

Lodge proposed on rim of Lake Billy Chinook

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

BEND — A proposed tourist lodge along the rim of Oregon's Lake Billy Chinook has unnerved local farmers concerned about potential conflicts between agriculture and increased visitor traffic.

The potential development is at the earliest stages of consideration by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, which owns the property, and Jefferson County, which may enact an "urban renewal" zone to support the project.

Aside from worries about tourists criticizing common farming practices, some local growers are dismayed by the implications of 27,000 acres of rural property being designated as "blighted" for inclusion in an urban renewal district.

"We don't believe our farmland is a blighted area," said Gary Harris, who farms north of Madras.

As part of an upcoming "master plan" update for the Cove Palisades State Park, which is along the lake, OPRD has floated the concept of building the lodge on its property.

"No decisions have been made, this is an idea that's part of a larger conversation



Bend Bulletin Photo

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about the cove," said MG Devereux, the agency's deputy director.

The "overnight facility" could operate similarly to the Silver Falls Lodge & Conference Center, the Wolf Creek Inn & Tavern and the Frenchglen Hotel, which are state-owned properties run by third parties under contract, he said.

Such a facility could also be an economic boon to county businesses that rely on tourists, though non-farm economic development must be balanced with

the concerns of the agriculture industry, said Jefferson County Commissioner Kelly Simmelink.

"I find it very hard not to take that opportunity," he said.

Establishing an urban renewal district that includes the lodge facility would raise money for improving roads, expanding water lines, building horse trails and otherwise investing in infrastructure in that area, Simmelink said.

Under the "tax increment financing" associ-

ated with urban renewal, the amount of property tax money directed to existing districts — such as library and fire districts — is frozen within the zone, while revenue increases are devoted to investments within its boundaries.

"We then have a pot of money to pull from to make those improvements," Simmelink said.

Critics of the proposal worry that an urban renewal district will constrain the amount of property tax revenue available for needed

county services, but they also anticipate it will create a precedent for development within the 27,000-acre zone.

"It's going to set up the desire and anticipation for people who have that scrubland to turn it into home sites," said Harris, the farmer and vice president of the Jefferson County Farm Bureau.

The county also has a limited number of valuable irrigated acres that should be protected from nonfarm incursions, said Mickey Killingsworth, a farmer and secretary-treasurer of the Jefferson County Farm Bureau.

"Once you get this lodge, you're going to have demand for more development around the lodge in the ag zone," she said.

Of more immediate concern, it's predictable that tourists would complain about farm practices they find annoying, which may result in new restrictions on those agricultural activities, Killingsworth said. During a recent air show over the summer, for example, field burning was suspended to avoid interfering with the entertainment.

"We move big equipment, we have dust, we do aerial spraying over here. There are a lot of conflicts, which is why we're zoned

the way we are," she said. "They don't want to listen to balers all night long. A lot of people are scared of herbicides and pesticides."

For their part, the county government and OPRD acknowledge that local farmers have legitimate concerns about the proposal, which would be heard during public processes for the master plan and the urban renewal district.

"From my perspective, I get it. Those are conversations we're going to have to have," Simmelink said.

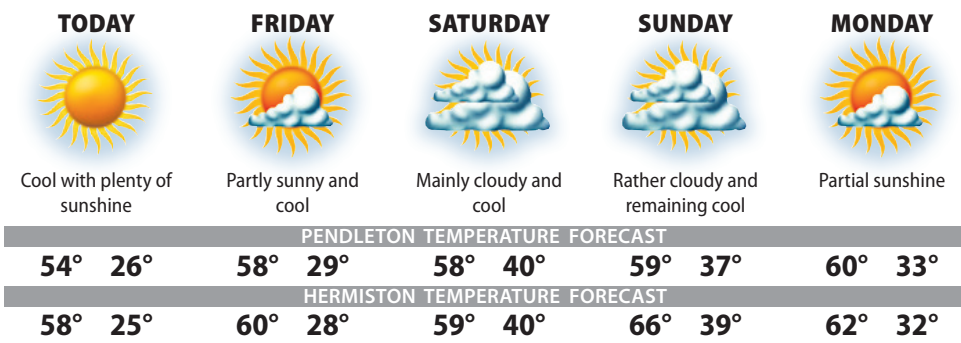
On the other hand, Simmelink said the owners of restaurants, gas stations and similar companies have largely expressed support for the proposal.

