

EDITORIALS

What's the emergency

The Oregon State Legislature is meeting for its short session shenanigans, 35 days in even-numbered years. From the looks of things, the State Capitol must be on fire. Or flooding, because 62 of the 97 bills in the Senate are being labeled with an emergency clause.

In the House, 299 bills will be voted on, all in 35 days; 64 of the first 99 bills are considered an emergency.

The bills vary widely, with no rhyme or reason to which will be declared an emergency — effective upon passage — and which are not. One emergency is how money will be distributed from the new wine country special license plates.

Calling a bill — or ordinance, at the city level — an “emergency” is a way to push through an agenda without question. Before Oregonians know it, the laws have changed and there's not much they can do about it.

By putting emergency clauses on a bill, senators and representatives in Oregon remove the chance for those bills to be referred to the ballot, thus effectively removing the people's veto power.

What's worse, senators and representatives say they have to pass these bills with emergency clauses to protect Oregonians from themselves, threatening that a ballot measure would have more drastic effects on Oregon's economy and business and ecosystem.

In the case of the minimum wage bill, which discriminates wages based on location — three tiers with three different minimum wages based on the county you live in — is an emergency. Legislators say it's better than the alternative ballot measure, which isn't actually on the ballot yet, but they say the tiered, gradual system will be better for businesses than if voters approved a statewide higher wage all at once.

But legislators seem to twist and interpret Oregonian's wishes on ballot measures anyway. For example, when Oregonians OK'd letting the Legislature meet every year, regular and short sessions in alternating years, they probably didn't expect their lawmakers to try to stuff 398 laws into 35 days — more than 11 laws per day.

These laws will affect public safety, the environment, victim's rights, minimum sentences for some crimes, gun rights, business, economic development, and Oregonians' pocketbooks.

They deserve more than an hour each in discussion, and they deserve the chance to go to the voters. Legislators need to stop declaring fake emergencies.

PUBLIC AGENDA

Public Agenda is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the *Itemizer-ObsERVER* via fax (503-623-2395) or email (ionews@polkio.com).

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 10

• **Independence Heritage Museum Commission** — 4 p.m., Independence Heritage Museum, 112 S. Third St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

• **Monmouth Library Advisory Board** — 7 a.m., Monmouth Public Library, 168 Ecols St. S., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Monmouth Parks and Recreation Board** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

• **Polk Soil and Water Conservation District Board meeting** — 6 p.m., USDA Service Center, 580 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-9680, ext. 5

THURSDAY, FEB. 11

• **Polk County Fire District No. 1 Board** — 6 p.m., Central Station 90, 1800 Monmouth St., Independence. 503-838-1510.

• **Western Days Commission** — 7 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

• **Falls City City Council** — 7 p.m., Falls City Community Center, 320 N. Main St., Falls City. 503-787-3631.

FRIDAY, FEB. 12

• **Monmouth Tree Advisory Board** — 7 p.m., Monmouth Senior Center, 180 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

SATURDAY, FEB. 13

• **Polk County Fair Board work session** — 8 a.m., Polk County Fair & Event Center, 520 S. Pacific Highway (99W), Rickreall. Breakfast at 7:30. 503-623-3048.

MONDAY, FEB. 15

• **Independence Tourism and Events Commission** — 6:30 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

• **Dallas City Council** — 7 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

TUESDAY, FEB. 16

• **Monmouth City Council** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Dallas Parks Advisory Board** — 5:30 p.m., Dallas City Hall, 187 SE Court St., Dallas. 503-831-3502.

• **Falls City School Board** — 6:30 p.m., Falls City High School, 111 N. Main St., Falls City. 503-787-3521.

• **Polk County Board of Commission work session** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 17

• **Independence Traffic Safety Commission** — 6:30 p.m., Independence Civic Center, 555 S. Main St., Independence. 503-838-1212.

• **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Failed thief: it never pays to steal

To all it should concern: I once tried to steal from this very hard-working, honest man. No guesses here, he caught me.

What may seem strange to most people these days is that I find myself so fortunate that he did.

Tough as it was, I was granted the opportunity to be reminded that I am not a thief aside from the fact and being even harder to accomplish, I was made stronger in my God.

