

WAGE: Higher minimums could affect eligibility for assistance programs

Continued from 1A

\$13.50. It's all phased in." Immediately boosting Oregon's minimum wage to \$15 an hour could cost the state in excess of \$140 million next biennium, according to the analysis.

The estimate excludes costs to local governments and any indirect costs such as higher paid public employees who might seek a corresponding raise.

Costs to K-12 education would be around \$52 million. Pay for certain classified public employees such as entry-level assistants and custodians would cost \$4.8 million. Universities estimate their costs would be on order of \$75 million in the next biennium. The cost would be between \$5.25 million and \$9 million for community colleges, under the governor's previous plan.

Higher education officials "point out that, in general, an increase in wages for student workers is likely to reduce other assistance the students receive, including federal

aid," the fiscal office report stated.

The higher minimums also could affect workers' eligibility for state assistance such as the Oregon Health Plan, food assistance program, school lunch programs, subsidized preschool, and student financial aid.

It's unclear how much a \$15 minimum would cost local governments, including school districts. Oregon Employment Department data suggests an increase to \$13.50 could cost about \$50 million more per biennium for local governments, according to the legislative fiscal office.

Linn County commissioners conducted their own estimate in which they forecast Brown's previous minimum wage proposal could cost local governments \$450 to \$500 million dollars a year.

The commissioners wrote in a letter to Brown that they believe the former proposal was "financially irresponsible" and an unfunded mandate.

NEWTON: At this point, Terpening is not a suspect

Continued from 1A

is a tool police can use to verify statements and facts, and the sheriff's office relies on an Oregon State Police detective out of Ontario to conduct the exams. They take at least a couple of hours, Rowan said, depending on how involved they are. He said he might be able to talk about the results of Terpening's test on



Terpening

Tuesday. The American Psychological Association, National Academy of Sciences and other organizations and scientists reject the polygraph as a lie detector. According to APA's 2004 findings, "An underlying problem is theoretical: There is no evidence that any pattern of physiological reactions is unique to deception."

STANDOFF: Four people still holding out at refuge

Continued from 1A

40, presents a danger to the community and he might fail to return for future court proceedings. Beckerman said Bundy repeatedly ignored federal demands to leave the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and she had little confidence he would comply with orders to show up in court.

U.S. District Court Judge Michael W. Mosman is expected to consider the matter Tuesday, when he also weighs the government's challenge to the potential release of another member of the armed group, Joseph O'Shaughnessy.

Bundy and O'Shaughnessy are among 11 people arrested in connection with the standoff that began Jan. 2, when the group called federal land restrictions burdensome and demanded the government turn over public lands to local control. Only one, Shawna Cox, has left jail.

Bundy was arrested Jan. 26 during a traffic stop, where police shot and killed Arizona rancher Robert "LaVoy" Finicum during a confrontation.

Since his arrest, Bundy has repeatedly urged the four people remaining at the refuge to go home. The holdouts include David Fry, who has posted updates to the YouTube channel "DefendYourBase," which the group has used frequently to release information.

Fry has said the four want assurances they won't be arrested and demand pardons for everyone involved. No video has been posted since Sunday.

Bundy's attorney has said Bundy didn't recognize Fry's name and that he wasn't a core member of the group. The other holdouts are Jeff Banta and married couple Sandy Anderson and Sean Anderson.

Those arrested face a felony conspiracy charge of using intimidation to prevent federal employees from their work at the refuge.

Bundy told the judge Friday that he loves the United States and believes government plays an important role, particularly in providing national security. He said he respected the judge's authority and would be back for all court proceedings.

Beckerman said Bundy and other occupiers made threatening comments during the standoff, and she was concerned he might take over another government building if released.

She ruled that Cox could leave jail — with GPS monitoring — but only after the remaining occupiers leave the refuge. Cox's public defender, Tiffany Harris, opposed that stipulation, and the Utah woman was released from jail shortly before midnight Friday.

The judge said O'Shaughnessy also could go home pending trial. Federal prosecutors objected, and he will stay in jail until Tuesday's hearing.

O'Shaughnessy's public defender, Amy Baggio, said her client wasn't a key figure in the occupation and did not spend his nights at the refuge. Baggio said he went to the standoff only as a witness in case the authorities used force.

Alphabet comes before Apple as world's most valuable company

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Alphabet now comes before Apple atop the list of the world's most valuable companies.

The shift occurred in Monday's extended trading after Alphabet, Google's new parent company, released a fourth-quarter earnings report that highlighted the robust growth of the digital ad market. Apple Inc.'s iPhone, meanwhile, is suffering its first downturn since it debuted eight years ago.

Alphabet Inc. earned \$4.9 billion on revenue of \$21.3 billion in the fourth quarter. If not for employee stock expenses and certain other items, Alphabet said it would have earned \$8.67 per share. That figure easily topped the average estimate of \$8.10 per share among analysts surveyed by FactSet.

The report provided the most detailed breakdown yet on the profits pouring in from Google's dominant search engine and ad network. (Google reorganized itself under Alphabet last October.) Investors pushed up Alphabet stock \$35.73, or 4.6 percent, to \$806.50 in extended trading. Based on that after-hours



AP Photo/Mark Lennihan

Electronic screens post prices of Alphabet, Twitter and Facebook stock, Monday at the Nasdaq MarketSite in New York. Alphabet, the parent company of Google, reports quarterly earnings Monday.

bump, Alphabet's market value stood at \$555 billion while Apple's was at \$533 billion, based on the most recent regulatory filings showing the company's outstanding shares. The rankings could quickly change again in regular trading Tuesday.

