



Polk County  
**Itemizer-Observer**

Volume 140, Issue 14

www.Polkio.com

April 8, 2015

75¢



Dallas High School's crowded hallways will become the norm with decreasing school budgets.

JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

# NOT ENOUGH?

State 2015-17 school budget comes up short

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — One Polk County school district will be making cuts while others should keep programs intact, but not much else with the 2015-17 school's budget now awaiting Gov. Kate Brown's signature.

The Oregon Senate passed the budget Monday afternoon in the amount of \$7.255 billion, about \$600 million more than in the current biennium. The House voted last week to advance the budget, contained in House Bill 5017. Both chambers voted on party lines, with Democrats supporting the proposal and Republicans asking for more.

School leaders from across the state asked for more, too.

Falls City Superintendent Jack Thompson described the \$7.255 billion biennial budget as "a slap in the face to education." He said the state began what he thought was reinvesting in education in the current two-year budget. To him, it was like being taken off life support, but now he believes the state has taken a step backward.



Thompson

"We will be on life support again," he said. "I will be able to maintain exactly what I have, less any pay raises. If it goes through at \$7.255 billion, I will have to make some cuts."

That isn't considering a long list of programs that had to be eliminated, deferred maintenance projects on buildings, forgone equipment purchases, and athletic uniforms in need of replacement.

"It saddens me. It does," Thompson said. "I have higher hopes for Oregon than what we are providing our kids."

In other school districts, the figure probably won't result in cuts, but certainly not much in the way of hoped-for program expansions.

In Dallas, the district will be able to pay for full-day kindergarten, though not with as much classroom support as originally planned for. The newly re-elected electives at LaCreole Middle School should stay.

"We believe we will be able to continue programs that we have," said Interim Superintendent Dennis Engle.

School officials had hoped to see a figure closer to \$7.5 billion.

"We would feel much better and be able to continue supports into the second year (of the biennium) and perhaps consider adding back some of what was lost," Engle said.

That would have been the case in Central School District, as well, if the figure had been higher.

Superintendent Buzz Brazeau said the district has benefited from enrollment growth and changes to the formula used to calculate how much money districts receive for students, so it won't be making cuts.



Brazeau

Brazeau said if more funding was on the way, the district would have considered adding to foreign languages, a marketing program at Central High School and programs such as FBLA and DECA that were eliminated when cuts began.

"Unfortunately, at this funding level we will not be able to do those things," he said.

Perrydale Schools are in a unique position of being able to add something back into its budget. Superintendent Eric Milburn said it's not a huge increase — the agricultural teacher/FFA adviser post will be increased from part-time to full-time — but it's part of a long-held goal to expand the program.

See BUDGET, Page 5A

## More background checks not the answer

Sheriff, gun dealers speak out against SB 941 proposals

By Emily Mentzer  
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Generally speaking, criminals don't pay much attention to laws, including gun laws.

"Guns that are used in crimes are typically either stolen or they've taken it from somebody without permission," said Sheriff Bob Wolfe.

Senate Bill 941 calls for background checks on private party transfers — that is, one individual selling a gun to another — but will do

nothing to make the community safer, Wolfe said in a letter to Sen. Floyd Prozanski and the Senate Committee on Judiciary, which passed the bill Monday, sending it to the Senate for a vote.

"It would simply add requirements and unnecessary laws for our law-abiding citizens, which ultimately would waste time and limited resources which could be better utilized addressing the bigger issue: mental health issues and crimes committed by individuals while using a gun,"

Wolfe said in the letter.

Under the proposal, private citizens would have to appear at a licensed gun dealer in person with both the person who wants to buy the gun and the person who wants to sell it.

The gun dealer would be responsible for conducting the background search on the buyer to ensure he or she is not a felon or has a history of violent mental illness.

The proposed measure makes exceptions for family members, law enforcement, inherited firearms and cer-

tain temporary transfers.

