

Bill would allow community college and public university mergers

By MEERAH POWELL
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Community colleges and public universities could gain the ability to merge, under a bill Oregon lawmakers are considering. But legislators and higher education officials say the details in what that would look like still need to be ironed out.

Senate President Peter Courtney introduced Senate Bill 1 during this current legislative session, and lawmakers discussed it during a public hearing on Monday, March 29. Courtney had introduced a similar bill back in the 2019 session, though it died before receiving a floor vote.

“It creates a clear path from community college education to a four-year degree,” he said. “The bill will create an administration for these new entities — one president instead of two, one provost instead of two, one human resources department, one legal department. ... The two institutions can be both leaner and stronger.”



Sam Stites/Oregon Capital Bureau, File

Senate President Peter Courtney introduced Senate Bill 1, which would allow Oregon community colleges and public universities the ability to merge.

Students can save a lot of money by choosing a community college for their first two years of higher education, Courtney said.

“Transferring from community college to a four-year university, however, can be a daunting task for many

students,” he said.

Creating a merged community college and four-year university would reduce the “transitional challenges,” Courtney said, by ensuring the two institutions would create “curricular continuity” to guarantee students’

community college credits would count directly toward a bachelor’s degree.

Courtney said it would also expose students to paths they may have not otherwise taken. He gave the example of a student pursuing an EMT certification, who would then

be able to see a direct path to getting a pre-med bachelor’s degree.

“I know it’s a different idea. ... If we don’t change how (the) higher education system operates, we’re going to leave a lot of our students behind, and Oregon is going to lose out on a lot of potential,” he said.

Oregon Sen. Michael Dembrow, chair of the Senate Committee on Education that held the public hearing for the bill, questioned the details of the legislation — specifically how bringing together two different institutions’ funding streams and governance systems would work.

“The community colleges, their boards are elected by their local communities and they’re really proud of that, and that is a special relationship they have with their communities, and that’s a question we’d need to solve,” Dembrow said.

Members of the boards of trustees at Oregon’s public universities are named by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate.

“Those are details that can be worked out, but I will say my hope had been that this year we would see a couple of institutions that wanted to explore that kind of relationship, and then we could do some kind of pilot and try it out,” Dembrow said. “It seems like we’re not there yet.”

No universities, at least publicly, have stated any desire to pursue such a merger.

Presidents of both Eastern Oregon University and Southern Oregon University testified neutrally on the bill.

“At this time, frankly I don’t know if merging institutions would solve the numerous issues we have in front of us,” Tom Insko, EOU president, said. “I do however believe it is our responsibility to evaluate and clearly understand if there are opportunities to do better and not let old paradigms and structures hamper our ability to accomplish extraordinary outcomes for current and prospective students, and I think SB 1 could be one tool that could help.”

Lawmakers explore wiping out stimulus tax penalty, refunds could take months

Unusual system resulted in 900,000 low-income residents owing state taxes

By MIKE ROGOWAY
The Oregonian

SALEM — The Oregon Legislature is moving to wipe out more than \$300 million in state taxes triggered by federal stimulus payments, but it could take several months for 900,000 taxpayers to get all the money back.

Congress authorized



Nathanson

Smith

\$1,800 in coronavirus relief payments in two installments last year and approved another \$1,400 earlier this month. The aid comes in the form of a federal tax rebate, which isn’t taxable.

Oregon is one of just six states that allow residents to subtract their federal taxes from their state tax liability. That’s usually a tax break,

but the stimulus payments produced the opposite effect: Lower federal taxes meant Oregonians had less to subtract from their state tax obligation.

On average, that created a \$333 tax hit for Oregonians who received stimulus payments. The actual amount varies considerably based on individual circumstances, but even some lower-income households could end up owing a few hundred dollars.

The issue has been clear to lawmakers since last May, at least, when the Legislative Revenue Office wrote a report on the effects of the

federal stimulus program. But lawmakers are just now taking it up.

Rep. Nancy Nathanson, D-Eugene, chairs the House Committee on Revenue. She said the Legislature focused initially on immediate pandemic aid and concluded that addressing the taxes generated by 2020 stimulus payments would be too challenging during last year’s special sessions. She said a rushed fix would have introduced a risk of mistakes or backlogged payments.

