

Redistricting: Pandemic disrupts once-a-decade legislative map drawing

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is headed to the Oregon Supreme Court.

The Legislature has decided to go ahead with the 10 legally mandated hearings. Though two are focused on each congressional district, they also deal with legislative boundaries as well.

“We will be proceeding as if we’ll get an extension from the Oregon Supreme Court or whatever else it takes to get the job done,” said Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, a senior Democratic lawmaker.

The pandemic has also turned the every-10-year “road show” of hearings into a series of virtual hearings.

Democrats and Republicans in the Legislature are uniting to ask the Oregon

HEARING SCHEDULE

2nd Congressional District

Includes Deschutes, Umatilla, Jackson, Baker, Crook, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, and Wheeler and parts of Josephine County

- First hearing: March 10, 5:30 p.m.
- Second hearing: March 20, 1 p.m.
- Legislature’s redistricting website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/redistricting/
- Map to locate your legislative and congressional representatives: www.oregonlegislature.gov/findyourlegislator/leg-districts.html
- Sign up to testify online or submit written comments: olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Committees/SRED/Overview

Supreme Court to reset the clock on delays and give the Legislature a shot at drawing the maps for the 2022 election. If the block-by-block data needed to create districts that

meet federal and state civil rights laws becomes available on Sept. 30, lawmakers want up to 60 days to draw the maps and submit them to the governor for approval.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said last week that if the courts agree, the Legislature would return in the fall for a special session to handle redistricting.

The request to send the mapping back to lawmakers has bipartisan support.

Democrats have the upper hand in shaping the district maps to their liking. The biggest prize is the sixth congressional district that Oregon is expected to receive, its first in 40 years. The U.S. Census Bureau has said it will officially notify states of their gain or loss in the 435-member U.S. House by April 30.

While Democrats would be in the driver’s seat for redistricting, Republicans want the maps drawn and debated in the Legislature. It gives the minority

party a chance to call attention to districts it deems unfair.

“This is one of the most important opportunities to participate in when it comes to our Constitutional Republic,” said Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, a member of the Senate Redistricting Committee.

Knopp said the hearings “will give people the ability to advocate for districts that represent our community and to help ensure the districts are drawn with an open and transparent process.”

The other scenarios would be for Secretary of State Shemia Fagan to draw the legislative district, while a five-judge panel would be appointed to draw congressional districts. Most of that work would be behind closed doors. If the Oregon Supreme Court

decides to have courts redraw the lines, that would also shut out lawmakers from voicing their opinions.

Under normal circumstance, the Legislature would have received the necessary data by April 1. It would then have until the end of the current regular legislative session on July 1 to send maps to Gov. Kate Brown for her approval.

If for any reason lawmakers could not agree, the mapping would then go to Secretary of State Shemia Fagan, who would have until Aug. 15 to submit maps.

“We are going to blow by all the deadlines at this point,” Rep. Andrea Salinas, D-Lake Oswego, chair of the House Redistricting Committee, said late last month.

Tuition: Many EOU students from low-income homes

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diverse, hail from rural areas or are the first in their families to attend college, according to the press release. Data suggests students and families from these demographics have been the most adversely impacted by the effects of COVID-19.

EOU returned to offering in-person classes in fall 2020. In holding tuition flat for 2021-22, Insko said the university has again chosen the more challenging path to serve its students.

“We’ve been having robust conversations with the university community about this,” Insko said. “This is a conscious choice to forgo tuition revenues that we would otherwise receive in order to prioritize our mission and direct state investment dollars to students when they most need it.”

EOU also has split online tuition into two tiers: resident and nonresident. Oregon undergraduates will not see an increase in online tuition this year, but the new nonresident rate will increase from \$265 to \$305 per credit. The change only applies to incoming or new online students, according to the press release. Existing nonresident online students will not see a rate hike.

Although tuition won’t



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Eastern Oregon University is not raising tuition for undergraduate students in 2021-22. The EOU Board of Trustees voted on Friday, March 5, 2021, in favor of holding tuition flat for all returning undergraduate students, on-campus and online, the university announced.

“THIS IS GOING TO TAKE SACRIFICE, BUT WE ARE CHOOSING TO TAKE THAT CONSIDERED RISK AND PRIORITIZE STUDENTS.”

