

Pot industry power needs raise issues

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — As Oregon prepares for legal marijuana July 1, the state’s energy agency is looking for ways to curb electricity use by indoor pot growers.

Indoor marijuana gardens are well-known power hogs, but Oregon faces a dilemma as it researches how to extend its energy efficiency programs to the cannabis industry: federal money that typically helps pay for efficiency projects cannot be used for any activities that involve pot.

“We don’t have answers to that yet, which is why we’re looking at it so carefully,” said Rachel Wray, a spokeswoman for the Oregon Department of Energy. “It is an emerging energy issue and we pay attention to those.”

Power-hungry grow lights and ventilation systems are not just an environmental issue.

Small, consumer-owned utilities across Oregon purchase electricity from the Bonneville Power Administration on a tiered system, which allows smaller utilities to purchase power at lower rates. Those rates could attract indoor growers, but the increased demand for electricity might drive up rates for all utility customers.

That prompted Ashland City Manger Dave Kanner to call for the state to adopt energy efficiency standards for indoor agriculture.

The Oregon Department of Energy tasked Diana Enright, program and policy adviser to agency director Michael Kaplan, with working on the intersection of pot and power.

Wray said cannabis remains “a small part of (Enright’s) policy portfolio,” but Enright attended a conference in December on energy demand from the marijuana industry. She is also following efforts to address the issue in two other states with legal recreational pot, Colorado and Washington.

In Colorado, Boulder County enacted



Courtesy Portland General Electric

Oregon Energy Department officials and electric utilities in the state are trying to address power issues produced by large, indoor marijuana ahead of recreational pot becoming legal in July.

a cannabis carbon tax, Enright said. Oregon state government is not currently considering anything similar.

On July 1, adults aged 21 and older can possess up to four marijuana plants. Growing those four plants indoors with lighting, climate control, ventilation and equipment to boost carbon dioxide to improve plant growth typically uses as much electricity as running 29 new refrigerators, according to one report by a California scientist. It is also equivalent to the total energy used by an average U.S. home.

“So you can start to see where the energy consumption is huge,” Enright said.

The Northwest Power and Conservation Council estimated in September that energy demand from pot growers in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana will nearly double over the next 20 years.

The anticipated increase in energy demand from legal recreational marijuana also caught the attention of investor and consumer-owned utilities. At a hearing in February, Portland General Electric government affairs analyst

Brendan McCarthy told lawmakers on the committee working to implement legal pot that 85 percent of residential transformer problems it handles are caused by indoor marijuana grows.

McCarthy said there is currently a shortage of information about energy demand from pot grows. Utilities want the information so they can deliver the power cannabis growers need and plan for energy efficiency measures. McCarthy said utilities also need that information so they can keep employees and customers safe.

“It doesn’t help us for someone to say, ‘We’re gonna start a pottery business and we’re gonna have a lot of kilns running,’” McCarthy said. “We’ve heard that.”

Power-hungry pot gardens can rival the energy intensity of data centers, with lights as intense as in operating rooms and air circulating at 60-times the rate of ventilation in a modern home.

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New lone wolf tracked into central Oregon

BEND (AP) — Another young male wolf from northeastern Oregon has moved into the central part of the state.

The wolf is about 2 years old, the usual time for young males to head out on their own, said Russ Morgan, wolf coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

He’s the third young male from the Imnaha Pack in northeastern Oregon to make it into central Oregon in recent years.

His GPS tracking collar showed he left the pack and wandered into Washington before returning to Oregon and going into Mount Hood National Forest.

“It just started taking off in the last few weeks,” said John Stephenson, wolf program coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Most recently, he was tracked on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation, north of Mount Jefferson, Morgan said.

The wolf was captured and collared as OR-25 last

year.

The first wolf recorded from the Imnaha pack in central Oregon was OR-3, who was in the Ochoco Mountains near Prineville in fall 2011 but hasn’t been tracked since.

The second, OR-7, came through Crook and Deschutes counties that fall and went on to celebrated meanderings in southern Oregon and Northern California. He was the first wolf known in that part of the U.S. for many decades.

A mate somehow turned up for OR-7 in southern Oregon, and they now have three pups from last year.

When young wolves disperse, they look for a new place to live, Morgan said.

Doing so, they may change course regularly and backtrack. The data provided by OR-25’s collar show the wolf has yet to settle on a territory, he said.

“All these collars tell us is where the wolf has been,” Morgan said. They do not give an indication of where a wolf is headed.

Lane County commissioner considers run for governor

By PETER WONG
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Lane County Commissioner Sid Leiken said Monday he is considering a bid for the Republican nomination for governor next year.

Democrat Kate Brown, who as secretary of state succeeded John Kitzhaber upon his resignation Feb. 18, faces an election in 2016 for the remaining two years in Kitzhaber’s term.

Democrats have held the governorship for 30 years, the longest stretch by either party in state history.