Given convictions and was granted much grace when my heartfelt apology was accepted. Please learn from this lesson. It never pays to steal. If you really need it then ask for it. You never know you may be blessed to receive.

Schrene Worley
Dallas

Dallas Hospital chief says 'goodbye'

Friday marked my last day as chief administrative officer at Salem Health West Valley and clinics. With a heavy heart, I have decided to return to my native Washington state so I can spend daily quality time with my family.

It's been a pleasure and joy to serve the hospital staff this past year — plus getting to know the wonderful people who live and work in Dallas and Polk County.

I immediately felt at home in the beautiful and simple life of Dallas, living two blocks from the hospital. I treasure the friendships, both professional and personal, that I've made here.

Thank you to all the community members and organizations who reached out and made me feel at home — including the Dallas Rotary, and the Dallas and Monmouth-Independence chambers of commerce.

2015 brought many changes for Salem Health West Valley.

We completed the affiliation with OHSU. Soon afterward, West Valley Hospital's name changed to Salem Health West Valley. In partnership with government agencies, we opened the Central Health and Wellness Center in Independence.

The work continues at Salem Health West Valley to offer exceptional experi-

ences to patients each and every day.

Hospital staff improved patient pre-registration for scheduled appointments and decreased wait times.

The emergency department vastly improved its trauma care by shortening the time it takes for patients to get a CT scan.

Imaging services were expanded for MRI, CT and ultrasound scans — plus colonoscopies and physical therapy related services.

The hospital now accepts requests for medical records for the Salem Health system, so you don't have to drive to Salem to get them.

The future truly looks bright for Salem Health West Valley.

I wish you all the best in the future. Thank you.

Jim Sapienza
Dallas

Changes needed to use potential

As a State Legislator, my job is to facilitate a safe and secure Oregon. Development of economic growth in our communities is a duty I take seriously.

Our future depends upon our ability to create, innovate, and market the next best ideas.

Therefore, I could not remain silent about a recent decision made by the Monmouth Independence Network (Minet) board to shelve a proposal to provide free and/or low-cost WiFi throughout its service areas. This is an unfortunate development. I urge a reconsideration of this policy choice.

We originally built Minet as a tool for economic development: a magnet to bring tech start-ups, provide unique capacity opportunities for small businesses, and empower innovators willing to share ideas to a global marketplace.

While our services to residential customers are best known, the network was engineered to support a robust commercial portfolio.

Minet was intended as a modern “farm to market” portal to a global marketplace — it is time for us to recalibrate the strategy and structure of Minet for the emergent potentials of the 21st century economy.

Other communities throughout Oregon are racing to do what we have already done — it is critical for us to optimize investments made for opportuni-

ties to come.

Over the past several years I have asked various members of Minet leadership to consider proposals including the following: restructure governance board by including more citizen-at-large and non-voting advisory positions; focus investments in assisting small business development; and invite a comprehensive review of internal practices, policies, and procedures.

These recommendations are intended to yield a healthier, more representative and transparent organization better able to seize new avenues for potential revenues as well as enhanced capacities to facilitate economic growth and sustainability.

I urge the leadership of our community to make the absolute best use of this public treasure.

Paul Evans
Monmouth

Be safe when walking, biking

Only bike and walk at dark or in the rain when absolutely necessary. Use crosswalks with lights or at intersections. Don't jaywalk.

Wear white clothing. When walking, take a high power torch which is easily seen at night.

To pay for safety equipment, let service organizations make this equipment available at bargain prices or the sheriff's office with their multi-million dollar levy.

At key intersections — government agency add flashing yellow lights with push button control. This is especially important at schools on state highways and high traveled streets.

Equipment — wear lime-yellow vest or wind breakers with reflective stripes.

Bicycles — wear hard hat with a bright torch and a bright torch on handle bars. Use flashing white/yellow lights. Wear reflector stripes at ankle and thigh area (level of car lights). Put reflectors in spokes of wheels.

Bike only in bike lanes, roads with wide shoulders or in parks created for bicycling.

Walk — take a high power torch and hold it in hand next to the traffic.

Use a torch not a flashlight. Aim to be seen in adverse conditions.

Kenneth Johnson
Dallas

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