

Making sense of the cap and trade proposal

Legislators, locals exchange ideas during video chat

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

The trio of state legislators on the video screen in the Blue Mountain Community College conference room left no doubt they are not in love with Oregon's cap and trade proposal.

Nine people sat around the BMCC conference room table sipping coffee and chatting with Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove, and Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, early Wednesday morning at the college's bimonthly legislative video session. The lawmakers sat inside the Oregon Capitol in Salem. Normally, only Hansell and Barreto appear, but this day they brought Bentz along to explain the complicated cap and trade system in the works.

Bentz, who sits on the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction, gave a 10-minute primer on the subject, calling it incredibly complex.

The program would push industry to find cleaner ways to do business by charging companies for their carbon emissions. He said the program could bring in an estimated \$550 million a year. California's 10-year-old program and others in Quebec and British Columbia provided models for the Oregon legislation.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Jeff Blackwood, Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition board member and retired Umatilla National Forest supervisor, shares about local effects of climate change, such as longer fire seasons, increase of invasive species, drought-stressed trees and higher spring runoff, during a video session with three Eastern Oregon legislators at Blue Mountain Community College.

Proponents say such a program would help rein in carbon emissions, fund green technology and help protect the world for future generations. On the other hand, critics say cap and trade could drive business from the state and boost fuel prices without making reducing carbon emissions.

As a committee member, Bentz said he worked harder on developing this program than "anything I've done since law school." Yet, he said he doesn't personally support the idea of cap and trade, preferring adaptation (predicting the effects of climate change and taking action to minimize damage). He worries about farmers and ranchers and said rural Oregon could bear too much of the burden with cap and trade. He knows from polls however that the majority of Oregonians favor the bill.

"We can spend a lot of time saying, 'Hell, no,' but this train has kind of left the station," he said. He said he respects Democratic colleagues on the carbon committee, he just sees things from a different angle.

"I don't want to attribute bad motives to my Democratic friends who are working on this bill," Bentz said. "They are receiving incredible pressure from constituents to do something."

Barreto said cap and trade isn't the answer and will burden the business community.

"This is adding more straws on the camel's back," he said.

As special taxes, family leave requirements and the like stack up, he said, "it doesn't paint a rosy picture about what's coming down the pike."

Pendleton businessman Winston Hill, co-owner of Buckin' Bean Coffee Roasters, asked measured questions about data from California's experience with cap and trade. Hill soaked in the answers, and then told the lawmakers the bill could bring dire consequences for small businesses and family farms, like the one on which he grew up.

"Has anyone looked at the price of wheat lately?" he asked. "The breakeven point is right there. The margin is gone. Just where is all this money supposed to come from? Eventually these types of programs will drive people across state lines. Oregon is not a planet unto itself."

Hansell said he worries about Oregon's nursery industry, one of the state's top earning crops. The senator said he recently visited with industry representatives who commented on effects of Alberta's cap and trade program on the province's nursery business.

"They said Alberta pretty much lost their nursery industry because of the added expense they had with natural gas," Hansell said.

Jeff Blackwood watched one of the two screens from his place at the conference table. Blackwood, former supervisor of the Umatilla National Forest, sits on the board of the Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition, a non-partisan, non-political group that looks at ways to mitigate climate change on a local level. Change is already happening, he said, ticking off a list of them: earlier runoff, longer fire seasons, increasing temperatures, drought-stressed trees and an increase of invasive species.

"We know the change is happening," Blackwood said. "We know it's going to take sacrifices from all sectors."

Chuck Wood, retired engineer and former Pendleton city councilman, said he recently found the bill online and has been digesting it slowly. He said he remains unsure whether cap and trade is the answer instead of a carbon tax, sequestration or another alternative.

"I'm really in favor of doing something about climate change," he said. "It's a big problem."

That was a sentiment no one in the room disputed.

