

Independent candidate invited to first gubernatorial debate

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

All three major political party candidates have been invited to the first of three major gubernatorial debates before the Nov. 6 general election.

Children First for Oregon, along with television station KOIN and Pamplin Media Group, will host the first major debate of the election season Oct. 2 with an atypical format: Children will pose all of the questions to the three candidates.

Incumbent Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, will face off with GOP nominee Rep. Knute Buehler, a Bend orthopedic surgeon, and Independent Party of Oregon nominee Patrick Starnes, a cabinet maker from Brownsville.

The "Debate for Oregon's Future" marks the first time Oregon children and youth will ask all of the questions in a gubernatorial debate, according to Children First for Oregon, an nonprofit child advocacy organization.

"We are so excited about the opportunity to highlight the voices and questions and issues impacting children's lives through this debate," said Tonia Hunt, executive director of Children First for Oregon. "This is a great opportunity to hear directly from young people in Oregon about what is happening to them and what issues matter to them on a day-to-day basis but also how that affects their future."

Children First for Oregon is accepting applications on its website from children and youth who would like to participate. Applicants can apply online at <https://www.cfio.org/debate/> as well as submit a question and learn how to submit a 30-second application video.

The event "will be a lot more interesting and informative for voters than traditional debates, partly because it will be tougher for the candidates to blow off questions from young people or switch to prepared talking points," said John Schrag, execu-



Patrick Starnes



Gov. Kate Brown



Rep. Knute Buehler

utive editor at Pamplin Media Group.

KOIN 6 anchor Jeff Gianola and *Portland Tribune* education reporter Shasta Kearns Moore will facilitate the questions and give participants advance tips on how to make sure the candidates answer their questions, Hunt said. The debate is scheduled for 7 to 8 p.m. in

the Portland area at a venue to be determined. The debate will be broadcast live by KOIN.

The Independent Party has threatened legal action if debate hosts fail to include their nominee in debates. Party officials cited a relatively new law that requires hosts to either invite all statewide candidates from

all major political parties to public debates and forums, or alternatively, report a campaign contribution to the candidates who were allowed to participate.

The campaign finance law, adopted in 2017, requires disclosure of \$750 or more of spending by individuals and nonprofit groups that reference, and effectively campaign for or against, a candidate within 60 days of a general election. Previously, people and groups had to report that type of spending only when they included specific words such as "elect" or "vote for" in public communications. House Bill 2505 exempts from the requirement nonpartisan candidate debates or forums "when all major party candidates for the state office have been invited to participate."

The IPO became Oregon's third major political party in 2015 after party members accounted for more than 5 percent of those registered to vote in the 2014 general election. Schrag said his initial reluctance to include Starnes in the debate stemmed from wanting to give maximum time to candidates who have orchestrated a serious campaign such as raising a significant amount of money.

"For me, it's a math issue: There will be only a few televised governor candidate forums this year, and each forum has a hard start and stop time, which means there is a finite number of minutes for questions and responses," Schrag said.

Starnes said he had not been invited to debates Oct. 4 by KOBI-TV in Medford and Oct. 9 hosted by KGW-TV and *The Oregonian*, as of Thursday, Aug. 23.

"I am hoping this breaks the logjam loose," Starnes said. "I'm looking forward to the debate, especially hearing the questions from the young people of Oregon because they aren't going to ask the questions we usually get, and we are going to have to explain things in a way they can understand. It's going to make it more real and more

IRRIGON

Morrow County plans new building for north county

Commissioners gather input through town hall meetings

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

Residents of Morrow County are being asked to give input about a new building planned for construction in Irrigon, which will house county services that are currently scattered around the northern part of the county.

The new building will be constructed on the site that now holds the county planning department, the justice court, and parole and probation. The existing building will be torn down, and the new one will house the current services, as well as the sheriff's office, the juvenile department, veteran's services, and some office space for the district attorney, county commissioners and other county officials.

County commissioners are in the process of holding town hall meetings to gather input from community members, asking what they want the building to look like, how big it should be, and what kind of growth they can anticipate.

County Commissioner Melissa Lindsay said the cost is still undetermined, but estimated it will come in somewhere between \$4 million and \$5 million for the entire project. Lindsay said the commissioners have not yet made a decision about how the project will be financed, but the money will likely come from one of the county's two main sources — the general fund, or Strategic

Investment Program (SIP) agreement funds that the county already has from contracts with wind power and other energy companies located in the county.

Lindsay said the county began looking at a completely new facility when, after a walk-through with a building inspector, they determined the building's quality was not worth upgrading.

"The planning department and the justice court really outgrew it," she said.

She said at the first town hall on Tuesday in Boardman, about 15 people showed up. The next meetings are Monday, Aug. 27 at Heppner City Hall (111 N. Main St., Heppner), Wednesday, Aug. 29 at Ione American Legion Hall (325 W. Second St., Ione), and Thursday, Aug. 30 at Irrigon City Hall (500 N.E. Main Ave., Irrigon). All meetings are from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Lindsay said the offices will not immediately account for any new staff, but it's something they're considering, as they keep up with the expanding north end of the county, especially with growth from the port.