"We as a commission are going to turn over every rock to get every opinion. We want full transparency so we're not making a bad decision," he said.

Any proposed master plan for the park would have to be approved by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission as well as the county commission, then would be subject to land use appeals, said Devereux of OPRD.

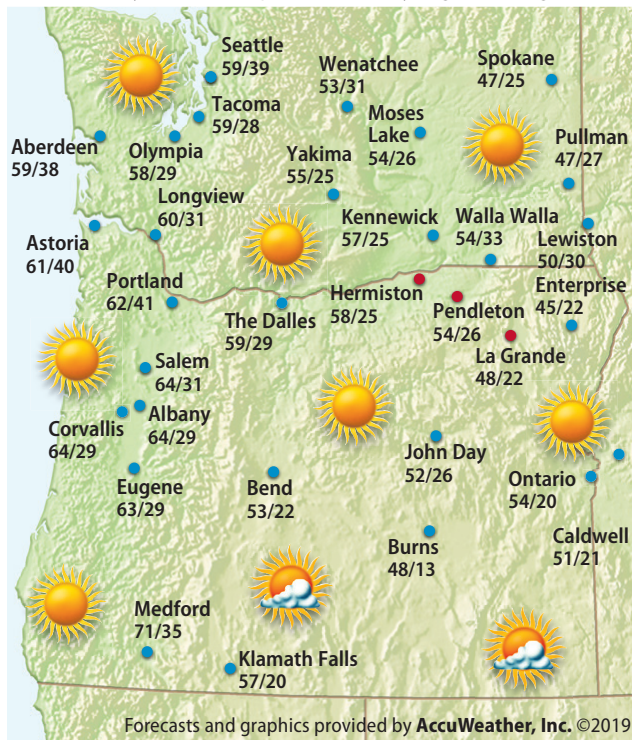
"If there are issues that are not overcomeable, this is not something where a decision has been made or set in stone," he said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



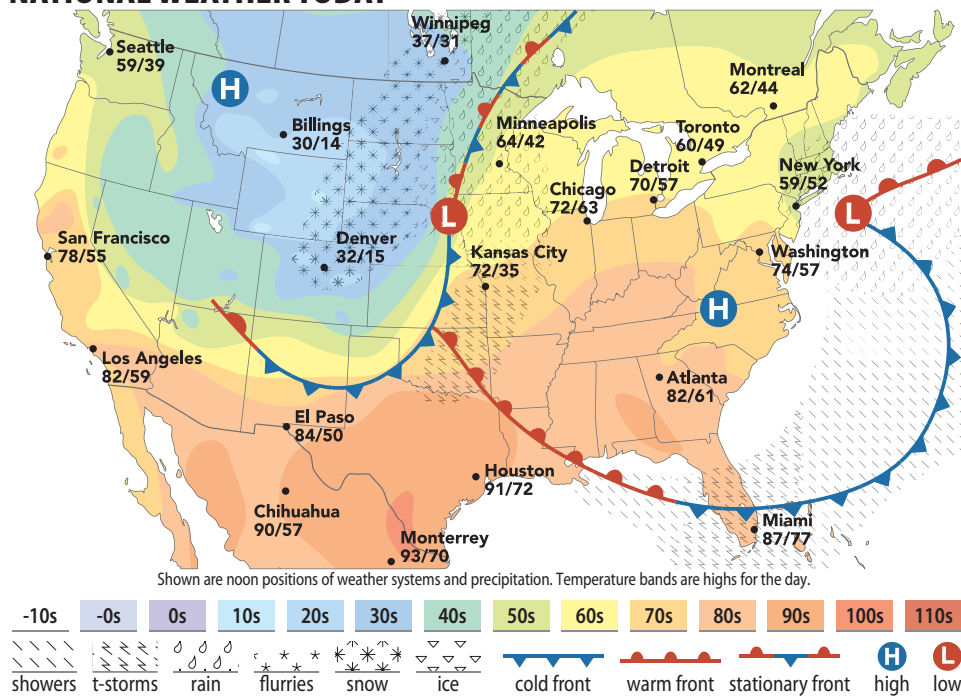
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	48°	34°
Normals	67°	42°
Records	90° (1934)	23° (1916)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.05"	
Month to date	0.05"	
Normal month to date	0.28"	
Year to date	10.90"	
Last year to date	7.91"	
Normal year to date	9.22"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	52°	39°
Normals	68°	40°
Records	86° (1934)	23° (1931)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	0.04"	
Normal month to date	0.15"	
Year to date	4.80"	
Last year to date	6.29"	
Normal year to date	6.71"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Fri.	
Boardman	ENE 4-8	NE 4-8
Pendleton	NE 4-8	NNE 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:04 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	6:19 p.m.	
Moonrise today	5:34 p.m.	
Moonset today	3:38 a.m.	
Full	Last	New
Oct 13	Oct 21	Oct 27
		Nov 4

