

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer
Volume 141, Issue 9 www.Polkio.com March 2, 2016 75¢

Bill to provide tax break for industry

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Legislation helping rural cities and counties encourage industrial business expansion has cleared the Oregon Senate and is slated for a vote in the House of Representatives this week.

Senate Bill 1565 would allow local governments to exempt new capital improvements valued between \$1 million to \$25 million from property taxes. The incentive could be in effect for three out of the first five years after local agencies approve the exemption. Tax deferrals — paying taxes at a later date — is also an option in the bill.

Standard language in the legislation allows for a 100 percent exemption for three years, but local governments are allowed the flexibility to change the terms. That includes offering the exemption for the full five years, or lowering the rate from 100 percent in any given year.

The exemption would only go into effect if taxing districts represents 75 percent of the total combined rate of taxation approve.

Sen. Brian Boquist (R-Dallas), one of the bill's chief sponsors, testifying under oath in a public hearing this month, said the purpose of the bill is to give local governments a flexible tool for economic development and business retention.

He said improvement in the economy hasn't been uniform and many rural areas, such as Polk County, still are struggling.

"You have these little areas that still need to be helped and need to be able to help themselves," Boquist said.

As originally written, the bill would have allowed the exemption to be used statewide, which Boquist said was his intent with the legislation.

An amendment added in the House Revenue Committee last week changed that. The revision limited the exemption to only those businesses located outside the urban growth boundary of cities with a population of 40,000 or less. That would exclude the Portland Metro area, Salem-Keizer, Eugene-Springfield, Albany, Corvallis and Bend.

Property tax assessors have voiced concerns that the flexibility in the bill would make administering the exemptions complicated.

Polk County Assessor Doug Schmidt, speaking on behalf of the Oregon Assessor's Association, said he supports the underlying intent of the bill. But the number of options cities and counties have to depart from the standard language in the bill would make administering the exemptions a time-consuming manual process, he said. Tax deferrals, if businesses were to choose that option, would also be difficult to implement for short-staffed assessor's offices throughout the state.

"Assessors, we look at how easy is something to administer, because, again, like everybody else with reduced budgets, we have reduced staff," he said.

To answer those concerns, the bill was amended requiring county assessors to testify about the administrative impact an exemption proposal that deviates from the standard 100 percent over three of five years. Offices would receive a fee for their work, too.

Schmidt said Boquist's willingness to create the standard exemption alleviated many of the assessors' issues with the bill.

"We still have concerns, but we can administer this bill with a minimal amount of manual processing if jurisdictions abide by the standard exemption," Schmidt said.

The bill passed the Senate on Feb. 19 and a public hearing and work session was held Friday in the House Committee on Revenue, after which, the committee approved the bill. It is slated for a House floor vote on Wednesday (today).

KVCS may join Falls City school district

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

KINGS VALLEY — Falls City School District and Kings Valley Charter School work well together on a number of fronts.

Students from the schools compete together on sport teams, providing more athletic opportunities. Academic partnerships exist as well, said Jamon Ellingson, Kings Valley's di-

rector.

"We've worked with their teaching staff in the past, exchanging equipment and ideas," Ellingson said.

The working relationship is so good that discussions have recently begun about changing the boundaries of the Falls City and Philomath school districts to make it possible for Falls City to take over as the school's charter sponsor.

See **SCHOOLS**, Page 5A



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer
Anton Alvarez is the 2015 Monmouth Independence Junior Citizen. He was nominated for his volunteerism at Salem Hospital and with the Monmouth-Independence YMCA.

DESIRE TO SERVE

Anton Alvarez honored to be Junior Citizen

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Anton Alvarez doesn't volunteer because someone's watching, but someone was watching — and nominated him for Monmouth-Independence's 2015 Junior Citizen.

Anton is a humble recipient of the award.

"I'm not really big on the recognition," he said. "I just like volunteering. It's my own personal goal. I just do what I do. I like volunteering, and that's why I do it."

His spirit of volunteering makes an impact on those around him.

The Central High sophomore was nominated for his volunteerism at Salem Hospital and at the Monmouth-Independence YMCA. He is in band and was on the swim team, until a back injury made him stop competing.

