

## FIRE: House also passed bill to double state's renewable energy mandate by 2040

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could no longer respond to those fires without additional funding.

Two years later, Wheeler County Fire and Rescue was created, essentially setting the template for HB 4007. The department is an all-volunteer outfit under the Wheeler County Emergency Management department. Equipment was provided by the now-defunct Wheeler Point Volunteer Fire Department out of Spray.

In its first month, Wheeler County Fire and Rescue responded to 33 fires and directly saved seven homes, Humphreys said. By 2015, residents had donated more than \$20,000 to support the program and new vehicles were picked up through federal donations.

Wheeler County Fire and Rescue has grown its volunteer base and was one of the first departments to respond to the massive Canyon Creek Complex in Grant County last summer.

"It's hard to believe what they've done in two years," Humphreys said. "It's something I'm really proud of."

Doug Grafe, chief of the Oregon Department of Forestry's Fire Protection Division, said there are currently 20 rangeland protection associations across the state, protecting 4.6 million acres. Under HB 4007, rangeland protection associations will still be required to submit annual budgets to the Board of Forestry and enter into cooperative agreements with ODF. Those agreements detail

the state's ability to assist with training and additional expenses.

HB 4007 now goes to the Senate for further consideration.

### Clean Power Plan

Also on Monday, the Oregon House passed a more controversial bill to double the state's renewable energy mandate for Pacific Power and Portland General Electric by 2040.

HB 4036 requires the utilities phase out coal to serve their Oregon customers by 2030. The bill passed 39-20, including support from a handful of Republicans. Smith was not one of them.

"I think all of us want a clean environment," Smith said. "It's also important to note we live on a hydro system that produces the cleanest, most dependable power on the planet."

As it stands, existing hydroelectric power does not count toward utilities' mandate under Oregon's renewable portfolio standard. Hydro makes up the majority of Oregon's electricity mix, at 44.7 percent, due in large part to the system of federal dams on the Columbia River.

Renewable energy advocates argue the RPS is meant to trigger investment in new wind and solar projects. Smith said ratepayers are left to foot the bill, especially if the renewable standard is raised to 50 percent from 25 percent as proposed in HB 4036.

"As soon as I knew hydro wouldn't be considered (in the bill), I was out," Smith said. "In my view, we're going to focus on expanding wind and solar

technology, all the while we have a proven, low-cost source of power in hydro."

Pacific Power and PGE insist they already have plans to phase coal out of their energy mix, and this bill — negotiated with a coalition of environmental groups — will result in rate increases of just approximately 1 percent per year.

The legislation was worked out in response to a proposed ballot measure filed by Renew Oregon that would accomplish the same goals, but include fewer protections for the utilities.

In an interview earlier this month with the *East Oregonian*, Pacific Power CEO Stefan Bird said the company has already added 2,000 megawatts in renewables since Berkshire Hathaway bought PacifiCorp in 2005. Meanwhile, the cost of renewable technology is falling significantly, making them more competitive to replace retiring coal plants.

"We can make this transition happen. We just need time and flexibility," Bird said.

HB 4036 was referred to the Senate Transportation and Business Committee on Tuesday. Smith said the bill appears like it will move forward before the end of the short session.

"In the end, I think ratepayers are going to spend more money," he said. "It's going to get more expensive, but won't do anything for the environment."

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## RAMM: Urged people to quit smoking

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his back with cupped hands to dislodge thick mucus from the walls of his lungs. As a teenager, he regularly wore an inflated percussion vest hooked to an air compressor that performed the same function. He had nebulizer and CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) treatments. He missed plenty of school over the years and considered medical staff and other CF patients at OHSU's Doernbecher Children's Hospital as family.

"He spent over a fifth of his high school career in the hospital," Hascall said. "He still graduated with high honors."

Ramm also received the coveted PHS Citizenship Cup in 2009. He attended Blue Mountain Community College, planning to ultimately earn degrees in computers and electrical engineering at Oregon State University. Because of his downtime, he often hunkered at his computer wearing wireless headphones, crushing his foes at Call of Duty and other computer games. He loved fishing, working out at a martial arts studio, fixing computers, performing magic, eating macaroni and cheese and spending time with his mom and three siblings. He was a stickler for good grammar. He volunteered fixing computers for a time at Domestic Violence Services where Hascall is program manager.

Ramm nurtured online friendships with fellow CFers, many of whom he never met. His dry sense of humor often emerged. On Nov. 17 he posted on Facebook, "Power just went out. I have no oxygen. We shall see if I die tonight." He advocated for people with lung issues. He urged people to quit smoking or change to e-cigarettes, saying "you save lives of those around you."

On Dec. 18, he posted, "Have tissue ready... the doctors and I have come to a decision that it is time to ease into comfort care. I'm taking the wheel at the end here and driving into a beautiful sunset."

Before he went, he orchestrated the celebration of life that would take place about a month after his death. On

Saturday, a portable microphone drifted around among the guests as tears fell and memories flowed.

"He loved life," said Candice Creger, Mat's aunt. "He read people really well. He did things to bring people together."

"It was his theme to breathe deeply and inhale life," said OHSU chaplain Cody Schuman. "Each of us can carry on his legacy of breathing deeply, regardless of our lung function."

Daelee McCormick, who has CF, left her bed at OHSU to travel to Pendleton for the day. She first met Ramm when both were young patients at Doernbecher and remembered wheelchair races and riding scooters in the hallways. She recalled young Mat making bracelets for the nurses, then making more to sell in the lobby during shift changes.

"He must have sold 50 or 60," she said, wiping a few tears. "He was quite the young entrepreneur."

The microphone found its way back to Hascall at the end. Her son's life, she said, offered lessons.

"Take care of your lungs. Look at each day as a gift. Live your day fully and with purpose," Hascall said. "Make connections with other people. Forgive them. Not everyone was nice to Mat, but even when people weren't nice, he found a way to forgive them."

Hascall had cried when she learned Mat had CF. She recalled a high school classmate who had died of the disease shortly after their graduation. Mat's doctors told her not to plan for a future, just live for the day. Looking back, she feels amazed.

"I always knew (death) was coming. There's only one ending to cystic fibrosis. I knew he had two mutations of the worst gene," Hascall said. "He did things I'd never thought he'd do. I never expected him to drive a car or have a girlfriend or graduate high school, let alone go to college. He exceeded all the milestones I thought he'd never get."

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