

# MORATORIUM: One commissioner said draft is beginning not the end

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about the marijuana issue, so the board allowed more public comments but did not re-vote. Steve Rodarte called the board vote “quick and easy” and criticized the study group for being anti-medical marijuana. He also argued against the proposed regulations. Commissioner Bill Elfering responded that the

group heard a wide range of opinions and considered multiple elements on the issue. He also said the draft is the beginning, not the end, and extending the moratorium allows for the planning process as well as to see what shakes out from the Legislature. Board chairman George Murdock said commissioners can revisit the moratorium at any time.

# MARIJUANA: OLCC can’t own marijuana as it does alcohol

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to opt out of allowing dispensaries and retail stores. Bovett said Oregon rulemakers have learned lessons from Colorado and Washington, which may have driven retail prices too high with their multi-tiered tax systems. “They failed to price marijuana at or below the organized black market,” Bovett said. “As a result, that has undercut the retail market.” Bovett, who traveled to Colorado last month, said he talked to retailers about the customers who buy marijuana in their shops. Turns out, the pot shops cater mostly to tourists. “Coloradans generally don’t buy their marijuana from the retail shops at two or three times the price they can get it for on the greater black market,” he said. “Same is true for Washington, though prices are coming down pretty dramatically in Washington.” Lesson learned, he said. “We have a lower tax structure and it is there by design,” Bovett said. “It’s designed to potentially defeat the organized black market.”

In order to quash black market activity, however, the attorney said Oregon must also figure out a way to better control huge leaks in the medical marijuana supply chain. “Right now, the medical marijuana supply chain is as porous as any marijuana supply chain anywhere,” he said. “We truly bleed massive quantities of medical marijuana out of Southern Oregon into the rest of the nation.” Another evolving detail is the question of whether cities and counties can opt out of allowing medical marijuana dispensaries or retail businesses. One city, Cave Junction, took it to court. A Josephine County Circuit Court judge ruled that the city may ban medical marijuana dispensaries. The case is now being considered in the Court of Appeals. “Local control is a hot, hot, hot issue, probably the hottest marijuana issue in the state capitol right now,” Bovett said.

Marijuana is still illegal at the federal level. That makes the regulation and distribution of weed different than alcohol in many ways. For one, the Oregon

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— Rob Bovett, legal counsel for the Association of Oregon Counties

Liquor Control Commission (possibly the Oregon Liquor & Cannabis Commission in the future) can’t own marijuana as it does alcohol. “We can’t ask the OLCC to commit a crime,” he said. “It’s a completely different scheme.” There are myriad issues large and small, he said. For instance, where do recreational marijuana users legally get seeds and plant starts between July when pot becomes decriminalized and when retail sales begin in 2016? “Measure 91 completely forgot about seeds... ‘immaculate conception’ is what we’re calling it in Salem,” said Bovett, triggering a laugh from the audience. Refining marijuana regulations will take time and more than a few headaches, he said. Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock, who introduced Bovett, said recreational marijuana is “a particularly interesting topic here in Eastern Oregon where more than 70 percent of the voters said no when than issue came before them in November,” later adding, “Welcome to reality.”

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# ARREST: Walton had 3 failure-to-appear warrants

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claimed to have information about his stolen property. She did not want cops involved, the sheriff said, but the man called the sheriff’s office around 9:30 a.m. about the meet at a gravel pit on Gun Club Road in Morrow County near the Umatilla County border. Deputy Nathan Braun and detective Brian Synder tried to hide and watch, Matlack said, but she may have glimpsed one of their vehicles and decided to split. That decision may be because of the three failure-to-appear warrants for her arrest: one a felony out of Morrow County and the two misdemeanors out of Umatilla, one of which includes a \$100,000 bond. Walton drove past Braun’s patrol car and shrugged. Braun decided to pull her over, Matlack said. That was at about 10:15 a.m., and the

wheels on her small GMC pickup would not stop turning for more than an hour. Matlack said by 10:49 a.m. the pursuit was eastbound on Interstate 84 and reached 75 mph. It appears that is also where she recorded the video, which can be viewed at [www.eastoregonian.com](http://www.eastoregonian.com). She took the Echo Road exit and turned north on Wells Station Road, then west onto Stage Gulch Road. Matlack said she blew through multiple stop signs and was doing 35-55 mph on the gravel roads as Braun and Synder chased. Other law enforcement joined, including the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office and Oregon State Police. Both tried to stop the pickup with a spike strip. Matlack said Walton caught sight of the trooper setting up the equipment on the gravel road, avoided the spikes and rushed on. Her stopping and accelerating threw up a cloud of dust

and rocks, and Braun thought the trooper had yanked the strip out of the way when instead he reached for his gun. Braun drove over the strip and punctured one of his tires. Synder pressed on, following the GMC north on South Edwards Road until the vehicle turned onto property where Walton has been living. She tried to turn the vehicle around but hit Snyder’s unmarked sports utility vehicle and stopped. Synder approached on foot, Matlack said, and Walton exited with a knife. The detective drew his gun and told her to drop it but she refused. Matlack said Walton told Synder he would have to shoot her. Snyder kept his distance, told her again and again to put down the weapon. Then, Matlack said, Snyder asked a backup deputy to hand him a Taser gun. Immediately, Walton

dropped the knife. Matlack said the encounter could have ended tragically, but Synder stayed professional and handled it well. Matlack said it was baffling Walton gave up at the mention of the Taser but kept her ground with a loaded gun pointed at her. Maybe, he speculated, she has been shot with a Taser before. Matlack said Walton does not have insurance to cover the damage to the police vehicles and she could face a slew of charges, including for running four vehicles off the road during the chase. For now she remains in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on the three warrants and a probable cause charge of felony attempt to elude/flee police.