Gun laws about background checks are already extensive. Each time someone wants to buy a gun, a new background check is conducted, said Bryan Jobe, co-owner of Fifty1Fifty3 Tactical in Monmouth.

"If someone consigns a weapon with us, it's their gun, they're selling it through us," Jobe said. "If they change their mind, we have to do a background check to give them their gun back."

See GUNS, Page 5A

## IN YOUR TOWN

### DALLAS NEWS

Thursday Dallas High School's brightest acting and technical theater performers will test their skills against the state's best at the Oregon Thespians State Festival in Salem.

This year, Dallas' contingent consists of three students: Selena Harris, Rachel Tilgner and Alicia Scherer.

The partnership between Harris and Tilgner arose from DHS drama teacher Blair Cromwell's suggestion. She saw something in their work ethic that made her think they make a good match.

»Page 17A

### FALLS CITY NEWS

Come football season, the Falls City Mountaineer faithful purple and gold-clad fan base will brave any weather conditions to see its favorite team play.

But beginning next season, that will be a little easier, as work building a cover over the bleachers at the Falls City High School football field will be underway shortly, if it hasn't already begun.

Last week, the lumber was delivered to build the cover, one of the final steps in a project that has been on the district's to-do list for a number of years.

»Page 3A

### INDEPENDENCE NEWS

Whether opening a new business or honing skills to run a long-standing one, a pep talk can be helpful.

Promote Enterprising Performance workshops are back at Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce starting Tuesday. The series of six seminars will cover everything from developing and building a budget to marketing to fundraising.

"The concept is to provide information, best practices, tips, things of that nature, to help businesses and organizations in our community," said Jean Love, executive director of the chamber.

»Page 2A

### MONMOUTH NEWS

Since April 1, four candidates for Western Oregon University's next president have been on campus visiting with students, faculty, staff and the community.

Fernando Delgado, Christopher Ames, Margaret Madden and Rex Fuller each spent time in open forums and answered questions about how they would shape the future of WOU. See daily coverage on open forums on the *Itemizer-Observer's* website.

A decision on the president should be made by Friday, with an announcement to be made by Monday or Tuesday.

»www.polkio.com

### POLK COUNTY NEWS

Polk County's tentatively approved 2015-16 budget is a "tale of three budgets," according to County Administrator Greg Hansen.

"This budget is much better from a fiscal standpoint than what we've had in the past," he said while delivering his budget message March 30, at the beginning of four days of budget hearings. "No layoffs are proposed in this budget."

But as Hansen characterized it, there are three distinct components to what will end up being the county spending plan for 2015-16.

»Page 2A

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue
Learn how to care for those blueberry bushes at a Master Gardener workshop at Trinity Lutheran Church in Dallas. 7 p.m. Free.	Check out Eric Loftin's new exhibit, "Mind the Gap," at an artist reception at MaMere's Bed and Breakfast. 5-7 p.m. Free.	Fiddlers take the stage at the Oregon Old Time Fiddlers Association's Fiddle and Variety show in Rickreall. 6:30 p.m. \$3-\$6.	The final show of the 2014-15 Smith Fine Arts Series features Jose James and the Metropole Orchestra. 7:30 p.m. \$11-\$28.	What's new in home and garden? Find out at Spirit Mountain Casino's Home & Outdoor show's "outdoor paradise." Noon-7 p.m. Free.	Get inspired by the watercolor, ink and drawing artworks of Charlotte Lamb on display at Dallas Public Library. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free.	Today is National Dolphin Day. Dolphins live in pods of up to a dozen and are highly sociable animals.	
Mostly sunny Hi: 59 Lo: 38	Mostly sunny Hi: 66 Lo: 40	Mostly sunny Hi: 63 Lo: 42	Showers Hi: 55 Lo: 38	Showers Hi: 56 Lo: 37	Mostly sunny Hi: 59 Lo: 40	Showers Hi: 59 Lo: 35	