

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## MEASURE 110

## Auditors identify problems in grants

Negotiations with grant winners to take until late July, early August to complete

By EMILY GREEN  
*The Lund Report*

SALEM — State auditors issued a “risk” letter flagging issues even as the drug decriminalization act’s oversight council finished approving grant applications.

After nearly six months of delays, funds are closer to reaching addiction services providers in Oregon. The council overseeing Measure 110’s rollout finished approving grant applications on Thursday, June 2, and grantees should have their money by the end of the summer.

The milestone comes one day after the Oregon Secretary of State’s Office, which is conducting an audit, sent a letter to Oregon Health Authority calling out “areas of risk” in the way the program has been administered so far.

OHA Director Patrick Allen noted his agency’s “missteps” on Measure 110 in presentations to legislative committees on June 1 and 2.

“There’s been some challenges, and not least of which we’ve certainly made some mistakes as we’ve done this work,” he told the Senate Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Committee on June 1. He said the agency “vastly underestimated the complexity” of reinventing the behavioral health system and the pandemic has placed additional stresses on the agency’s workforce, which led to competing priorities.

### Oversight council ‘optimistic’ on review process

When voters passed Oregon’s landmark drug decriminalization law in November 2020, they diverted about \$300 million in marijuana tax dollars to pay for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services every two years. The bulk of this biennium’s Measure 110 funding, about \$276 million, was initially stalled as the inexperienced community council tasked with distributing the funds struggled to design and execute a complicated grant program with little assistance from the state. Then, after more than 130 Oregon Health Authority staff stepped in to take over application reviews, bureaucratic processes further delayed the release of funds.

See Grants, Page A8

## BLUE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



About 100 Blue Mountain Community College faculty, students and community members gather Wednesday, June 1, 2022, on the Pendleton campus to protest proposed budget cuts before a meeting of the BMCC Board of Education.

Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

## Layoff decision postponed

### Faculty supporters rally before meeting on 2022-23 budget

By JOHN TILLMAN  
*East Oregonian*

PENDLETON — The Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education at its meeting Wednesday, June 1, postponed action on a 2022-23 budget proposing faculty layoffs.

The board’s reading of state law requiring seven day public notice was responsible for the delay, BMCC President Mark Browning explained.

The board plans to reconvene in a special meeting June 6 to consider approval of the budget. The budget committee agreed to the BMCC Faculty Association’s request to resume talks on teacher layoffs June 3.

“I don’t ever want to close that door,” Browning said. “We have a plan, but of course (the administration) is willing to listen. The (BMFA) came up with some good ideas before talks broke down. I give them credit for that.”

Before the final decision to delay the budget vote, the faculty union went ahead with its rally outside Pioneer Hall. The demonstration of support for teachers attracted about 120 attendees, according to new BMFA President Sascha McKeon. She



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Greg Schulberg, Blue Mountain Community College math and science instructor, plays drums with a faculty band during a rally Wednesday, June 1, 2022, on the Pendleton campus to protest the college administration’s budget proposal that would cut several teaching positions.

has been on the union executive team for two years and a biology instructor for 10.

“The other faculty and I are grateful for the extraordinary support we have had from our students, alumni and the community at large,” she read in a statement to the board. “As of this afternoon, our petition to save BMCC faculty has garnered over 1,900 signatures between

our Google sheet and Change.org.”

The event featured sign-carrying union supporters in blue T-shirts emblazoned with “Save BMCC” in yellow, a band of instructors playing classic rock and stacks of pizza boxes and water bottles. Public speakers’ comments began at 5 p.m.

See BMCC, Page A8

## Profits on the line

Local farmers, orchardists paying premiums for necessary petroleum-related goods

By JOHN TILLMAN  
*East Oregonian*

UMAPINE — Agricultural producers are paying record-high tabs for crucial fertilizers.

The agricultural data analysis service DTN reported important fertilizers doubled from the first week of May 2021 to 2022. Anhydrous ammonia reached an all-time high of \$1,534 per ton in April and stayed the same in May. Urea also hit a record of \$1,031 per ton in April then dropped slightly to \$1,001. Anhydrous was barely above \$400 in September 2020, but has zoomed upward more than 250% in less than two years.

Fertilizer inflation has outpaced even gasoline, diesel and natural gas price hikes.

Producing nitrogen fertilizers ammonia and urea requires natural gas feedstock. Despite high prices for fuel, fertilizer and other petroleum products, though, some local farmers and ranchers remain cautiously optimistic.

“As long as wheat prices stay up, I’m OK with high inputs,” Wheat and cattle rancher Tim Leber of Umapine said. “Where I get nervous is if wheat crashes, while we’re stuck with high inputs, as happened in 2008 to 2010.”

In 2008, soft white wheat prices were almost as high as 2022.

Leber already has top-dressed his fields, to take advantage of the

See Profits, Page A8



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Umapine farmer Tim Leber on May 31, 2022, leans against the Case Quadtrac tractor he uses to fertilize and seed his crops. Fertilizer prices have doubled in the past year.



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