It's his work at Salem Hospital that made him stand out above the crowd of excellent youth who were nominated for the award. Alvarez said he started volunteering with the hospital in the summer of 2015.

"There was a pretty tough process of getting in," he said. "You had to fill out an

And the nominees are:

- First Citizen** — Pat Jaffer, Lois Sieber, Tom Takacs.
- Distinguished Service** — Moises Ceja, Russ Cooper, Joann Fuhrman.
- Educator of the Year** — Buzz Brazeau, Frank White, Rob Wingham.
- Education Support Staff of the Year** — Patty Bermudes, Nancy Harper, Ryan O'Malley.
- Retail Services** — Les Schwab Tire Center, Petals & Vines, Roth's Fresh Markets.
- Nonprofit or organization** — Central School District, HALO, Monmouth-Independence YMCA, Partnerships in Community Living Inc.
- Food and Beverage Service** — Arena Sports Bar & Grill, San Antonio Mexican Restaurant, Three Legged Dog Public House.
- Personal Service Provider** — Ash Creek Animal Clinic, Monmouth Fitness Center, Superior Cuts.
- Professional Services Provider** — Brandt's Sanitary Service, C Cable Realty, Itemizer-Observer, MAPS, Minet, Monmouth Power & Light, Oregon State Credit Union.

application, which was pretty lengthy. Then there was an essay. Then we had to get two letters of recommendation. Then we had an interview."

Anton liked it so much that he chose to continue even after the summer program ended, said Cleo Alvarez, his mom.

"As he was getting older, he's always seemed bent to do something in the medical field," she said.

That has only been confirmed by his work in the

hospital.

"I love the environment of the hospital itself and seeing all the people," Anton said. "Being a volunteer at the hospital, you see different kinds of people."

He leaves school on Wednesdays — a half day — and heads to the hospital where he does "a lot of things you wouldn't think need to be done."

"There's a lot of little tasks, for sure," Anton said. See **SERVICE**, Page 5A

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

LaCreole Middle School students will take viewers back to the origins of Peter Pan in their play, "Tick Tock."

»Page 15A

FALLS CITY

Falls City student-athletes will soon be decked out in new uniforms, thanks to a grant from the Trail Blazers.

»Page 3A

INDEPENDENCE

Fruit trees were planted close together in the Inspiration Garden at Mount Fir Park.

»Page 3A

MONMOUTH

Three juveniles were referred for 27 incidents of car break-ins from Feb. 19-21.

»Page 14A

SPORTS

Central boys basketball set to host play-in game tonight.

»Page 11A

Polk man charged with double murder

Itemizer-Observer staff report

SALEM — A man originally from Polk County was arrested in West Salem Saturday in connection with a double homicide in



Morris

Crooked River Ranch.

According to Oregon State Police,

the suspect in the alleged homicide, Mitchell Julio Morris, 20, was arrested Saturday morning without incident.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office responded to a report of shots fired at about 6:50 p.m. in the 9000 block of Southwest Sand Road in Crooked River Ranch. Deputies found two people dead, Bailee Ray Southwick, 18 and Mackenzie Lyman, 21.

They both lived at the location of the shooting and Morris was living with them at the time of the shooting.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue
Even if you can't make it to a local library, you can celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday through reading a book. All day. Free.	Meet Oregon author and illustrator Mark Fearing at the Dallas Public Library and learn about narrative, visual art. 4 p.m. Free.	Central High School's performance of "Once on this Island" opens tonight at the auditorium. 7:30 p.m. \$5-\$8.	Mid-Valley Christian Academy will host its annual dinner and auction at Central Baptist Church. Child care available. 5 p.m. \$20.	The Rickreall Grange Flea Market returns with fresh-baked goods, vendors, breakfast and lunch. Head to the grange. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free.	"The Intern" is the movie fundraiser this year for the Independence Friends of the Library. Tickets include popcorn. 7 p.m. \$15.	The TOPS club meets in the First Christian Church basement. The weight-loss group is open to anyone. 6 p.m. First is free.	
Rain Hi: 53 Lo: 44	Possible T-storms Hi: 58 Lo: 40	Rain Hi: 55 Lo: 44	Rain Hi: 56 Lo: 45	Rain Hi: 54 Lo: 43	Rain Hi: 52 Lo: 39	Rain Hi: 51 Lo: 42	