

BROADBAND: Tough questions came from students

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ubiquitous in the Willamette Valley, Franell said broadband services in some rural areas of the state range from slow to nonexistent.
“If Sam Colt’s 45-caliber revolver was the great equalizer of the 1800s, broadband is certainly the great equalizer of our age,” he said.
Brown said nine school districts are applying for grants through the Connecting Oregon Schools Fund, which could result in \$6 million used to install 100 miles of fiber, supported by federal matching grants.
“The internet makes knowledge accessible, and that access needs to be available regardless of whether they’re in Elgin or Eugene,” she said.
InterMountain Education Service District Superintendent Mark Mulvihill said the bill will primarily help the school districts in Elgin, Imbler and Huntington improve their access to broadband.
Elgin School District Superintendent Dianne Greif said internet service has improved over the past few years, but heavy snowfall during Grande Ronde Valley winters means service interruptions can’t



Gov. Kate Brown laughs at a comment from a Pendleton High School student Friday at the Pendleton Technology and Trade Center.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

be avoided.
That’s a problem for Elgin teachers that frequently integrate laptops, digital file sharing and video into their classrooms, requiring them to scramble for alternatives when service goes down. Greif said House Bill 4023 money would go toward building fiber between La Grande and Elgin, underground and safe from the snow.
Gov. Kate Brown was surrounded by some of the region’s top education officials, but the tough questions came from a class of Pendleton High School students.

After quizzing kids from the Pendleton High School culinary arts program about their recent victory at a cooking competition and watching the robotics team’s robot launch a box into the air during a tour of the Pendleton Tech and Trade Center, Brown was ushered into a room for a question-and-answer session with a small group of students.
One student asked Brown about the future of Oregon Promise, the state program that pays for most of the community college tuition for recent high school graduates and GED recipients.
Brown told the students that she will continue to support Oregon Promise and wants to see it expanded to older students who are returning to school.
Another student asked her how she would support Eastern Oregon, a conservative corner of a blue state.
The Democratic governor listed the state’s investment in the Umatilla Basin, Ontario infrastructure and the Pendleton Heights housing development as ways she has helped Eastern Oregon.

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SESSION: Brown veto of tax bill would had made session unnecessary

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ceremony. But in an interview following the event, he echoed his fellow Republicans in criticizing the special session.
Hansell said leaders from both houses are currently engaging in negotiations, but he anticipates that whatever comes out of it won’t result

in anything impactful.
“It really doesn’t do much for many people,” he said.
Brown could have resolved the issue by vetoing the bill or waiting for the 2019 session, Hansell said, but there was “a lot of politics” in her decision.
“In an election year, she realized that she needed to do

something,” he said.
At the Friday signing ceremony, Brown said the issue could not be resolved during the short session nor wait until next year.
“We couldn’t get agreement during the short session,” she said. “The Trump tax plan highlighted the inequities in Oregon’s

pass-through entities. I think very strongly that Oregon’s small businesses need tax fairness and they need it now. They can’t wait until 2019.”
Brown referenced a 2013 special session under former Gov. John Kitzhaber, which produced the “grand bargain” between business and labor groups that resulted

in tax breaks for a few large Oregon companies such as Nike.
“We were able to come in for a special session a few years ago to provide tax certainty for a couple of large corporations,” she said. “If we were able to do that for a couple of large corporations, we can do it for thousands of

small businesses.”
Asked whether her special session announcement was politically motivated, Brown simply answered: “No.”
If the Legislature expands the tax break, the Legislative Revenue Office estimates about 9,000 Oregon sole proprietorships would be eligible for the decreased rate.

DAIRY: Auctioneers spent three weeks planning for event

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Aside from Lost Valley Farm, te Velde’s bankruptcy also encompasses his California dairy operations, Pacific Rim Dairy in Corcoran and GJ te Velde Dairy in Tipton.
Together, the dairies have more than 40,000 cattle that are listed as potential “hazard property” that poses a safety threat or requires immediate attention.
Te Velde’s companies owe between \$100 million and \$500 million to fewer than 1,000 creditors and have between \$100 million and \$500 million in assets, according to the bankruptcy petition.
A more complete accounting of his financial affairs is due in bankruptcy court by May 10.
Overland Stockyard, a dairy livestock auction in Hanford, Calif., is listed as te Velde’s largest unsecured creditor with a claim of \$3 million, followed by Conway Hay Sales of Goshen, Calif., with a \$2.9 million claim and Valmont Northwest, an irrigation equipment dealer in Pasco, Wash., with a \$2.3 million claim.
Joe VanLeuven, an attorney representing Rabobank, said he is still evaluating the bankruptcy effect on Rabobank’s state court action and the financial receivership for Lost Valley Farm.
A receiver was appointed to oversee the Oregon dairy’s finances and protect Rabobank’s collateral at the same time that an Oregon judge ordered the company to cooperate with the planned auction earlier this month.
VanLeuven said he would not comment on Rabobank’s disposition toward a reorganization plan for Te Velde’s companies. It is unclear what the immediate effects of the bankruptcy will be, thought the immediate impact is the automatic stay, he said.
“The upshot is our auction is not happening today,” VanLeuven said.
Riley Walter, te Velde’s

