

# RICHARDSON: New machines will provide a second check

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can authenticate whether a voter made a simple mistake, such as an inadvertent pencil mark, or indeed filled in more than one circle.

"You're fixing that ballot right then in the moment," Lindell said, and all the tabulation happens inside the machine.

The local group of women who volunteer to verify signatures and check for voting irregularities still have the first look at ballots, Lindell said, so the new machines provide a second check.

The county is awaiting federal and then state certification of the machines. Lindell said the new tabulators get to work for the November election.

She also told Richardson her department's biggest hurdle is collecting ballot boxes. County staff, volunteers and local law enforcement bring in the boxes when polls close at 8 p.m.



Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson reacts to an old ballot box on display at the Umatilla County Elections Division office, while touring the facilities Thursday in Pendleton.

Richardson said that voting experience is so different from Portland's.

There, he said, last-minute voters line up at the polls or in vehicles to drop off ballots.

Elections officials take and count the ballots of anyone in line before 8 p.m. They also

take ballots of anyone who comes after the deadline, but they don't count those in the vote. Instead, they send a letter to those voters explaining the ballot came in too late and urged them to try better next time.

Richardson also said he is working to hold up Oregon is a national model for how to operate secure elections. While the state and counties store voter registration and information online and in computers, Richardson said paper ballots remain hard to hack.

Washington, D.C., knows Oregon is serious about elections security, he said, and the state is getting a \$5.5 million federal grant to enhance that security. The recent federal omnibus spending bill allocates \$380 million for grants to help states secure their election systems.

Russian hackers penetrated those systems in 21 states in the 2016 presidential election. Rather than try to

manipulate ballots, he said, the Russians were trying to undermine the confidence people had in the election systems. As secretary of state, he said, his job is to ensure Oregonians that elections maintain their integrity and are fair.

Voters elected Richardson to the post in 2016, the first time a Republican won a statewide office in Oregon since 2002. Before departing Pendleton, he gave Lindell a medallion displaying the state seal on one side and the motto he adopted for his office on the other: *Pro tanto quid retribuamus*, Latin for "What shall we give in return for so much?"

He said the motto exemplifies how he values public service.

From Pendleton, Richardson visited elections offices in Heppner, Condon and Fossil on his way to Medford. He said he plans to return this year for the Pendleton Round-Up.



Oregon Sen. Bill Hansell, left, inquires about the cost of a single dose of NARCAN nasal spray during a roundtable discussion on opioids with U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, second from right, at the Umatilla County Sheriff's Department in Pendleton.

## OPIOIDS: Use is 'increasing'

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subjects of late — the opioid crisis. Walden encouraged the law enforcement leaders to talk about what they are seeing on the streets and how the epidemic affects police protocol.

UCSO Sgt. John Shafer explained that until lately officers field-tested suspicious substances in subjects' possession. No more. Increasingly, police are accidentally getting poisoned after handling minuscule amounts of fentanyl.

"An officer from Ohio got some on his uniform and he brushed it off," Shafer said. "It absorbed through his skin and he got sick. What saved him was Narcan."

Narcan, the brand name of a drug called naloxone, is proving to be an invaluable tool for law enforcement. The medication reverses overdoses of opioid drugs such as prescription painkillers, heroin, morphine and fentanyl. County deputies recently began carrying Narcan on their duty belts.

The nasally administered Narcan is so safe that officers don't need even to know for sure that someone is overdosing from opioids.

"When in doubt, you can go ahead and administer," Rowan said. "There are no adverse effects."

"How often in Umatilla

County do you run into people who are overdosing on opioids?" Walden asked.

"It's increasing," Shafer said.

Last year, emergency medical service workers administered Narcan 177 times in the county.

The epidemic seems to be creeping into every demographic from homeless person and soccer mom to rock star. Schafer waved his arm at the bottles glowing on the screen.

"Michael Jackson died of carfentanyl," he said, pointing to the bottle on the right. "Tom Petty and Prince both died of overdoses of fentanyl."

The crisis rages in stars' mansions, on the streets and in the house next door.

Walden, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, this month oversaw hearings on more than 20 bills designed to attack the opioid epidemic in a multifaceted way. He said the bills attack the problem on different fronts including education, treatment, regulation and research.

Walden lamented the shiftiness of those who dodge the laws as they manufacture potent opioids.

"They can change out a molecule and all of a sudden that's not an illegal substance," he said. "We're trying to change the law so

we can stay ahead of them instead of vice-versa. It's a real challenge."

