great state of ours where a person can be charged, tried, convicted and sentenced by the media with no due process and no independent verification of the allegations involved.

Since Oct. 8, when *Willamette Week* first reported Hayes’ efforts to use her position as honorary first lady on behalf of her private consulting business, there has been a steady stream of news disclosures.

They were not enough to deter Kitzhaber’s re-election Nov. 4, although he won with just under half the votes cast among six candidates. But his once-commanding lead over Republican Dennis Richardson, a conservative state representative from Southern Oregon, dropped sharply.

The course of events changed with a Jan. 27 story by the EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group Capital Bureau about \$118,000 that Hayes received for consulting work that she would not discuss. Other news organizations then reported that Hayes apparently did not report that income on tax returns that had been released to them.

Kitzhaber then declared at a Jan. 30 news conference that Hayes would no longer have a policy or political role in his administration. But his appearance and responses raised more questions.

Blast at allies

As for Kitzhaber’s criticism of political allies, his words appeared aimed at Senate President Pe-

ter Courtney of Salem and House Speaker Tina Kotek of Portland, both Democrats who called publicly for his resignation Thursday after they urged him privately a couple of days earlier to do so.

Kitzhaber’s jostling with Republican legislative majorities during his first two terms as governor earned him the moniker of “Dr. No,” for his 202 vetoes.

He was much more successful at the start of his third term in 2011, when he obtained approval of sweeping education and health-care overhauls from an evenly split House and a narrowly divided Senate.

Two years later, when Kitzhaber had his first-ever Democratic majorities while governor, he won their approval of a “grand bargain” that cut some business taxes and raised others — and pared public pension cost-of-living increases, yet raised school and human services spending.

However, even though Kitzhaber was credited with saving the deal when it appeared it might fail, it also soured legislators on the governor — and the 2014 election did not replenish his political capital with them or the public.

He also said in his statement last week:

“It is not in my nature to walk away from a job I have undertaken — it is to stand and fight for the cause. For that reason I apologize to all those people who gave of their faith, time, energy and resources to elect me to a fourth term last year and who have supported me over the past three decades. I promise you that I will continue to pursue our shared goals and our common cause in another venue.”

BROWN: Urged for a quick settlement to dispute at West Coast seaports

Continued from 1A

starting today. It’s time for us to get back to work. It’s time to move Oregon forward.”

Generational shift

Wednesday’s transition marks a generational change in Oregon politics. Brown’s four Democratic predecessors, including Kitzhaber, were born before, during or just after World War II.

Two of them were among those in the House chamber: Barbara Roberts, the first woman to hold the job, and Ted Kulongoski, Kitzhaber’s successor in 2003 and predecessor in 2011, when Kitzhaber returned for a record third term.

Also among those present were Dan Little, Brown’s husband, and her mother, Sally.

Brown will serve until the 2016 general election, when she can seek the remaining two years in Kitzhaber’s term. The Oregon Constitution requires the interim election. If she runs and wins, Brown will be eligible in 2018 to seek a single term of her own.

The secretary of state is the next in line of succession to the governor under the Oregon Constitution, which does not provide for a lieutenant governor.

The secretary of state oversees elections — which are conducted by officials in Oregon’s 36 counties — and is in charge of audits and state records, and maintains the business registry and business portal.

Brown, 54, was a Portland attorney specializing in family and juvenile law before she got involved in state politics. She was appointed to a vacant seat in the Oregon House in 1991 and was there two terms before she won an open Oregon Senate seat in 1996.

Just two years later, she became Senate Democratic leader, a position she would hold for almost nine years. During that time, she led her party to a majority in the Senate.

As chairman of the Senate Rules Committee in 2007, Brown was floor manager for an overhaul of the government-ethics law recommended by the Oregon Law Commission.

She resigned as majority leader in mid-2007 to prepare for her successful 2008 campaign for secretary of state. She was re-elected in 2012. Both times, she won 51 percent of the votes cast in multi-candidate races.

Brown will have to appoint someone to succeed her as secretary of state, also for the rest of her term ending with the 2016 general election.

First order of business

Soon after the inauguration, Brown urged a quick settlement to a dispute between dockworkers and their employers that has hamstrung international trade through West Coast seaports.

Brown joined the governors of California and Washington state in issuing a statement saying the impasse has disrupted trade and is threatening jobs and state economies.

The labor dispute has tied up 29 ports that handle around \$1 trillion in trade annually. Dozens of ships are anchored up and down the West Coast as they wait for dock space.

Round-Up shout out

After the inauguration, Brown greeted several members of the legislature, including Bill Hansell (R-Athena), a second-year state senator with an aisle seat for ceremony.

Hansell congratulated her, he said, and then offered a ‘Let ‘er Buck.’

“Her immediately eyes lit up,” Hansell said, “and she said ‘I’ll be riding in the Westward Ho! parade this year.’”

— *The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group. The Associated Press contributed to this story.*

TAX: In 1919, Oregon was the first state to have a gas tax

Continued from 1A

oline tax, the traditional means of paying for road building and repair.

Oregon was the first state to have a gasoline tax, in 1919.

The argument is that cars have become much more fuel-efficient — some using batteries — and drivers are driving less. So, the officials say, gasoline tax revenue hasn’t kept up with construction costs.

After the Legislature rejected a tax on highly efficient vehicles, it authorized the test to begin this summer.

The OreGO website is a means of getting information out to people who’d like to take the tax for a spin. They can’t actually sign up until July.

The tax name and logo arose from a tour

of the state to talk to residents, said spokeswoman Michelle Godfrey.

People who attended the meetings said they wanted a name and logo that exhibited “freedom from bad roads” while immediately identifying the state, Godfrey said. The stylish OreGo logo shows a perfectly curving highway leading to Mount Hood.

The department has previously run tests of satellite-based systems to track mileage, and gotten criticism from people concerned about privacy.

Those who sign up for the tax test this summer will be able to keep track of how much they drive by using a variety of means, from a GPS tracker to a daily diary.

“GPS will be the most hassle-free option,” said Godfrey. “But it’s also the option that people tend to dislike the most.”

COAL: An administrative hearing is set for December

Continued from 1A

minal at the Port of Morrow, on the Columbia River. An administrative hearing on the states’ protest is set for December.

Ambre Energy had proposed bringing coal by train to Boardman, where it would be loaded on barges at the Port of Morrow and sent more than 200 miles down the Columbia River to the Port of St. Helens. There, it would be transferred to oceangoing ships.

In rejecting the application, the Oregon Department of State Lands said the terminal would interfere with a fishery in the state’s waters.

Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead, a Republican, has argued that Oregon’s rejection of the Port of Morrow project interferes with Wyoming’s right to engage in interstate commerce. He told lawmakers in his state-of-the-state address last month that he intends to continue to work, “with bulldog determination on coal initiatives, port expansion, new technology and value-added products.”



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