

CANDIDATES from page 1A

Oregon House of Representatives in Salem, including serving on the Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee, the Economic Development and Trade Committee and as Chair of the Joint Commission on Transportation.

McKeown then opened the meeting to questions from the crowd. While some of the queries questioned decisions made by the current administration, most revolved around the funding levels for education and the

possible need for a state-wide sales tax.

McKeown cited some of the state's history surrounding earlier attempts at passing a sales tax and asked for a show of hands of those in attendance who would support a sales tax. Though she seemed somewhat surprised when most of the hands in the room were raised, McKeown appeared resigned to the difficulties of passing a state sales tax.

"We've had a sales tax on the ballot at least nine times, maybe more, and it has always gone

down in flames by huge numbers," McKeown said. "This showing of hands gives me some hope that maybe we can move in that direction in the future."

DeFazio, who has been the representative for Oregon Congressional District 4 since 1987, followed McKeown's presentation.

While the congressman was direct in his criticism of President Trump and the administration's policies, changes and cuts during its first two years in office, DeFazio was primarily focused on the work within his district.

"The greatest accomplishment of this partisan Republican Congress is the passage of the massive tax cut bill. Seventy-three percent of the benefits flow to corporations ... and six percent of Americans have gotten a raise or a bonus due to the tax cut," DeFazio said. "The six largest banks in America, already profitable, will get a \$20

billion tax break this year. This means we will borrow \$20 billion and add it to the national debt and give to the six largest banks in the country."

DeFazio then pointed to the ongoing needs of towns along the Oregon coast, mentioning continued efforts to provide the funding needed to maintain and improve the conditions of Oregon's small ports and, in particular, the Siuslaw Estuary.

"Small ports are the lifeblood of many small communities on the Oregon coast, and the Corps (Army Corps of Engineers) has a budget that is not adequate," DeFazio said. "They have huge needs on the Columbia, and elsewhere, and they tend to ignore the small ports ... But I was able to get 10 percent set aside to dredge small ports and we are still benefiting from that."

The question of cutting funding for social programs like Medicare and Social Security was raised and DeFazio again

turned to the problems created by recent tax cuts. He reiterated his belief that the cuts are a major problem that will become more serious over time.

"We are projected to have a trillion-dollar deficits next year. A couple of hundred million of that is due to the tax bill, and that is a real concern. You can't borrow a trillion dollars a year in peace time and make it work," DeFazio said. "This means the debt will equal all of our other economic activity ... and Speaker of the House Paul Ryan has said this will undoubtedly lead to cuts in Social Security and Medicare."

One question from the audience moved away from economics when someone who identified himself as a local veteran asked DeFazio about the death of longtime senator and former prison of war (POW) John McCain, wanting to know the Congressman's response to the way McCain's passing had been handled by

the president.

"John and I served together while he was on the senate side for many years. Mostly we worked together on Coast Guard issues, as we shared jurisdiction there and also things that related to commercial aviation," DeFazio explained. "He was a patriot that served his country both in uniform and in the senate for many years, he suffered horribly as a POW in Vietnam and, while we had our political differences, I think we had a mutual respect for each other. I honor his life and passing."

When asked if he had an opinion on the manner in which President Trump handled the death of McCain, DeFazio paused for a moment, obviously choosing his words carefully before answering, "The president showed himself to be very small."

Both DeFazio and McKeown will be on the ballot on the Nov. 7 General Election.

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CRITICAL from page 8A

The City of Florence is

also looking to support local schools, this time with a Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Competitive Grant Program. At a meeting on Aug. 20, Florence City Council directed staff to submit a letter of intent about participating in the FY 2019-20 grant cycle.

This project looks to complete sidewalks on 26th and 27th streets between Highway 101 and Oak Street to help stu-

dents walk or bike to school, as well as potentially adding a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon near the schools on Highway 101.

If the letter of intent is approved, the city will submit a formal grant proposal in October.

Also in October, the Siuslaw School Board plans to host facilities open houses to encourage community members to

come in and see for themselves the state of the buildings.

"A lot of the folks I know who are chamber members went to school at Siuslaw 15, 20, 30 years ago, and they don't know the current conditions," Pierson said. "Over the years, the district has cobbled together classroom spaces in places never intended as classrooms. There is inadequate ventilation, there is no exterior lighting and there are a lot of interesting things to see."

Erickson also encouraged people to talk to current and recently graduated Siuslaw students to get their opinion about the facilities.

"It is very interesting to see how they take it," she said. "They are very bright, they understand and they will fully tell you of the issues with the school. They don't have any reason to hold back, since they are the ones who use the school on a daily basis. It is a big eye opener to hear what they say."

People who wish to know more should visit the Siuslaw School District website, attend or request a presentation at a community meeting or take the survey at www.survey-monkey.com/r/bap2.

"We just want to get the information out there," Erickson said. "We won't tell people how they should or should not vote. It's their decision. We know it's a large chunk of money, but we want the facts out there."

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