

Writer proposes local currency named after city's namesake

EUGENE (AP) — May I pay for that in Skinners?

That question could one day come from a customer at a Eugene store, if Bruce Holland Rogers successfully introduces a new, local currency that would be the city's first in years, maybe ever.

Rogers plans to make the currency, which he calls Skinners (after city founder Eugene Skinner), available sometime this summer.

But he'll need local businesses to get on board. Lots of them.

After all, you can't buy anything with a \$2 bill that has an image of Eugene Skinner on it, or a \$3 bill with the image of his wife, Mary Skinner, if no one accepts them as legal tender.

"If there is a community that could benefit from a local currency, I think Eugene really fits that bill," said Rogers, 56, an award-winning author who specializes in short stories, science-fiction and something called flash (as few as 200 words) fiction.

Local currencies are not new. Oregon appears to have several, including the Corvallis Hour Exchange (in which \$10 U.S. dollars equals one Corvallis Hour) that's been around since 2002, and the Cascadia Hour Exchange in Portland, which was available in Eugene in the early 1990s.

And there are dozens across the country — from Baltimore to Berkshire County, Mass., from Minneapolis to Madison, Wis. — and apparently hundreds, if not thousands, throughout the world.

The places where they've had some success appear to be communities similar to Eugene, that favor sustainability, environmental friendliness, quirkiness and the like.

No laws prevent residents of a community from establishing their own form of money as an alternative to U.S. currency.

The goal of a local currency is to encourage people to buy and sell local goods and services to and from each other. The special local currency ensures the money stays local because it is largely worthless anywhere else.

Some are skeptical that local currencies accomplish much, however.

"If this had some positive economic benefits, we'd see this happening everywhere," University of Oregon economics professor Tim Duy says. "What these generally are is quaint local curiosities rather than groundbreaking economic changes."

University says county GMO measure could hamper research

CORVALLIS (AP) — Oregon State University says a Benton County ballot measure that seeks to ban the cultivation of genetically modified crops in the county could hurt GMO-related university research projects.

Backers of Measure 2-89, the Local Food System Ordinance of Benton County, say the ordinance is limited to food crops. Its goal is to protect farmers from GMO contamination and keep corporations that sell GMO seeds from taking over the county's agricultural base.

The measure would also grant legal rights to soil, plants and water.

University officials fear the measure could affect a host of non-food university projects that use genetic engineering techniques or GMO's, *The Corvallis Gazette-Times* reports.

OSU officials point to a section of the ordinance that states: "It shall be unlawful for any corporation or governmental entity to engage in the use of genetically engineered organisms within Benton County."

"Our general counsel's office has done a review of the ballot measure as written and has a strong concern that that language, whether intended or otherwise, would impact the use of genetically engineered organisms at Oregon State University," said university spokesman Steve Clark.

Projects that could be affected, the university says, include testing on transgenic



In this April 20 photo, Mary King and Harry MacCormack of Benton Food Freedom look over a field of organically-grown cabbage in Philomath, Ore. Oregon State University says a Benton County ballot measure that seeks to ban the cultivation of genetically modified crops in the county could hurt university research projects.

ability to improve the properties of plants and animals," Summerton said, "except perhaps in Benton County if our local Ludlucks (anti-technology folks) succeed in getting voters to pass Measure 2-89."

Proponents of the measure insist the GMO ban would not affect most university or private research.

OSU would have to take out its field tests of agricultural GM crops, they say. But any other non-food related projects could go on unhampered, said Stephanie Hampton of Benton Food Freedom, the coalition of organic farmers and anti-corporate activists behind the measure.

Hampton said a ruling by Benton County Circuit Court Judge Locke Williams made it clear the measure contains only one subject, protecting the local food system — a constitutional requirement for a citizen initiative to be placed on the ballot in Oregon.

But Benton County Counsel Vance Croncy — who would have to defend the measure from legal challenges if it passes — said the measure includes the whole spectrum of research involving GMOs.

If it passes, it's unclear whether the ban would have any teeth — the Oregon Legislature in 2013 prohibited ballot measures and local governments' GMO bans. According to the measure's backers, a local food system ordinance would pre-empt that state law.

Voters will get a say on the measure on May 19.

Beckman said he worries he may no longer be able to pursue his work.

"We're working with the FDA, and we're hopeful to be testing in humans within a year," he said.

Private biotech firms operating in Benton County have also expressed concern about the measure. Siga Technologies, which has a \$433 million contract to provide anti-small-pox drugs to the Strategic National Stockpile, uses genetic engineering to develop drugs.

Philomath-based company Gene Tools is working on a treatment for Alzheimer's disease. In an email to the newspaper, the company's CEO Jim Summerton said the measure could spell a major setback for researchers like him.

"We are now experiencing a quantum leap in humanity's

Gunman ID'd in cartoon event attack

By JAMIE STENGLE
Associated Press

GARLAND, Texas — One of two gunmen who opened fire with assault rifles at a Prophet Muhammad cartoon contest in Texas has been identified by a law enforcement official as a man who was on the FBI's radar four years ago during a terrorism investigation. Authorities credited an off-duty officer working security at the event with saving lives by killing the gunman.

