



EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2020

144th Year, No. 67

WINNER OF THE 2019 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50

Local legislators preparing for session

Short session gets underway Feb. 3

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

SALEM — The 2020 Legislative Session starts on Feb. 3, but there are still a lot of unknowns about what the session will look like.

The 35-day “short session” on even-numbered years, introduced in 2012, was originally meant to allow the Legislature to make budget reconciliations and small policy tweaks in their off-years, but some larger, more controversial issues will likely make their way into this year’s session.

“There are a lot of moving parts right now,” Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, said.

Last week, the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee discussed a revised version of the cap-and-trade bill that caused Senate Republicans to walk out on the 2019 session — something they haven’t ruled out yet for 2020.

And, while the deadline has not yet passed for legislators to file their bills for the session, Hansell said he had heard rumor of legislators working on bills on other major policy topics, such as gun control.

“It’s still a little early to know, but it looks like there’s a possibility of having multiple pieces of major legislation,” he said.

Hansell, however, said he’s sticking to something that should be less controversial for his one bill that senators are allowed to drop in the short session.

The bill he plans to file would appropriate money to the Oregon Department of Agriculture for gathering and reviewing research on groundwater in the Umatilla Basin and creating an “implementation plan to improve ground water quality and obtain full or partial removal of ground water management area designation from Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area.” The project would convene a task force to help coordinate the efforts of stakeholders, such as irrigators, the tribes and state department, in lowering the nitrate levels in groundwater.

Hansell said the idea came from a policy option package, or POP, from the Department of Agriculture in the last session. POPs are requests that aren’t an actual part of the budget but are a suggestion that an agency hopes the legislature will take and find funding for. In this case, Hansell said he attended a meeting on the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area in Hermiston where that POP was discussed and



Hansell



Smith



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Addie Peterson tells stories about her Uncle Scott during Sunday’s memorial for Scott Fairley at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Saying goodbye

Pendleton says farewell to Scott Fairley during emotional memorial

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — One could almost hear Scott Fairley’s booming laugh reverberating around the Pendleton Convention Center on Sunday afternoon.

Almost. Though anyone who knew the good-natured Pendleton city councilman could hear Fairley’s trademark laugh bouncing around in their heads like a pleasant refrain as the stories flowed.

A flood of mourners showed up to honor Fairley, who died on Jan. 7 of an aneurysm while vacationing in Mexico with family. About 800 people filled the chairs on the convention center’s main floor and more guests overflowed to the balcony.

Before they sat, many gazed at photographs showing Fairley in different phases of his life. They showed him standing on a mountaintop, posing with his motorcycle, and clowning with wife Kimbra as they sat on a pink scooter during a vacation in Italy. In other images he sipped microbrews, walked mountain trails and romped with his dogs.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A display of photos at Sunday’s celebration of life for Scott Fairley included one of Scott and Kimbra Fairley clowning for the camera on a rented scooter during a vacation to Italy.

Memorabilia included a couple of cowboy hats, a pipe collection, an “Elect Scott Fairley” sign and his shiny city councilor nameplate. A package of tissues offered a message that Fairley endorsed with his life: “Saisir ce moment,” translated as “seize the moment.”

One mourner looking at the display asked another, “Were you a friend of Scott’s?”

The answer came quickly. “Was anybody not?”

That was the consensus. The

53-year-old councilman had a reputation for being fun-loving, adventurous, kind, spirited and passionately interested in civic and world affairs.

One high-profile mourner was missing during Sunday’s memorial service. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, who ordered that flags fly at half-mast in the state on Sunday to honor Fairley, couldn’t come as planned after her plane was cancelled in Portland.

Fairley worked as Regional Business

See Memorial, Page A8

Helping out down under

Joseph fire management officer returns from battling Australian blazes

By KATY NESBITT
For the East Oregonian

JOSEPH — Facing a historic fire season, American fire managers are mobilizing for Australia to help quell hundreds of fires that have blazed across the country since August.

Nathan Goodrich, fire management officer for the Wallowa-Whitman North Zone, was one of 20 Americans that teamed with 20 Canadians dispatched to the state of New South Wales in December. Goodrich returned home Jan. 12, but several U.S. Forest Service personnel from Northeast Oregon will remain in

Australia until the end of February.

Goodrich said he served as an operations section chief. Most of the positions filled by North Americans were similar positions, as much of Australia’s fire work force is volunteer.

Heat waves and drought have fueled bigger and more frequent fires in parts of Australia, so far this season torching some 40,000 square miles, an area about as big as Ohio.

“We were sprinkled into teams already there in New South Wales, so we were anywhere from two to three hours north of Sydney to two to three hours south,”



Goodrich



Singleton Argus Photo/Alex Tigani, File

Volunteers with the New South Wales Rural Fire Service and members of the Australian Army Reserve go over a fire briefing in the control room of the Hunter Valley Rural Fire Service headquarters.

See Fire, Page A8



7 294671100022 2