Leiken, who is in his second term as a commissioner, said he is in an exploratory stage as he changed his campaign committee name to Sid Leiken for Governor.

“I will spend the next several weeks going around the state to meet Oregonians where they live, and talk about their vision for Oregon’s future,” Leiken said in a statement.

He becomes the third Republican to consider entering the race.

Dr. William “Bud” Pierce, a physician from

Salem and a former president of the Oregon Medical Association, has announced.

Businessman Allen Alley of Lake Oswego — a former state GOP chairman, a 2010 candidate for governor and the party’s 2008 nominee for state treasurer — is considering a bid.

Leiken was on the Springfield City Council two years before he became mayor in 2000, and served 10 years. Among the achievements he mentions are the call center for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, relocation of Peace Health into the center of town, and new jobs at Symantec.

He launched a bid for the 4th District congressional seat in 2009, but dropped it after a question arose about documentation of a \$2,000 campaign payment to his mother, ostensibly for polling services. He later returned the money to his campaign account.

He won a seat on the five-member Lane County board in 2010.

Leiken is the grandson of Sid Leiken, a timber company owner in Roseburg who was a Democratic state representative from 1961 to 1969.



Leiken

Corinthian College closes 28 remaining campuses

By KIMBERLY HEFLING
AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON — Corinthian Colleges canceled classes Monday and shut down all of its remaining 28 ground campuses, displacing about 16,000 students, less than two weeks after the Education Department announced it was fining the for-profit institution \$30 million for misrepresentation.

The Santa Ana, California-based company said it was working with other schools to help students continue their education by making transcripts available and coordinating with other educational institutions to accept them. The closures include Heald College campuses in California, Hawaii and Oregon, as well as Everest and WyoTech schools in California, Arizona and New York.

Corinthian was one of the country’s largest for-profit educational institutions. It collapsed last summer amid a cash shortage and fraud allegations.

The Education Department contends that Corinthian failed to comply with requests to address allegations of falsifying job placement data and altering grades and attendance records. It agreed to sell



AP Photo/Eric Risberg, File

In this Oct. 10, 2013 file photo, California Attorney General Kamala Harris gestures while standing by a display showing an internal document showing the target demographic of Corinthian Colleges, during a news conference in San Francisco.

or close its campuses under pressure from the department.

The closures left many current and former students frustrated and with questions about what they mean for their education going forward.

“I would like to know if I am allowed to transfer my credits, if the credits even mean anything,” said Dominique Avila, 35, who withdrew from Heald College’s campus in Roseville, Calif., late last year and was trying to get her transcripts transferred to another school. “What does that mean as far as my debt goes?”

Students who attend a

school that closes while they are enrolled may be eligible to have their federal loans forgiven. Ted Mitchell, the undersecretary at the Education Department, said in a statement that the department “will immediately begin outreach to Corinthian students to review all their options, which may include

loan discharges for students whose school closed.”

The Education Department estimated that forgiving the federal student loans for all the current students would cost taxpayers a maximum \$214 million.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., and four other senators in a letter Monday encouraged the department to “take immediate action to identify and inform students with loans eligible for relief that they may qualify for discharge or cancellation.”

Earlier in April, the department fined subsidiary Heald College, alleging the school had shown a pattern of falsifying post-graduation employment data. In one instance, the company’s Honolulu campus declared a student had found work in her chosen field of accounting, even though administrators knew she was working at Taco Bell, the department said.

GOP ethics bills get airing in Oregon House committee

SALEM (AP) — Local government officials and lobbyists told an Oregon legislative committee Monday that it would be too expensive and time consuming to comply with a proposal to strengthen the state’s public records laws.

The Democrat-controlled House Rules Committee listened to more than an hour of discussion but took no action on the public records measure. It was one of six Republican-sponsored ethics and transparency bills the committee took up in the wake of the scandal that led to former Gov. John Kitzhaber’s resignation.

The GOP measures will be considered along with others proposed by Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, said Rep. Val Hoyle of Eugene, the No. 2 Democrat in the House who chairs the Rules Committee.

The records bill would create deadlines for government agencies to respond to requests for public documents, put a limit on fees they can charge to produce them and require that documents be retained for at least three years.

“We know what the real problem is with public records — it’s the stonewalling with time and fees, and not getting the records to the public,” said Rep. Julie Parrish, a West Linn Republican who sponsored the bill.

It was also backed by journalists and transparency advocates, who said weaknesses in the current law keep the public in the dark about the functions of government.

But a parade of officials from local governments complained it would be impossible for them to fulfill all records requests within six weeks, as the bill would require. They said complying with records requests would have to take precedence over other priorities, particularly in small agencies that have staff performing multiple functions.

In addition to the public records bill, Parrish proposed creating new requirements for the governor’s spouse to report and limit sources of income. Two other bills would allow criminal charges against executive branch officials who provide false information to the Legislature.

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