— EOU President Tom Insko

go up for on-campus or online resident undergraduate students, EOU expects to increase on-campus fees in 2021-22. Insko said the

university aims to keep future tuition increases minimal, between 1.5-3.5% per year. Administrators held discussions with student

leaders and internal groups to garner feedback.

“This is going to take sacrifice, but we are choosing to take that considered risk and prioritize students,” Insko said.

EOU and the other six public universities are working together to request a \$63 million increase in the Public University Support Fund, bringing the total allocation to \$900 million.

Serendipity: Goodwin died in 1871 at age 49

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Street. He also built a bridge over the Umatilla River to make it easy for travelers to reach the new hotel. A sign pointed the way.

An ad for “Goodwin’s Hotel” in the *Columbia Press* describes “good hay corrals attached to the place” and “prices to suit the hard times.” The bridge, the ad said, was free to travelers. That sentence vanished from advertisements in 1868 when travelers apparently started paying tolls.

In late 1868, the Goodwins deeded 2.5 acres to the county, which erected a combination county courthouse and jail on the site. Goodwin’s brick smokehouse became part of the courthouse.

The newly platted town, also the new county seat, was named Pendleton, after Ohio Sen. George Hunt Pendleton, a Democratic candidate for vice president in 1864. Residents numbered 250 at the time. When Pendleton was officially incorporated in 1880, the population had grown to 730.

Goodwin died in 1871 at age 49. Photographs of the entrepreneur are hard to come by. His wife, Aura, who lived to age 84 and is often called “the mother of Pendleton,” is memorialized

in a bronze statue on Main Street.

Some Pendleton streets bear the Goodwin name — Goodwin Avenue, Goodwin Lane and Goodwin Place. Aura Avenue pays tribute to Aura, who eventually married Henry J. Raley.

Last month, Pendleton Mayor John Turner proclaimed Moses Goodwin’s birthday, Feb. 15, 2021, as Moses Goodwin Day.

“As Mayor of Pendleton I feel a direct connection to the man who founded Pendleton, Moses Goodwin,” Turner said. “So I thank him for this legacy and feel honored to follow in his footsteps as we celebrate his 200th birthday.”

Turner said Moses packed a lot into his five decades of life.

The proclamation reads: “In January 1871, after a life well filled with good deeds, and leaving a record few will ever equal, Mr. Goodwin passed from earthly scenes to those of another world. Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that I, John H. Turner, Mayor of the City of Pendleton, and on behalf of the City of Pendleton, honor Mr. Moses Goodwin, declaring February 15, 2021 — the date of the 200th anniversary of Mr. Goodwin’s birth — Moses Goodwin Day.”

Phinney: Editor covered rural Oregon’s growth, change over four-decade career

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the *CUJ*, asked him to stay on while the COVID-19 pandemic spread through the reservation. With the vaccine now being distributed among tribal members, Phinney followed through on putting away the editor’s pen.

Over a career that spanned four decades, Phinney not only covered some of rural Oregon’s most important events but also a remarkable period of growth and change for the CTUIR.

Phinney said he caught the writing bug earlier when he entered a fifth grade essay contest.

He was born in Southern California, but spent the remainder of his childhood in Eastern Oregon after turning 2, jumping from town to town as his father’s career advanced at Safeway. Phinney eventually ended his school years in Hermiston, where he was editor of Hermiston High’s student newspaper.

He tried his hand at college by attending the University of Oregon, but after a year, Phinney dropped out to work for the hometown *Hermiston Herald* in 1975.

A 19-year-old Phinney made enough of an impression on then-owner Jerry Reed that he was soon named editor of the *Heppner Gazette-Times*. But he soon looked to venture outside the confines of the Northwest.

He spent several years working as an editor and publisher at newspapers in Wyoming and Montana, not only further refining his editing and reporting skills,

but learning the entirety of the newspaper business like layout, production, ad sales and photography.

Phinney returned to Oregon in 1983 to take a job with *The Dalles Weekly Reminder*, a publication looking to transition away from mostly printing advertisements and into more news coverage.

The *Reminder* was one of the first newspapers to cover the controversy surrounding a Wasco County commune that was established by followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, an Indian mystic.