"I understand there's a need to focus on the environment. We're all in the same ship, for crying out loud," Hill said. "When it sinks, we all sink."

The community video-conferences, sponsored by BMCC and the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce, are at 7 a.m. every first and third Wednesday of the Legislative Session in the college's Pioneer Hall Boardroom.

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0810.



Contributed photo

Pendleton High School's Rhythmic Mode dance team is hosting Hearts in Motion. The dance competition is Saturday at Warburg Court. In addition, the team was recognized by Les Schwab Tire Centers and the OSAA as the January team of the month.

Dance team hosts competition

Rhythmic Mode receives honors

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

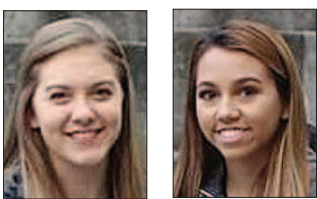
Dance teams from across the region are coming to town to participate in the Hearts in Motion dance competition.

In its 32nd year, Pendleton High School's Rhythmic Mode dance team is hosting the event.

Nearly two dozen school and club teams will participate. The doors open Saturday at 11 a.m. at the school's Warburg Court, 1800 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. The grand march starts at 11:45 a.m. and competition begins at noon. Admission is \$10 each and free for ages 5 and under. A concession booth will be available for food and beverage purchases.

"It's always so much fun to see all the teams in costume on the floor at the same time," said Lora Franks about the grand entry.

The event also serves as a fundraiser for the team, which placed first in the 2018 OSAA Dance



Schmidt

Gilsdorf

and Drill State Championships. Money raised helps in supporting the team leading up to the 2019 state competition.

Also, Rhythmic Mode recently took the spotlight, being selected as the Oregon School Activities Association January team of the month. Each month throughout the school year, Les Schwab Tire Centers and the OSAA recognizes a varsity team for each of the six classifications. Teams are chosen based on performance on the court/field, academic work in the classroom and service to the community. In addition to the recognition, the team received a trophy and \$100 for its program. Anyone can nominate a team.

For more information, visit www.osaa.org/awards/team-of-the-month.

Also, Franks said high school dance team senior

members are invited each January to audition for the Dance & Drill Coaches Association of Oregon all-state team.

Rhythmic Mode teammates Emily Gilsdorf and Vanessa Schmidt were selected as two of the 14 dancers for the 5A division's 2019 all-state team.

"It's a very high honor and long-standing tradition among Oregon dance teams," Franks said.

For more information about Hearts In Motion, contact Franks at lora_franks@yahoo.com or 541-377-0675.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

IMAC to serve hearty breakfast

IRRIGON — The regular monthly fundraising breakfast of the Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center is this weekend.

A hearty meal will be available on Saturday from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. The cost is \$4.50 per person.

The group is dedicated to the preservation of Irrigon's 1921 school building and developing a regional art venue. For more information, call Peggy Price at 541-567-3806.

League to discuss redistricting

PENDLETON — A gathering to provide information about voter redistricting is planned in Pendleton.

The League of Women Voters is coordinating a forum in order to educate voters on what proposed changes mean. Voters will learn about current problems in the redistricting process and what the league proposes as a reform.

The no-host luncheon meeting is Saturday from 1-3:30 p.m. at Rooster's Country Kitchen, 1515 Southgate, Pendleton. The program begins at 2 p.m.

Candalynn Johnson, League of Women Voters of Oregon campaign coordinator, and Norman Tur-

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ill, president of LWV of Oregon Making Democracy Work for All, will be on hand.

"The League of Women Voters supports reform because voters should be choosing their representatives, not representatives choosing their voters," Tur-

rill said. Founded in 1920, The

League of Women Voters is a grassroots, nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. For more information, contact Johnson at 503-581-5722, candalynn@lwv.org or visit www.lwv.org.

For more about redistricting, go to www.redistrictingmatters.org.

Mom & Baby Support Group



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