

BRIEFLY

Hansell's annexation bill passes Senate

SALEM — The Oregon Senate unanimously passed a bill Wednesday that will give the city of Milton-Freewater options besides forced annexation of a nearby trailer park with drinking water has been deemed unsafe.

By current state law, Milton-Freewater must annex Locust Mobile Village about 1 mile northeast from the city's growth boundary because eleven residents filed a petition for annexation, and there are not any alternate means for providing safe drinking water to the community.

The bill was sponsored by Bill Hansell (R-Athena) and allows the city to stop forced annexation if 40 percent of the petitioners wish to remove their names upon finding a better solution for all parties.

"Milton-Freewater will be the first of many Oregon cities to benefit from SB 121," Hansell said in a press release. "Currently, cities have no choice but to accept forced annexation if as few as eleven residents request it. Now, cities can work with residents to find other solutions to the health hazard abatement that may be less costly and more effective."

Hansell said the city would have to pay \$15 million to run sewer and water pipes to the park.

The bill, SB121, now moves to the Oregon House of Representative for consideration.

EOU announces top candidates

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University's board of trustees, led by David Nelson of Pendleton, announced its top four candidates for university president on Friday.

The university is looking for a president to replace interim president Jay Kenton, who plans to step down at the end of the school year.

Nelson said the university cast a wide net, reviewing applications from candidates in 13 states before selecting the finalists.

"The candidates all interviewed really quite well, and I think they're passionate about becoming president of Eastern," he said.

The board's search committee has forwarded the finalists to the Oregon University System Chancellor for consideration.

•Marysz Rames was appointed as interim president of Dakota State University in Madison, South Dakota in 2014 and has increased enrollment since.

•Cynthia Pemberton is provost and vice president for academic affairs at Dickinson State University in Dickinson, N.D. and also serves as an author, speaker and consultant.

•Tom Insko is area

manager of Boise Cascade's Inland Region in La Grande, overseeing multiple operations for the company in the region. He has served on the EOU board of trustees and as president of the EOU Foundation.

•Martin Tadlock has been provost and vice president for academic affairs at Bemidji State University in Bemidji, Minnesota, since 2012 and as chief academic officer at Northwest Technical College since 2014.

For more information on the candidates and when they will visit EOU's campus for interviews and a meet and greet, visit eou.edu/presidentalsearch.

Stanfield to vote on annexing interchange property

STANFIELD — Stanfield residents have one last opportunity for input before the city council votes on an ordinance annexing 25 acres near the Interstate 84 interchange.

The council will hold a public hearing April 21 at 7 p.m. before voting on the ordinance.

The property in question is east of Highway 395 where it meets Interstate 84 across from the Pilot Travel Center. If annexed the land would be added to the city's tax rolls and be covered by city services.

The council and property owners alike have expressed interest in annexation as a way to encourage commercial development, such as a hotel or restaurant, on the property once it is eligible to be hooked up to the city's water supply.

Umatilla considers extension on dispensary ban

UMATILLA — As Umatilla's one-year moratorium on medical marijuana dispensaries comes to a close the city is considering an ordinance to extend the ban.

The city council is meeting in special session at 6:30 p.m. at city hall, 700 6th St. in Umatilla, to hold a public hearing and vote on the moratorium. The council will also meet in executive session before adjourning.

Last year city staff stated the year-long moratorium, meant to extend from April 2014 to May 1, 2015, was needed to give the city time to come up with regulation of the facilities. The city's planning commission plans to have a draft of those rules — part of the city's comprehensive overhaul of its commercial zone rules — ready for the council's review on May 5.

Meanwhile the ordinance before the city council on Tuesday would extend the city's moratorium on dispensaries for another 120 days.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

Pendleton council will talk pot, walkways

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The Pendleton City Council has several major decisions on the docket for Tuesday's meeting.

The council will consider an ordinance that would regulate medical and recreational marijuana sales in the city.

Under a draft passed by the planning commission, marijuana retailers can be located in the city's commercial service and central mixed use zones granted they are not within 1,000 feet of a K-12 school or another marijuana facility.

The ordinance will not become law until passed by the

city council, and some council members have suggested significant revisions to the commission's draft.