Phinney remembers being flooded with 54 letters to the editor from angry Rajneeshis who were critical of the *Reminder*’s coverage of their settlement. He relished their responses.

“I made a point to run every damn Rajneeshi letter,” he said.

In 1985, he moved back home to take a job as sports editor with the *East Oregonian* before eventually moving to the news side.

Hal McCune, who worked with Phinney in the newsroom during his time at the *EO*, remembered Phinney as extroverted and self-starting. Foreshadowing his time with the *CUJ*, McCune said Phinney was the best tribal reporter the paper had.

“He definitely made his mark,” he said.

Before becoming his colleagues at the CTUIR, Deb Crosswell and Chuck Sams’ first experience with Phinney was as young interns helping out in the *EO* darkroom in the 1980s.

As time passed, eventu-

ally Crosswell would ascend to become the CTUIR’s director of public affairs. One of the tasks the Tribes gave to her was revitalizing the *Confederated Umatilla Journal*, which had been established in 1977 but had fallen out of regular publication.

When Crosswell turned to Phinney in 1996 to become the editor of the *CUJ*, she was hiring a local with decades of experience in every facet of the newspaper business and had developed sources on the reservation from his time at the *East Oregonian*. But there was also talk among the community about whether a white man should be the one to lead a tribally owned newspaper.

But Crosswell, who now works as the executive managing director of Cayuse Holdings, said Phinney put in the time to earn the respect of the tribal community.

Marcus Luke, who worked as a reporter under Phinney from 1999 to 2005, remembers the many weekends they went out to events on the reservation. It got to the point that tribal members started seeking them out to talk about the comings and goings of the community, and

if the *CUJ* wasn’t there, Luke and Phinney would be sure to hear about it.

Although he wasn’t a tribal member, Phinney knew he had a special role in covering tribal life, often being one of the only nonmembers to cover CTUIR religious and cultural ceremonies.

Phinney was the only member of the media to witness the 2017 burial of “the Ancient One,” a 9,000-year-old body that was connected to several Northwest tribes. Sams, who managed as the Tribes’ communications director and later as the interim executive director, said the Tribes knew they could trust Phinney to not disclose the location of the event, an important condition for all the tribes involved.

Although the *CUJ* derives part of its income from advertisements, the newspaper is owned by the CTUIR and overseen under the umbrella of tribal government.

Phinney said the fact that he was covering a tribal government that was also responsible for signing his checks occasionally caused some tension, but his supervisors never stepped in to

interfere in the *CUJ*’s news coverage.

Sams said it was important for the integrity of the newspaper to maintain a level of independence, and under Phinney’s tenure, it’s always operated under the Society of Professional Journalists’ code of ethics.

Throughout most of his tenure, the *CUJ* was mostly a two-person operation, meaning Phinney was often front and center in reporting the developments of the Tribes.

Phinney said he felt fortunate to cover the CTUIR as it went through a period of tremendous growth. The economic success of the Wildhorse Resort & Casino not only pushed the CTUIR to becoming a commercial attraction and one of the top employers in the region, it led to an expansion in the Tribes’ cultural pursuits. By the time of Phinney’s retirement, he had seen the Tribes build a new school, health clinic, cultural museum and governance center, and had been on reporting trips to New Zealand and Washington, D.C.

Phinney’s ink-stained days aren’t completely over. He said he’s looking into occasion-

ally freelancing at the *CUJ* and elsewhere, but he’s also looking into pursuing other opportunities, like coaching the Nixyaawii Community School golf team.

His wife, Carrie, continues to work as an administrative assistant at the school. His three daughters are now grown, and after doing some journalism in their high school years, are all now pursuing careers in other fields.

“I told them all to get newspaper work out of their systems, but I’m encouraged that they still read the news,” he said.

When Phinney retired, the Tribes promoted reporter Cary Rosenbaum to editor as Phinney’s permanent replacement.

Phinney said Rosenbaum should be a good fit for where news is heading, more experienced in working on the internet and social media.

“I’m an old dog that didn’t learn the new tricks,” he said.

But for 46 years, Phinney put out a newspaper each month that told the story of not just the CTUIR, but also the rural West.

“It’s the only thing I’ve ever done,” he said.

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