Apple's stock has been sliding amid concerns over slowing iPhone sales. Meanwhile, Alphabet's stock has surged by 45 percent since the end of 2014 when it was still trading under Google's name.

The fourth-quarter report marks the first time Alphabet has spelled out the costs of running still-exper-

imental businesses that are trying to do everything from eliminating human drivers to curing cancer.

Until now, Google chose to hide the expense of running those peripheral operations in its financial statement. The company's opaque accounting made it difficult to know just how much profit Google reaped from its primary business — selling digital ads next to everything from search results to YouTube videos.

In the fourth quarter, Google produced an operating profit of \$6.8 billion on revenue of \$17.1 billion, after subtracting ad commis-

sions. That translates into a whopping profit margin of 40 percent. Apple registered an operating profit margin of 32 percent in its most recent quarter.

Meanwhile, Alphabet's other companies together produced an operating loss of \$1.2 billion on revenue of just \$151 million. Alphabet labels that category "other bets." For the full year, Alphabet's other companies lost \$3.6 billion on revenue of \$448 million.

The optimism surrounding Alphabet stems in part from hopes that the company is developing more financial discipline as it discloses more earnings details. Google had become known for its free-spending habits and reluctance to share information with analysts.

The change in sentiment coincided with Google's hiring of a new chief financial officer, Ruth Porat, last May. Porat, a Wall Street veteran, has consistently signaled her intent to rein in spending.

Under the previous setup at Google, "things had always been a little muddy," said Edward Jones analyst Josh Olson. "The hope now is that management will continue to show greater cost discipline."

HOUK: Was elected as mayor of Pendleton in 2004

Continued from 1A

first election cycle that Houk, 57, won't appear on a ballot since the early 1980s.

While his first attempt as a 22-year-old fell short, Houk entered local politics by winning a seat on the BMCC Board of Education, a position he would hold until 2005.

Houk was elected to the Pendleton City Council in 1994 and as mayor in 2004, coming in second in a three-way race in the

primary before winning in the ensuing runoff election. He ran unopposed in 2008 and 2012.

Houk is the latest council incumbent to decide against seeking another term, ensuring 2017 will feature several new faces.

Former City Councilor Jane Hill resigned in January to take a job with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Since then, Councilor Chuck Wood decided against a reelection campaign while

councilors Becky Marks and Tom Young have previously said they're undecided.

Additionally, a committee called Pendleton Citizens United has organized to recall Councilor Al Plute, whose term runs through 2018.

Houk hasn't talked with anyone who is interested in replacing him as mayor, a position he said scares off interested candidates because of the time commitment.

As of Monday morning,

City Recorder Andrea Denton said no one has filed for mayor. The filing deadline for the May 17 municipal election is March 8.

Houk plans to work for Union Pacific for another five years and is unsure if he'll resurrect his political career after he retires, although he didn't rule it out.

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

RAIN: Mountain snow should stick around through end of Feb.

Continued from 1A

Northwest. Forecasts call for mild weather in the coming months, Hull said, with the majority of storms tracking south into California.

"On the whole, it looks like it's going to be a drier-than-normal period the next three months," he said. "Of course, up in the mountains, it can be quite a bit different."

Hull said mountain snow should stick around above 5,000 feet through the end of February, which would help keep irrigators and fish runs from running out of water too early in the season. Last year, some irrigation districts were forced to shut off their pumps early as low river flows raised the

water temperature enough to kill migrating salmon and steelhead.

The region's snowpack is faring much better in 2016 than it was at the start of February 2015, including 143 percent of average in the John Day Basin versus 65 percent; 154 percent in the Harney Basin versus 79 percent; and 116 percent in the Grande Ronde, Powder, Burnt and Imnaha river basins versus 70 percent.

Greg Silbernagel, district watermaster in Pendleton, said McKay and Cold Springs reservoirs typically

begin filling up between March and May. Last year was an anomaly, he said, with snowmelt in February.

Silbernagel said he's more optimistic about conditions for this year, though it's still too early to know for sure. His district includes the Westland, Hermiston, Stanfield and West Extension irrigation districts, and 136,324 acres of irrigated agriculture in Umatilla County.

"We like seeing water for the irrigators, and for environmental reasons as well," he said. "If this weather

pattern continues, I think we'll be very happy."

As for dryland wheat, Don Wysocki with Oregon State University Extension Service said he welcomes an average year, but there's still a long way to go to recoup subsoil moisture.

"We're having an average year, which we haven't seen for three years. From that standpoint, it's good," he said. "But we have a fairly large deficit to make up."

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

"We're having an average year, which we haven't seen for three years. From that standpoint, it's good. But we have a fairly large deficit to make up."

— Don Wysocki, Oregon State University Extension Service

SHORT STOP

2012 NW Carden Ave. Like Us On facebook
541-276-1522

HERMISTON BREWING CO.

2ND ANNUAL BOTTOMS UP!

BEEREX FEST

Saturday Feb 27
Noon - 7pm
125 N. 1st Hermiston, OR — (541) 289-7415
featuring select Northwest breweries

WWW.HERMISTONBREWINGCOMPANY.COM

Valentine Dinner for Two

It's the small touches that mean so much!

Choose between our heart shaped steak for two or our 1/3# hamburger patties.

Stop or call to pre-order by 2/8/2016

E.O.M.S.
EASTERN OREGON MOBILE SLAUGHTER

541-567-2011
253 W. Hermiston Ave., Hermiston