“After further evaluation, making a change to Oregon tax law is the surest way to offset the indirect impact that

the federal tax credit has on Oregon taxpayers,” Nathanson wrote in an email. “I’m hopeful that this is a starting point toward a bipartisan solution to streamline tax relief for the coming year.”

An amendment to House Bill 2433 proposed on Monday, March 29, would wipe out the entire Oregon tax obligation created by the stimulus payments. Some taxpayers who owed no federal taxes at all could also benefit with lower state taxes.

Lawmakers in both parties have signaled support for addressing the stimulus tax issue. It may not be easy, though.

Changes in Oregon tax law don’t take effect until 90 days after the Legislature convenes, long after the tax deadline for filing 2020 taxes (the deadline is May 17 this year, following federal and state postponements.)

At a House committee hearing on March 29, representatives from the Oregon Department of Revenue testified that any change could take months to implement. That means Oregonians will have to wait an extended period to get repaid for taxes generated by 2020’s stimulus payments, including the stimulus money Congress approved last December.

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Asher Dental Services is in search of a Dental Assistant.
This is a full-time position with administrative duties including inventory control, patient scheduling, claims submittal. Seeking a team player to join our staff. We are a friendly, patient-oriented dental office. Dental Assistant will work under the supervision of a dentist and perform all aspects of four-handed dentistry and dental assisting duties. Maintenance and sterilization of instruments, equipment, materials and treatment rooms for all dental procedures. Dental Assisting Certification and experience desired but will train the right person. For more information, contact Teresa at Asher Community Health Center, Fossil Oregon, 541-763-2725 ext 220.


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CITY OF MILTON-FREEWATER is now accepting applications for the position of Supervisor – Parks/Recreation/Buildings, Public Works Department. Application & position information may be found on the City's website at www.mfcity.com or you may call 541-938-8243 to arrange to pick up an application from City Hall, 722 S. Main, Milton-Freewater, OR 97862. Applications must be received in City Hall by 11:00am on Friday, April 23, 2021. EOE

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EO-11250
UMATILLA COUNTY, OREGON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Community Addictions and Mental Health Program Services

Umatilla County, Oregon is requesting proposals for Community Addictions and Mental Health Program Services.

Umatilla County may reject any proposals not in compliance with all prescribed procedures and requirements and reserves the right to reject for good cause any or all proposals and to accept the proposal deemed to be in the public interest.

A copy of the Request for Proposals may be obtained by contacting Mark Royal, 211 SW 1st Street, Pendleton, Oregon, (541) 278-6330, or on the Umatilla County website at www.co.umatilla.or.us/bcc/notices. Proposals are due 4:00 p.m., April 26, 2021, followed by public opening. March 30, April 1, 2021

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101 Legal Notices

EO-11207
NOTICE OF BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
A public meeting of the Budget Committee of the Pilot Rock Cemetery Maintenance District #5, Umatilla County State of Oregon, to discuss the budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, will be held at 634 NE 6th Street, Pilot Rock, Oregon. The meeting will take place on April 22nd at 7:00p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to receive the budget message and to receive comment from the public on the budget. A copy of the budget document may be inspected or obtained on or after April 29th at 504 NE Hickory Street, Pilot Rock, Oregon between the hours of 1:00pm and 6:00pm. This is a public meeting where deliberation of the Budget Committee will take place. Any person may appear at the meeting and discuss the proposed budget with the Budget Committee. Publish dates: April 1 and April 15, 2021

EO-11259
PUBLIC NOTICE
The City of Boardman will make a Type II Land Use Decision Wednesday, April 21, 2021

The purpose of this notice is to take public comment for a Partition request received on March 8, 2021, from Amazon Data Services, Inc. (ADS). ADS is requesting a partition of Tax Lot #411 of Morrow County Tax Map 4N 25E 09, a 70.39-acre parcel. The partition would create a second parcel of 5.35-acres with the parent parcel becoming 65.04-acres in size.

This Land Use Decision will be processed in accordance with Boardman Development Code Chapter 4.3 – Land Divisions and Lot Line Adjustments.

The citizens of Boardman are invited to make comment in writing, orally at city hall, or electronically to beyelerb@city-ofboardman.com.

(S) Heather Baumgartner
City Clerk
Posted: March 30, 2021
Published: March 30, 2021

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