



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan  
**Vehicles pass by a sign advocating the Hermiston School bond measure along Highway 395 in Hermiston on Tuesday afternoon.**

# Bond: Largest portion of raised dollars went to PR firm Pac/West

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\$500 each, as did Ric Sherman, chair of the board for Umatilla County Fire District 1. Hermiston Mayor Dave Drotzmann, Hermiston High School Principal Tom Spoo and the Oregon AFL-CIO also joined the \$500 club. And a multitude have contributed more than \$1,200 in miscellaneous cash contributions of \$100 or less.

The Umatilla County Elections Division mailed 44,642 ballots last week for the Nov. 5 election. Kim Lindell, county elections manager, said 923 — 2% — have trickled in so far. She expects this election to have a lower overall turnout in the county.

Hermiston should have a higher turnout because of the school bond, Lindell said, and other communities with something at stake could show up in greater numbers.

Milton-Freewater voters are considering the formation of the Milton-Freewater Valley Ambulance District with a permanent tax rate of \$1.10 per \$1,000 in assessed value. The Echo Fire District is asking voters to approve a \$150,000 local tax to support its operations over five years. And the Riverside Rural Fire Protection District seeks a five-year local option tax of

about 91 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value that would raise \$36,000 a year.

But the two countywide measures may not spark a lot of interest.

One measure asks if voters want to change the language in the county charter from “law enforcement department” to “sheriff’s office” as set out in Oregon law. That would have the practical effect of having the county’s foundational document reflect the name the county and locals already call the law enforcement agency. The measure also aligns the charter with the functions of the sheriff under Oregon law with the exception of tax collection.

The second measure amends the election process for county officials. Under the proposal, the county would require a primary election only if more than two candidates filed for the election, and the two with the most votes would face off in the November general election. The change could end situations where a losing incumbent remains in office more than six months.

Whether the ballot is exciting or not, Lindell said the election will cost about \$45,000, or around \$1 per registered voter.

# Sale: Interested party will remain confidential until an official offer is made

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yes,” the *Herald* quoted Wolfe as saying during his speech at the grand opening.

For most of its existence, the center was run by the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce, but in 2017 the city council voted unanimously to end its contract with the chamber and move the parks and recreation department into the building to run it instead. Residents who showed up to oppose the move were told by city staff and city councilors that the center would still be available for community events under the new management.

During that time the city conducted a study of available event space in the area, noting there were 689 total events held in the Hermiston Community Center in 2016, including chamber of commerce meetings. The city did not have an updated figure for 2018 immediately available.

The report listed the

city-owned Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, the National Guard Army in Hermiston and the Pendleton Convention Center as the other alternatives in the area for an indoor 300-plus person event. Alternatives for smaller events included the Maxwell Siding Event Center, the Port of Morrow’s offices in Boardman and the Oxford Suites in Hermiston.

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan reported to the council before their 2017 vote on the chamber contract that it took \$198,700 in gross expenses to run the center, paid for by rental fees and transient room tax funds. He said rental revenue for the community center had decreased since EOTEC had opened its event center in 2016.

The community center is in the city’s urban renewal district, meaning tax revenue generated from increases in the property’s value would go toward the district for improvements to the downtown area.

# Walgreens: After 6 years store is coming to an end

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to a store that was built and opened in 2013.

At the time of its opening, Walgreens supported 20 jobs and a corporate spokesman expressed confidence in the store’s success despite the presence of nearby competitors.

Pharmacies at Rite Aid, Safeway and Walmart are all within close proximity, and

the Bi-Mart pharmacy is less than a mile away.

The 100 block of Southwest 20th Street has also struggled to retain the chain stores that used to anchor the area.

At the nearby Pendleton Retail Center strip mall, Pizza Hut, Rent-A-Center, GameStop, and Verizon have either closed up shop or moved their stores to a different location.

# Clarno rejects ballot proposal on immigrant driver’s licenses

## Secretary of State ballot measure doesn’t comply with the Oregon Constitution

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
*Oregon Capital Bureau*

SALEM — An attempt to repeal a new state law allowing undocumented immigrants to get Oregon driver’s licenses has hit a snag.

Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno on Tuesday halted a proposed ballot initiative to walk back House Bill 2015, saying it doesn’t comply with requirements stated in the Oregon Constitution.

The bill, passed earlier this year, allows Oregonians to present forms of ID that don’t prove a person’s legal immigration status in order to get a driver’s license. The licenses will not be available until Jan. 1, 2021.

Undocumented immigrants — or others without documents proving U.S. citizenship or that they are in the country legally — have been barred from getting driver’s licenses in Oregon since 2007.

Supporters of the petition want to prevent people who are here illegally from getting state driver’s licenses.

The campaign to repeal the law, which calls itself “Stop Illegal Drivers,” is led by Mark Callahan, a frequent candidate for political office in Oregon.

Callahan, reached for comment Tuesday, said the campaign was “definitely going to fight” the ruling, and pointed to several previous cases he believes support his interpretation that the petition passes muster.

The Secretary of State’s Office believes the constitution requires the petitioners to present the changes the petition would make to state statutes. Instead, the ballot title just says that a “Yes” vote on the petition “‘Demands’ repeal” of the bill.

In a post on the “Stop Illegal Drivers” website, the campaign said the reason Elections Director Steve Trout gave — the constitutional requirement cited by Clarno — was “not valid.”

The campaign also posted on the website a message from Callahan addressed to Trout. Callahan called



Oregon Capital Bureau Photo/Claire Withycombe, File  
**Secretary of State Bev Clarno gives a speech April 3, 2019, at her swearing-in ceremony. Clarno on Tuesday halted a proposed ballot initiative to walk back House Bill 2015, saying it doesn’t comply with requirements stated in the Oregon Constitution.**

the reason for the rejection “flawed in logic and reasoning.” He maintained the petition was not trying to pass a new law.

“How can we submit the full text of a law that we are NOT ‘Proposing?’” Callahan wrote. “It doesn’t make any sense. If we are NOT ‘Proposing’ a law, there is no full text of a law to submit.”

Oregon’s constitution includes several ways that Oregonians can have a direct say on a policy at the ballot box.

Lawmakers can refer a measure to the ballot; citizens can ask for a referendum on a particular law; or citizens can file an initiative petition to change state laws.

A referendum, which simply asks voters to reject or keep a law state legislators pass, differs from an initiative petition.

In the case of House Bill 2015, petitioners could not submit a referendum. That’s because of a few words in the bill that amount to an “emergency clause.”

That clause says the bill takes effect as soon as lawmakers pass it. The state constitution doesn’t allow bills that go into effect that soon to get referred.

But citizens can file an initiative petition in that case. That’s what the backers of Initiative Petition 43 did.

Since they filed an initiative petition, the Secretary of State’s Office says, petitioners were supposed to present an amended form of the law for voters’ consideration, showing exactly how the law would be changed if

the provisions of House Bill 2015 were repealed.

But the petition they submitted just “demanded” repeal of the law.

House Bill 2015 affected many parts of state law, said Deputy Secretary of State Rich Vial.

“We feel like you need to put the sections that were originally affected by the legislation in to the petition and show what you would propose to take back out of the law or change it back to what it was before,” Vial said. “The law, obviously, was complicated enough that there was a number of things in the statute that were added or changed.”

Moving forward, the petitioners could rewrite the petition and re-gather the sponsorship signatures in order to get another ballot title drafted, at which point the Secretary of State’s Office would review both again for constitutionality, Vial said.

But in cases like this, if petitioners don’t want to rewrite the measure, sometimes they will bring a lawsuit.

Supporters of the petition argue House Bill 2015 contradicted the will of Oregon voters, who in 2014 rejected a measure to create a separate type of license for people who cannot prove they are in the country legally.

Proponents of House Bill 2015 said that bill would simply allow Oregonians to present forms of personal identification that don’t prove legal status. It would also apply to people who didn’t have access to

vital records, such as people who are experiencing homelessness.