The congressman cited other frustrations such as the discovery of massive shipments of painkillers that flooded into a West Virginia town of 2,900 people, enough for 5,624 pain pills for every man, woman and child there. He described a pill distribution point with lines so long, someone set up a hot dog stand. It's an illustration of how crazy it has become.

"It's a natural disaster," Walden said. "More people die from opioid overdoses than automobile accidents."

Fighting such a scourge isn't cheap. He said Oregon received \$6.5 million from the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) that originated in the Energy and Commerce Committee. The recent budget deal will provide \$6 billion nationally over two years. Those gathered with Walden will be interested to see if that is enough.

When Walden asked the open-ended question, "What do you need?" the sheriff responded.

"What it boils down to," Rowan said, "is adequate funding."

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## Californians to take their coffee with a cancer warning

By BRIAN MELLEY  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A Los Angeles judge has determined that coffee companies must carry an ominous cancer warning label because of a chemical produced in the roasting process.

Superior Court Judge Elihu Berle said Wednesday that Starbucks and other companies failed to show that benefits from drinking coffee outweighed any risks. He ruled in an earlier phase of trial that companies hadn't shown the threat from the chemical was insignificant.

The Council for Education and Research on Toxics, a nonprofit group, sued Starbucks and 90 other companies under a state law that requires warnings on a wide range of chemicals that can cause cancer. One is acrylamide, a carcinogen present in coffee.

"Defendants failed to satisfy their burden of proving ... that consumption of coffee confers a benefit to human health," Berle wrote in his proposed ruling.

The coffee industry had claimed the chemical was present at harmless levels and should be exempt from the law because it results naturally from the cooking process that makes beans flavorful. It also argued coffee was good for the body.



AP Photo/Richard Vogel, File  
A barista pours steamed milk in a coffee at a cafe in September 2017 in Los Angeles.

The ruling came despite eased concerns in recent years about the possible dangers of coffee, with some studies finding health benefits. In 2016, the International Agency for Research on Cancer — the cancer agency of the World Health Organization — moved coffee off its "possible carcinogen" list.

The lawsuit was brought under the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act, passed by voters in 1986. It allows private citizens, advocacy groups and attorneys to sue on behalf of the state and collect a portion of civil penalties.

The law has been credited with reducing chemicals that cause cancer and birth defects, such as lead in hair dyes, mercury in nasal sprays and arsenic in bottled water. But it's also been widely criticized for abuses by lawyers shaking down businesses for quick settlements.

"Coffee has been shown, over and over again, to be a healthy beverage," said William Murray, president and CEO of the National Coffee Association, in reaction to the decision. He argued the lawsuit "does nothing to improve public health."

The lawsuit has been brewing for eight years and is still not over. A third phase of trial will determine civil penalties of up to \$2,500 per person exposed each day over eight years, an astronomical figure in a state of 40 million that appears unlikely to be imposed.

Attorney Raphael Metzger, who brought the lawsuit and drinks a few cups of coffee daily, wants the industry to remove the chemical from its process. Coffee companies have said that's not feasible.

"Getting it out is better for public health than leaving it in and warning people," he said.

Metzger's client brought a similar case later taken up by the state attorney general that resulted in potato-chip makers agreeing in 2008 to pay \$3 million and remove acrylamide from their products.

The chip-makers opted to do that rather than post cancer warnings like those that are found, and largely ignored, throughout California.

## POT: Many banks don't want anything to do with pot money

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The letter, released by California Treasurer John Chiang, said the absence of those federal rules "leaves the industry and financial institutions in the dark."

A shortage of banking services in California's emerging pot industry is seen as a major obstacle to developing a thriving, regulated marketplace.

Legal pot sales for adults kicked off in the state on Jan. 1, but many banks

don't want anything to do with pot money for fear it could expose them to legal trouble from the federal government.

That's left many businesses to operate largely in cash, which can make them a target for theft while posing risks for cannabis workers and the public.

Financial institutions need "some comfort that they will not be prosecuted, or lose access to customer assets, simply for banking

this industry," said the letter, also signed by several cannabis industry groups and the Maine Credit Union League.

Congress this month extended restrictions that prevent the Justice Department from prosecuting medical marijuana cases in legal-pot states.

Chiang, a Democratic candidate for governor, earlier formed a task force in an attempt to resolve banking problems for the marijuana industry.

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