At an apartment complex in Phoenix where the FBI says one of the gunmen lived, federal agents spent hours Monday examining a white minivan. They later began inspecting a second vehicle, a silver sedan, and took photographs of papers taken from the trunk.

FBI agents canvassed the Autumn Ridge Apartments complex to speak with residents as members of the Phoenix police bomb squad, wearing protective armor and helmets, assisted in the search.

Authorities believe the apartment belonged to a man a federal law enforcement official identified as Elton Simpson. The official, who was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation by name and spoke to *The Associated Press* on the condition of anonymity, said investigators were searching Simpson's property in connection with the case.

A second law enforcement official, who spoke on condition of anonymity for the same reason, confirmed that Simpson was the same man named in court docu-



FBI crime scene investigators document the area around two deceased gunmen and their vehicle Monday outside the Curtis Culwell Center in Garland, Texas.

Who is Pamela Geller?

Pamela Geller, 56, coordinated the Muhammad cartoon contest and is head of an organization called the American Freedom Defense Initiative. Through websites, books, ad campaigns and public events, Geller has been warning for years that Islam threatens to destroy the U.S.

She famously led the campaign in 2010 — under a different group, called Stop the Islamization of America — to prevent the opening of an Islamic community center blocks from the World Trade Center site. She called it the "ground zero mosque."

The Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit organization that tracks hate groups, keeps a dossier on her in its "extremist files," calling her "the anti-Muslim movement's most visible and flamboyant figurehead."

"I don't think that many Westernized Muslims know when they pray five times a day that they're cursing Christians and Jews five times a day," she was quoted as telling *The New York Times* in 2010. — *The Associated Press*



Geller

ments as convicted in 2011 in federal court in Phoenix of making a false statement by lying to an FBI agent about whether he had discussed traveling to Somalia. According to the documents, Simpson had discussed with an FBI informant a desire to travel to Somalia, but denied

to an FBI agent that he'd had any such discussions.

Authorities in Texas described a dramatic confrontation Sunday evening outside the Curtis Culwell Center in the Dallas suburb of Garland.

Police spokesman Joe Harn said Monday that two men stopped at a parking lot

entrance blocked by a police vehicle. They came out of their car armed with assault weapons and began firing on an off-duty Garland officer and an unarmed security guard who also were getting out of their vehicle to question the men, Harn said.

The gunmen were wearing body armor, he said, and one shot the guard in the leg. The officer returned fire and struck both men, killing them. The guard was treated for his injury at a hospital and released.

Harn said investigators searched the men's car and detonated several suspicious items, but no bombs were found in the vehicle. Additional ammunition was found inside.

"We were able to stop those men before they were able to penetrate the area and shoot anyone else," Harn said.

The unidentified officer, who was not hurt, "did a very good job and probably saved lives," he added.

Harn did not directly answer questions Monday as to whether the gunmen were acting in response to Sunday's event, but said, "obviously they were there to shoot people."

According to mainstream Islamic tradition, any physical depiction of the Prophet Muhammad — even a respectful one — is considered blasphemous. Drawings similar to those featured at the Texas event have sparked violence around the world.

The contest Sunday, hosted by the New York-based American Freedom Defense Initiative, was awarding \$10,000 for the best cartoon depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

BRIEFLY

Man arrested on gun charge near scene of recent rioting, but no shooting

BALTIMORE (AP) — Days after riots crippled Baltimore, tensions again escalated Monday after police said they arrested a man who appeared to be armed. The arrest drew a crowd of protesters who chanted, "Black community, control the police!"

Lt. Col. Melvin Russell said police pursued a man who was spotted on surveillance cameras and appeared to be armed with a handgun. Police said the man was taken into custody after a brief chase, during which a gunshot was heard.

Russell said that police never fired their weapons and that no one was shot. Police recovered a handgun loaded with three rounds, one of which was spent. The suspect was not injured and did not want to go to a hospital, but was taken in an ambulance anyway, he said.

Sen. Catherine Pugh, a Democrat whose district includes the area where the situation occurred, said she went to a hospital to check on the man. She said she asked him if he was OK, and he told her he was.

"There were no visible injuries," Pugh said, though she didn't know what happened to him. The man was visibly upset, but he was able to see his mother before he was released to police, who arrested him, Pugh said. The man was able to walk to a police van, where he was strapped in and taken to Central Booking, she said.

No evidence of conflict in donations to Clinton Foundation, Hillary's work

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department said Monday it has no evidence that any actions taken by Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton when she was secretary of state were influenced by donations to the Clinton Foundation or former President Bill Clinton's speaking fees.

Spokesman Jeff Rathke said the department received requests to review potential conflicts primarily for proposed speech hosts or consulting deals for Bill Clinton and found no conflicts.

Rathke said, however, that the department welcomes new commitments from the Clinton Foundation to disclose its donors and to support additional efforts that ensure all of those donations are public.

The State Department's comment comes as Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign grapples with criticism that foreign entities traded donations to the family charity for favors at the State Department. Hundreds of paid speeches given by Bill Clinton, which can command as much as \$500,000 or more per appearance, have also come under attack from Republican opponents.

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