Staff Photographer E.J. Harris contributed to this story. Contact Phil Wright at [pwright@eastoregonian.com](mailto:pwright@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0833.

# RIVER: Area’s condition doesn’t lend itself well to investment

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city’s \$100,000 incentive, but McDonald would have to assume the complete cost of constructing a two-story building. McDonald said the prohibitive costs eventually deterred him from locating his business there. The commission also weighed in with their own opinions on the lack of development. Councilman Al Plute, who serves on the commission along with the rest of the city council, said the area’s blighted condition doesn’t lend itself well to investment. “It’s hard for a person to be the first to build next to a bunch of garbage,” he said.

Another member of the advisory committee, Paul Chalmers, said there just isn’t enough demand for two-story businesses to make the current plan feasible. “It’s a great plan, but its sitting on a shelf that can’t be reached,” he said.

## Spare a quarter

Having been a member of the advisory committee and the river quarter committee, Mary Hallman offered a unique view. She said the committee dedicated years of work toward creating the river plan before burning out from exhaustion and disbanding. Hallman defended the river plan as a long term vision and said it shouldn’t be viewed as a short term fix. She compared the plan to Barnhart Road, a project the city hasn’t completely aban-



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A vacant lot near the 400 block of Southwest Court Avenue in Pendleton.

doned despite a current lack of interest from developers. Hallman feared that a repeal of the plan would mean low quality properties would continue to be drawn to the area. “If it is revoked, or even substantially gutted, there will be nothing to keep the central river quarter from developing into a strip mall,” she said. Despite strong criticism of the plan, the commission

seemed more in favor of tweaking it rather than a complete overhaul. Mayor Phillip Houk said the commission could take the money from the incentive program to buy land in the river quarter directly, after which the could demolish existing structures and resell the property directly to a developer. McDonald said any significant revision of the riv-

er quarter program needed an incentive higher than the \$100,000 currently offered. Ultimately, the commission unanimously voted to send the river plan back to the advisory committee, which will report back to the commission their findings in three months.

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## Cascade Natural Gas files natural gas increase request in Oregon

The purpose of this announcement is to provide Cascade Natural Gas customers with general information about the company’s proposals and their effects on its customers. Calculations and statements within this announcement are not binding on the Oregon Public Utility Commission.

Cascade Natural Gas filed a natural gas rate increase request with the Oregon Public Utility Commission on March 31, 2015. If approved, it would increase residential customers’ monthly bill by an average of \$1.88 a month.

The main reason for the rate increase request is to recover the cost of the increased investment in natural gas facilities to ensure safe and reliable service. The projected 2015 year-end total gross investment by Cascade for Oregon natural gas operations is \$193 million, compared with \$41 million in 1988 when the last general rate case was filed.

The proposed increase is for \$3.6 million annually over current rates, or a 5.11 percent overall increase. Cascade serves about 68,000 customers in 25 Oregon communities.

The proposed increase for each rate class, which is based on rate class studies, is:

- Residential 3.48 percent
- Commercial 5.98 percent
- Industrial 6.78 percent

Copies of the rate case filing are available for inspection at Cascade’s main and district offices. For additional information, the company can be reached at:

8113 W. Grandridge Blvd  
Kennewick, WA 99336-7166  
Phone: 888-522-1130

Additional information about the rate case filing can also be found on the company’s website: [www.cngc.com](http://www.cngc.com)

The Oregon Public Utility Commission can be reached at:  
PO Box 1088, Salem, OR 97308-1088  
Phone: 800-522-2404

### ANNUAL HERITAGE HOME TOUR

*A fun-filled event with refreshments, presentation on the various home styles found in Pendleton, and a tour of two turn-of-the-century mansions.*

**Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
Heritage Station Museum  
Two tour sessions offered:  
11 AM – 2 PM or  
12:15 PM to 3 PM

**Tickets: \$20 if bought in advance: \$30 on day of event.**

**Call Heritage Station Museum at 541-276-0012 for information**

## Attention Parents: Don't Miss the Bus!

**Join us Thursday, April 23 from 6-8 pm OR Saturday, April 25 9:30-11:30 am at Sunridge Middle School Sign-up Now! Space is Limited! Register at [www.readyforkindergarten.org](http://www.readyforkindergarten.org)**

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**Questions? E-mail [tcrfopendleton@gmail.com](mailto:tcrfopendleton@gmail.com)  
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