She said there is no official start date for the construction yet, but commissioners hope to get things started before the end of the year, weather permitting.

"We hoped to break ground going into this fall, but in order to engage the public with meetings, we had to delay it a little," she said.

"As a commission, we agree we want to get it done as quickly as possible, and have a good, operating building for services in north county," Lindsay said.

State police identify cornfield runner

HERMISTON — Oregon State Police identified the car thief suspect who escaped Wednesday into a cornfield near Hermiston as Marco Antonio Garcia.

Police spent nearly five hours searching for a man who crashed a stolen vehicle into a guard rail near Herm-

iston and ran into a nearby cornfield. State police Thursday morning reported Garcia, 32, faces charges for unauthorized use of a vehicle, hit and run (for damaging property), attempt to elude in a vehicle (felony) and on foot (misdemeanor), reckless driving, speeding

more than 100 mph and driving while suspended.

State court records show Garcia lived in Boardman in 2017, when he pleaded guilty for conspiracy to deliver methamphetamine.

According to the plea petition, Garcia made a deal to sell the drugs to a buyer for

\$50. He received a sentence of 30 days in jail and three years probation that started Nov. 6, 2017. Court records also show he has convictions in Morrow County in 2014 and 2015, including theft, unauthorized use of a vehicle and meth possession.

COMING EVENTS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 24
STORY AND CRAFT TIME, 2 p.m., Echo Public Library, 20 S. Bonanza, Echo. (541-376-8411)

AFTER SCHOOL 3-ON-3 BASKETBALL, 3:15-5 p.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. For ages 13-18. Free. (Casey Brown 541-276-8100)

GIB OLINGER ELEMENTARY DEDICATION, 5 p.m., Gib Olinger Elementary School, 1011 S. Mill St., Milton-Freewater. Dedication at 5 p.m., ribbon cutting at 6 p.m., salmon barbecue at 6:30 p.m., (tickets available at the chamber and the school) Harvest of Art show 4-8 p.m. Free. (Jennifer Konrad 541-938-5563)

VFW BINGO, 6 p.m., Hermiston VFW, 45 W. Cherry St., Hermiston. Doors open at 6 p.m., games begin at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome. (541-567-6219)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25
IMAC BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER, 7:30-10:30 a.m., Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. Benefits the Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center project. Costs \$4.50. (Peggy Price 541-567-3806)

FREE FOR ALL, 9:30-10:15 a.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free art classes for children

up to age 12. Children under 8 should be accompanied by an adult. (Roberta Lavadour 541-278-9201)

YARN CLUB, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-2882)

FAMILY HISTORY WORKSHOPS, 10 a.m., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 850 S.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Workshops, photo scanning and more. (Stephanie Blackburn 541-567-6251)

HIP & HANDMADE, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free drop-in project class for adults. (Roberta Lavadour 541-278-9201)

IRRIGON FARMERS MARKET, 3-7 p.m., Irrigon City Hall parking lot, 500 N.E. Main Ave., Irrigon. Local vendors, local produce, crafts and more. (Aaron Palmquist 541-922-3047)

BROADWAY BLOCK PARTY, 3-7 p.m., downtown, Broadway Street, Milton-Freewater. Bounce houses, face painting, 5K run, food trucks, live music by Diego and the Detonators, adult beverages (21 and older) and more. Free and suitable for all ages. (Alex Hedges or Norm Saager 509-440-3530 or 509-520-2183)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26
EVANGELIST MISHAYLE NOHEA, 11 a.m., Mission Assembly of God Church, 47328 Short Mile Road, Pendleton. Nohea will share her testimony of her near death experience, the reality of Jesus, Heaven and Hell, and her deliverance from cancer. Everyone welcome. (Vern Kube 541-377-1880 or 541-276-0310)

MONDAY, AUGUST 27
EARLY MORNING BASKETBALL, 6-7 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. All ages. Free. (Casey Brown 541-276-8100)

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME, 10:30 a.m., Athena Public Library, 418 E. Main St., Athena. For ages birth to 6. (541-566-2470)

PENDLETON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12-1 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (Tori Bowman 541-276-

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MILE 22 [R]
11:40* 1:50* 4:00 6:40 9:40
THE MEG [PG13]
11:50* 2:20* 4:50 7:20 9:50
HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 3 [PG]
11:40* 2:00*
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4:20 7:10
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Mirasol Family Health Center to hold health fair Saturday

Mirasol Family Health Center in Hermiston is holding a health fair on Saturday.

The fair is 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the health center, 589 N.W. 11th St. It will include wellness exams,

immunizations, \$10 sports physicals, music, free tacos from Tacos Xavi, games and a dunk tank. The event is free and open to the public, although children getting immunizations or exams must be accompanied by an adult.

EOCO Insurance has also donated backpacks for children who get wellness exams.

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