bankruptcy lawyer based in Fresno, Calif., did not immediately return a message for comment.
The auctioneer, Toppenish Livestock, sent several staff members on the hundred-mile trip to Boardman to inform bidders of the latest development. Owner John Top said the company spent three weeks preparing for the auction.
“It’s the height of inconvenience,” Top said.
Aside from its financial troubles, Lost Valley Farm has repeatedly run into regulatory problems in 2018.
Unauthorized discharge of manure and other violations of its confined animal feeding operation, or CAFO, permit prompted the Oregon Department of Agriculture to fine the dairy more than \$10,000.
Continued wastewater issues were cited in a lawsuit filed by ODA seeking to stop all discharges from the dairy, which would effectively shut it down. That case was settled, allowing Lost Valley Farm to continue operating under certain conditions.
A spokeswoman for ODA said regulators continue to conduct weekly inspections at the dairy. Since the March 16 court settlement, they have observed several more violations — including manure spills — at Lost Valley Farm, which were self-reported but still constitute a CAFO permit violation.
Compliance work is ongoing, the spokeswoman said, adding that no surface water or groundwater sites have been contaminated. When asked about how they are working to comply with the permit, te Velde said, “All I can tell you is we’re doing the best we can there.”
Oregon’s CAFO program permits, on average, 509 facilities and conducted 880 inspections across the state last year. All dairies, regardless of size, are visited approximately every 10 months, and less than 1 percent of inspections resulted in violations that led to civil penalties.

AN OPEN LETTER TO VOTERS UMATILLA AND MORROW COUNTIES FROM ROB COLLINS CANDIDATE FOR CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

April 21, 2018

I am running for the position of Circuit Court Judge. I am writing this letter directly to you, as I feel the time constraints of candidates’ fairs and general campaign contacts, limit my ability to fully present the message I would like to share. I am very excited to be your candidate for Circuit Court Judge and look forward to continuing to serve my community.

First I would like to suggest that in selecting the right candidate to fill this position on the Circuit Court that you need to consider the current composition of the judges in the Pendleton Courthouse. There are three judicial positions in Pendleton. Mr. Breiling and I are running to fill the position created by Judge Hampton’s retirement. Before assuming a judicial position, both Judge Brauer and Judge Lieuallen had legal backgrounds focused in criminal law. Judge Hampton had more civil law background, and since Judge Pahl’s retirement, has served primarily as a domestic relations judge, handled other types of civil litigation, plus dependency and delinquency cases involving minors. We can expect that the new judge assuming Judge Hampton’s position should be a judge with a very strong family law and civil law litigation background, and I am the candidate who best fills that need.

Mr. Breiling has campaigned primarily on the focus of his career as a criminal law defense attorney, which is why he has the large number of court appearances last year (483) that he highlights. Any second year criminal prosecutor or public defender could tout the same level of court appearances, if not more. Right now we have a young criminal prosecutor in Hermiston that recently made over 550 court appearances in just one month. But this does not make anyone qualified to be a judge. Multiple criminal arraignments, changes of plea, status hearings and other repetitive and brief court appearances in a single day add up, but tell you nothing about the individual’s insight into the correct application of law, their commitment to justice, or their ability to interpret, analyze and apply the law to the facts of a case. That is the job a judge must fulfill. And I am the candidate best qualified to supply the broad legal knowledge and experience expected of an effective judge.

In the last few years I have been practicing with a focus in areas other than criminal law that require fewer court appearances, but are very important to the resolution of cases in Circuit Court. We already have two judges in Pendleton with very similar criminal law backgrounds, both comparable to Mr. Breiling’s experience in that they had a criminal focus before taking the bench. I practiced criminal law for years, dealt with criminal matters as a judge in Municipal Court over the past 18 years, and am certainly proficient in that arena but have an even stronger background and experience in a variety of civil law areas including family law, probate, guardianship, conservatorship, adoption, real estate, contract disputes and agriculture related and general business law matters than does my opponent. These are the areas of experience most needed for this position, along with a deeply held respect for the law and the process of justice. I believe a recognition of my qualifications and my commitment to enforcing the law, is the reason I am the candidate who received the endorsement of the Oregon State Bar poll of all judges and attorneys in Umatilla and Morrow counties by a 60% majority vote, and the endorsement of Crime Victims United of Oregon.

I also want to respond to recent suggestions that I am seeking this position as a sort of retirement. This position is for a six year term, and six years is all that anyone elected to this position has the certainty of serving. That may be the last six years of my career, as I won’t have a practice to return to after six years on the bench. I have every intention of serving that full term, and working diligently for the citizens of Umatilla and Morrow Counties. If I was interested in retiring, I would stay in my law practice and simply start reducing my work load. That is not my intention.

The role of a Circuit Court Judge is a service position, and I see this as the best way I can use both my legal and personal skills to continue the commitment of service that has been a focus of my life since I returned home to Eastern Oregon after completing law school. There has never been a time during my adult life in Pendleton that I have not been involved in some form of service work for my community, starting with serving on the Red Cross Board of Directors and the Umatilla-Morrow County Housing Authority Board shortly after I came back to Pendleton, and most recently by serving the region as a Pendleton Round-Up Director for the past seven years. I will complete my eighth and final year in September of this year. In between I have worked hard in service roles with a variety of other organizations including the Pendleton Rotary Club that I have supported for 37 years.

I have worked long hours in my profession to serve my clients, often spending evenings and weekends at my office, but I also made time to volunteer both personally and professionally. I intend to dedicate myself 100% to being the best judge I can be for the people of Umatilla and Morrow Counties as long as I have the privilege to serve. I am asking for your votes.

You deserve the best possible judge over the next six years, and for these reasons I believe I am the best candidate for this position. Thank you to my supporters who have written so many letters to the editor and assisted in and supported my campaign. I am honored and humbled by your efforts, and grateful for the journey.

Sincerely,

Rob Collins

Please visit us on Facebook at Rob Collins for Circuit Court Judge.
Paid for by Rob Collins for Circuit Court Judge, 71352 Hwy 395 S, Pendleton, Oregon 97801.