

# Panic over gas law Grover's still can't own pump gas

By Zach Silva  
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A slight amendment to a seemingly obscure Oregon law that went into effect on Jan. 1 made national headlines last week.

Oregon's House Bill 2482, which allows individuals in counties of 40,000 or less to pump their own gas at any time of the day, was an amendment to ORS 480.341 which said individuals could pump their own gas in these same rural counties after 6 p.m. and before 6 a.m. The "sun-up to sun-down" rule as one local gas attendant put it.

This law impacts half of the counties in Oregon but only seven percent of all residents. While this small change to a small law that affects counties of small populations did not drastically change anything, it made big waves across social media in the opening days of the year.

After KTVL, a CBS affiliate in Medford, shared an article about the change on their Facebook page, the story took off. Their post received over 61,000 shares and 54,000 comments and was referenced in stories by new outlets across the country including *The Seattle Times*, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

The headlines that accompanied these articles used words and phrases such as 'panic' and 'Oregonians losing their minds.'

While there was a sense of joy from people outside of Oregon in seeing Oregonians online go into a brief hysteria about the prospect and nuance of having to pump their own gas, the reality is that just a small portion of individuals will be impacted. Amidst the hubbub, there were individuals in Cottage Grove who were also perplexed by the change.

"There's been a lot of confusion. There's been a lot of questions, people showing up not knowing what to do. Just hanging around, 'do we do it, do you do it?' kind of thing," said gas attendant Dalton Pardun who works at the Chevron in town that is just off of I-5.

"And especially the out-of-staters are even worse because they catch word that hey, we can do it and then it becomes a stand-off thing. [They're] like, 'why are you here, what are you doing?'"

Attendants from other gas stations around the city also noted an uptick in questions from customers about who should be filling up their car.

Lane County's population was last marked at over 300,000 residents, making it exempt from the new law and requiring the continued use of gas attendants.

# City Continued from A1

improving water service to Taylor, Parks, Red Hill and Cottage Heights homeowners. Installed 6 crosswalks on south 10th along Bohemia Park and added cross hatching to crosswalks at 10th and Main. Grind and repaving of South 6th Street and Mosby Creek projects were completed.

Utility Division, Supervisor Tony Kirk retired after 40 years of service and Mike O'Reilly was promoted to Utilities Supervisor. The department has also been repainting striping throughout town as well as maintaining and repairing the sewer and water main lines in town.

Maintenance Division, Combined the Building Maintenance Department and Parks Department which allows for flexibility with staffing during the spring and early summer for park maintenance. Installed new lighting along Row River Trail starting at Trail Head and continuing east to 16th Street. Installed irrigation at Lulu's Dog Park.

Building Division had 148 commercial permits issued with a total value of \$26.5M, 489 Residential permits issued with a total value of \$7.5M and 46 new home permits issued.

Planning Division started the

housing needs analysis. Also a full time Planning Tech was added, this position will handle land use compliance violations and assist the City Planner in processing planning applications. FEMA rating of level 7 saving homeowners in the flood plain 15% on their flood insurance. Third annual Emergency Preparedness Fair at Cottage Theater. Repainted Opal Whitley Mural and 98 planning permits processed.

Water Treatment Plant, New emergency generators were installed at the Holly pump station and Reservoirs site. Cleaned the inside of the water reservoirs and high service booster pump station at the water treatment plant. Installed scada at all pump stations and reservoirs connecting them electronically to the water treatment plant.

Waste Treatment, Erich Schroeder was promoted to Waste Treatment Superintendent. Purchased 2 portable water samplers, installed a security camera system. Hosted the Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association September Board meeting and rebuilt Effluent filters with a staff saving of over \$20,000.

Armory, Lead removal of the exterior staircases and thorough cleaning resulted in a no lead

detected in test. Upgraded the power breaker box on stage and lighting. Completed window restoration and awarded bid for construction documents. 37 events were hosted at the Armory in 2017, and 21 are already booked for 2018.

2017 Safety Record, Administration, public works and development, and finance departments worked 51,586.23 hours without a loss time accident.

Library is the hardest to cover because so much goes on there. Like hosting "A Place For All People" from the Smithsonian Exhibit or "Bridging Cultures" a display of Islamic and Muslim books, art, film and music. Pete Barrell, Community Services Director, received the Movers and Shakers award from the Library Journal Magazine and honored at the American Library Association annual conference. Each week during the summer the library took forty kids on Outdoor Adventure field trips. They hosted 44 summer programs for all ages. Over 1400 children attended summer reading program special events, 220 children read books in the summer reading program. The Community Center was home for almost 40 groups or organizations for meetings or events.

Finance Department prepared a \$33M budget that the budget

committee and city council adopted. Over 23% of utility bills are being paid on line. They also participated in the purchase of the police radio upgrades. The finance staff was involved with researching the best way to move forward with our meter reading equipment. Hand held meter reading devices had increased in price to be over \$4,000 each.

They were able to replace the equipment using smart phones and software that allows the phone to be used as a reading device and upload the information immediately to the cloud. This allows for better customer service when a leak is suspected, with a much shorter turnaround time to address the potential leak.

The Youth Advisory Council had a great year presenting their Nitrous Oxide bill to the Legislation at the State Capitol. The YAC was recognized throughout the state and was asked to speak at the League of Oregon Cities conference.

I'd personally like to take a moment and thank my employer Weyerhaeuser and the management lead team. Their support of me in this position and willing to let me be flexible with my schedule has truly helped in the success of this past year.

# LATHAM

## Continued from A1

at ACE, we looked at private schools and charter schools. Latham is our best option and if it closes, we are looking at home schooling. I would have to quit my career, I still have student loans to pay, to teach my child," she said.

More than a dozen people spoke up, at one point, commenting from the audience, hailing Latham as a family environment affording students the chance to learn in smaller classes. The school currently has 94

students enrolled, 33 of which do not live in the school's attendance area. A survey sent out by the school district to Latham parents showed that 66 current students intended to return to Latham next year but Parent informed the board that even if the school kept its current enrollment, the addition of five to 10 students might not make the school financially feasible.

"This is an extremely difficult decision," Settelmeier said. "I love small schools...

children come first. We have to look at how much it costs to educate a student. Is it fair to other kids in our other schools and the staff in those schools who are trying to do those jobs?"

The board asked for more information, citing a desire

to wait at least a year, garnering confusion from parents who hoped to work to increase enrollment at the school—a possible solution presented by several board members.

However, district maintenance manager Matt Allen noted that the school is on track for some "big ticket" repairs and is showing its age. "It's not the labor, it's the equipment and materials," he said after Latham parents suggested Latham fathers could help with repairs.

"I think we need to make a decision about X day this decision is made," Settelmeier insisted. "I am comfortable saying it is not tonight but it needs to be soon."

The board agreed to table the discussion until its February 5 meeting, asking for a per-pupil cost and a run-down of necessary repairs.

If the board does not vote to close Latham on February 5, it will not discuss the closure again until the 2018-2019 school year barring any structural failure or other pressing matter at the facility.

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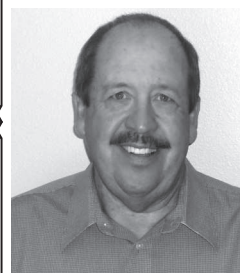
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