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 98° in El Centro, Calif. Low 15° in Mullian Pass, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Teachers' union raises concerns about impact of drug initiative

By JEFF MAPES
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Oregon's powerful teachers' union is warning that a proposed drug decriminalization ballot measure could take millions of dollars from the state's public schools.

The Oregon Education Association says it isn't taking a position at this point on the initiative, which would decriminalize personal possession of a wide range of illegal drugs, including heroin and methamphetamine.

The union says the measure could reduce funding for schools by around \$37 million a year. That's because it would divert much of the taxes from legal marijuana sales from schools and other services to beefed-up drug treatment programs.

While this is a small portion of the more than \$6 billion a year spent on schools, it could have a noticeable effect on local budgets.

The union on Friday filed comments with the secretary of state complaining the proposed ballot language describing the initiative "provides virtually no expla-

nation of how the initiative is funded and the impact on school funding."

In its comments, the union added:

"Who would not want to fund more addiction recovery programs in the abstract? But if money for those services is coming from education and other programs, the choice is less clear."

Peter Zuckerman, a spokesman for the decriminalization measure, said in a statement the lack of drug treatment has had a "devastating impact on the state," including for schools and student families.

He said he looked forward to "continuing the conversation with" the union on the measure, which is now designated as Initiative Petition 44.

The initiative is backed by the Drug Policy Alliance, a New York-based group that has long been in the forefront of efforts around the country to legalize marijuana. The group, which has received major support from billionaire investor George Soros, has long argued that prosecuting illegal drug users is counterproductive.

The group hasn't decided yet whether it will support launching a signature-gathering effort to qualify for the November 2020 ballot. For now, backers are seeing what kind of language it gets for a ballot title. That language can often play an important role in determining how voters react to a measure.

A statement from the union's vice president, Reed Scott-Schwalbach, said in a statement "educators believe that treatment is a critical component of overcoming addiction," but she said the union isn't ready to take a stand on the measure.

"We filed comments to clarify that the funds this measure affects are currently partially dedicated to Oregon school funding," Scott-Schwalbach said, "and we believe that information should be reflected in the materials about this measure."

Backers of the measure filed their own comments on a draft ballot title for IP 44. Instead of focusing on drug decriminalization, they said it should first emphasize how the measure would expand access to drug treatment.

BRIEFLY

Man who threatened 2 gets services with 68th conviction

PORTLAND — A homeless man, who is one of Portland's most frequently arrested people, is getting a chance to get drug, alcohol and mental health treatment instead of prison time for convictions for threatening a woman and her minor son as they cowered in a locked car.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Brian Lankford was sentenced to three years of probation through the Multnomah County Justice Reinvestment Program, which also is geared to help him find stable housing.

Lankford has been arrested over 220 times in the past decade and as of Monday convicted 68 times for crimes including misdemeanor theft, trespassing, harassment, and other charges.

Lankford told The Oregonian/OregonLive last year that he uses methamphetamines, and it's easy to feel hopeless.

A Multnomah County District Attorney's Office spokesman says the district attorney's office thought probation, treatment and help finding housing would be better at addressing Lankford's problems. If Lankford fails to abide by the terms, he could go to prison

— Associated Press

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Business Office Manager:

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Production Manager: Mike Jensen
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