Tuesday's meeting is the last scheduled meeting before a year-long ban on medical marijuana dispensaries expires May 1.

Also on the agenda is consideration of a law that would ban obstruction of any public walkway in Pendleton.

Because youth gather in the middle of Bedford Bridge, which sometimes leads to fights and drug deals, Police Chief Stuart Roberts recommended not only banning obstruction on the Bedford Bridge, but on any sidewalk, walking path or bridge

in the city.

At the last city council meeting, councilwoman Jane Hill said Roberts' proposal was too far reaching and suggested he supplement his next report to the council.

Another issue with big implications is a resolution to adopt master plans for the city's water, sewer and storm-water drainage systems.

Although the council could adopt those master plans Tuesday, a set of rate hikes and system development charges won't be adopted until later.

Public Works Director Bob Patterson wrote in a press release that the system development charge rates

will become available for public review May 22. The council will consider adopting the charges and their accompanying rates July 21.

A recent letter to the *East Oregonian* suggested opponents of the planned Don Requa bronze in Brownfield Park will attend the council meeting. Staff included two letters in support of the Requa statue in the agenda packet.

The Pendleton City Council will meet at 7 p.m. at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

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



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

New trophy in town

Sculptor Micheal Booth stands next to the East Oregonian "Let'er Buck" all-around trophy after delivering it to the East Oregonian office Wednesday in Pendleton. The old trophy went home with Decatur, Texas, cowboy Trevor Brazile after he won the all-around title for the third consecutive time at the Pendleton Round-Up.

Bill would limit elementary expulsions, suspensions

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

A bill passed by the Oregon Senate and headed to the House would limit the reasons schools can expel or suspend students, but Eastern Oregon educators don't see it as a problem.

Senate Bill 553 is meant to address what bill sponsor Sara Gelsler (D-Corvallis) called a "school to prison pipeline" in which students are excluded from school starting at a young age for minor infractions, leading to more serious behavioral problems down the road. The bill passed the Senate with a 27-3 bipartisan vote last week.

The most notable provision in the bill would limit elementary schools to only expelling or suspending students if they harm someone or pose a threat to the safety of staff or students. According to Gelsler last year 8,000 elementary school students were suspended in Oregon, often for "disruptive behavior."

But Umatilla School District superintendent Heidi Sipe said in her 13 years

as an administrator she has never once expelled an elementary student, and suspensions in that age group are few and far between.

"We have sometimes given out of school suspensions for students due to weapons (usually brought because they are really excited to show their friends their new knife or because they forgot it in a pocket) or fighting," she wrote in an email. "This is RARE, it's also for short durations."

As a result she said she has no problem with the bill.

In Pendleton, assistant superintendent Tricia Mooney said she hasn't seen a single expulsion of an elementary school student in her seven years with the district, and suspensions are rare. She said an out of school suspension may mean more to a teenager, but in the younger grades lower level consequences like missing a recess often get the point across just as well.

"Really at the elementary level, we're looking at those things as a teaching opportunity," she said.

Dirk Dirksen, superintendent of Morrow County

School District, said Morrow County schools "pretty much use the guidelines set forth by the Senator anyway." When students are causing problems in the classroom Dirksen said administrators would rather have them meet with a counselor or work with their teacher to come up with a solution.

"Usually there's a reason behind the acting out, so we try to support them in whatever way they need," he said.

Hermiston deputy superintendent Wade Smith can't remember handling a single elementary school suspension in his career either, and said even in the older grades, Hermiston School

District handed out a single expulsion last year.

The district tries to use out of school suspensions judiciously, too, which resulted in 25 out of school suspensions between the five elementary schools last year.

Smith said he didn't see the legislation changing Hermiston's policies.

"I don't see anything problematic, although I always start getting nervous when the legislature starts to infringe on school districts' right to ensure a safe learning environment for our students," he said.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

Jackie Downie, LCSW
Individual, Child and Family Therapist

is closing her private practice as of April 27th 2015.

A big thank you to Pendleton area for supporting the practice!

Records available after closing date by sending request to:
Jackie Downie, LCSW
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Pinedale, WY 82941-0484

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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 2nd
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

HERITAGE STATION
The Umatilla County Historical Society Museum