House Bill 2015 also says licenses granted to those who don’t present proof of citizenship do not meet federal “Real ID” standards.

The new IDs, a post-9/11 policy intended to strengthen security, will be required for Oregonians to enter certain federal buildings and to board commercial flights starting Oct. 1, 2020.

Members of the public had complained the ballot title was misleading. The ballot title said the effect of the “demand” stated in the petition was unclear.

Several commenters, in response, provided the dictionary definition of “demand.”

One member of the public, Kaila Calkins, wrote an email to the Secretary of State’s Office saying that “this is nothing more than another political ploy to effectively silence the Oregon voter.”

Clarno said in a statement she hoped the petitioners would “take (her) ruling as an opportunity to improve their proposal.”

“The initiative petition process is very important in giving Oregonians an opportunity to directly participate in our government,” Clarno said in a statement. “It is my sincere hope that the proponents of this ballot measure will take my ruling as an opportunity to improve their proposal. I will always support the presentation of ballot measures that meet constitutional requirements.”

# Californians brace for possible outage

By **JOCELYN GECKER AND CHRISTOPHER WEBER**  
*Associated Press*

SAN FRANCISCO — Hundreds of thousands of Northern California residents braced for another possible power outage as the state’s largest utility warned that a return of dangerous fire weather could prompt shut-offs across 16 counties.

The warning from Pacific Gas & Electric about a possible blackout Wednesday prompted a feeling of resignation among residents and business owners and renewed rushes to stock up on emergency supplies.

“I think it’s not panic per se, just ‘Eh, we gotta do this again?’” said Kim Schefer, manager of Village True Value Hardware in Santa Rosa.

Schefer was busy Tuesday directing customers to gas cans and batteries as they prepared for what many see as a costly, frustrating new routine.

It would be the second blackout in two weeks for much of the state.

PG&E cut power to more than 2 million people across the San Francisco Bay Area in rolling blackouts from Oct. 9-12, para-



AP Photo/Christian Monterrosa  
**Firefighters watch as a helicopter drops water in a wildfire in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles on Monday.**

lyzing parts of the region in what was the largest deliberate blackout in state history. Schools and universities canceled classes and many businesses were forced to close.

Earlier this week, PG&E notified 200,000 customers, or roughly a half-million people, that it could begin a new round of precautionary shut-offs mostly in the Sierra foothills and north of the San Francisco Bay Area. Blackouts would last at least 48 hours, the utility said.

PG&E says it’s concerned that winds forecast to hit 60 mph could throw branches and debris into power lines or topple them, sparking wildfires.

At Murphy’s Irish Pub

in Sonoma, co-owner Dermot Coll groaned at the thought of another power outage. The watering hole kept its doors open during the last 48-hour shut-off, but it wasn’t easy because generator power to the walk-in coolers kept failing.

“We made it work, but it was a headache,” Coll said. “We kept saying, ‘Is this even worth it?’”

Coll said he fears that precautionary blackouts will become a regular occurrence now that fire season in California is a year-round phenomenon.

“It’s going to be an annual event, I’m afraid. I hate to say it, but I believe it’s probably true,” he said.

PG&E has cast the black-

outs as a matter of public safety to prevent the kind of blazes that have killed scores of people in California over the past several years, destroyed thousands of homes, and ran up tens of billions of dollars in claims that drove the company into bankruptcy.

California Gov. Gavin sent a sharply worded letter Tuesday to Bill Johnson, CEO of the utility, blaming the unprecedented mass outage earlier this month on the company’s failure to maintain and upgrade its equipment.

“I believe the unacceptable scope and duration of the previous outage — deliberately forcing 735,000 customers to endure power outages — was the direct result of decades of PG&E prioritizing profit over public safety,” Newsom wrote, referring to the number of businesses and households affected, not the total number of people.

PG&E says the shut-downs are not about money.

“The sole intent is to prevent a catastrophic wildfire,” Johnson said in a Monday briefing.

A huge portion of California is under high fire risk amid unpredictable gusts and soaring temperatures.