

Local & State

Gov. Brown won't propose tax increase on beer, cider in 2019

By Gary A. Wamer
WesCom News Service

With the election over, state political leaders are looking ahead to the 2019 session of the Legislature and jockeying for position on the issues likely to get the most attention. That and other news from around Salem:

No beer tax planned

Gov. Kate Brown will not propose a tax hike on beer and other alcohol when she submits her proposed state budget later this month. Brown said a beer tax is "off the table" during a Nov. 16 meeting with reporters. A 10-percent increase in taxes on beer and hard cider had been floated as a proposal by Oregon Health Authority officials as a way to help fund programs.

Brown said while she is rejecting that proposal, she may pursue a tax increase on tobacco products, which officials also suggested.

Richardson's health

The Salem Reporter website has reported that Secretary of State Dennis Richardson has told top state officials he has glioblastoma, an aggressive and fatal form of cancer. The report Friday also was carried by Pamplin Media newspapers and television stations, including KOIN-TV in Portland. Richardson has publicly stated he is fighting a brain tumor but has not been more specific. Richardson's office disputed

the report of what Richardson said to state officials but declined to say whether Richardson has glioblastoma. Brown's office also declined comment.

The state's lone Republican statewide officeholder, Richardson has recently handed off some of his key work, such as attending State Land Board meetings, to aides. If he were to step down, his replacement would be named by Brown. Glioblastoma is the same type of cancer that killed U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

Early risers

Legislators will get an early start next year, thanks to a change in law passed this year. The 80th Assembly of the Legislature will have its official opening Jan. 22, the day after the Martin Luther King holiday. That's earlier than its usual February start. Lawmakers made the switch after the long session in 2017 ran through the Fourth of July holiday. Now, the House and Senate are scheduled to wrap business in June.

Swear-in

Lawmakers will be sworn in Jan. 14, the same day Brown will be inaugurated. Bend will be represented by two freshman Republican lawmakers: Cheri Helt in House District 54 and Jack Zika in House District 53.

No left turn

In a victory for moderates, longtime Senate President

Peter Courtney, D-Salem, was re-elected as the Democrats' official candidate to continue in the position next year. With an 18-12 Democratic majority in the chamber, Courtney's victory is all but certain.

Courtney has faced pressure from the Senate's liberal wing, who don't like his moderating influence blocking or changing legislation that comes over from the Democratic-controlled House. In one instance, the House has passed legislation four times calling for Oregon to join a movement for a direct popular vote to elect the president in place of the Electoral College. The Senate has declined to take up the issue each time.

Having served for 34 years, Courtney is the Legislature's most senior lawmaker.

Right turn?

Rep. Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, has announced he will not lead the House Republicans in the upcoming sessions.

McLane, whose district includes part of Deschutes County, has been the GOP leader since 2012. He will retain his seat in the House.

The move is likely to set off a debate over whether the new leader should be more openly and conservatively combative than McLane. With Democrats holding a 38-22 supermajority, they no longer need Republican votes to pass tax and fiscal bills. One name surfacing

for the GOP job: Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, the conservative talk radio host-turned-lawmaker. His candidacy is being promoted by former Knute Buehler campaign spokesman and conservative firebrand Jonathan Lockwood, who is now a political consultant in Texas.

Deeper dive

If you look at the Nov. 6 election statistics, one jumps out — Buehler won just 22 percent of the vote in Multnomah County, which includes Portland. That's the lowest percentage of any Republican general election gubernatorial candidate in 20 years, according to Wilamette Week. The blowout comes despite Buehler moving his headquarters and temporary home to the Portland suburb of Tigard and running as a moderate abortion-rights, LGBTQ-rights Republican. Brown beat Buehler in the county by more than 190,000 votes, a huge bulge that helped carry her to statewide victory.

Multnomah, which includes about 20 percent of all registered voters in the state, gave 74 percent of its vote to Brown, the highest percentage of any county. Brown won only seven of 36 counties, but they include some with big (for Oregon) populations: Clatsop, Washington, Multnomah, Hood River, Lincoln, Benton and Lane.

In Baker County Buehler received 73 percent of the vote, Brown 19 percent.

Woman charged with animal neglect

Baker County Sheriff's deputies arrested a Baker City woman Wednesday on four charges of second-degree animal neglect.

Morgan Louise Davis, 29, of 1510 11th St., was taken into custody after deputies found four dogs and other animals left behind at her former home at 620 Front St. in Haines, which was unoccupied.

The dogs appeared thin and had no access to water, according to a Baker County Sheriff's Office press release. Also in the home were large amounts of garbage and the floor was covered with animal feces and urine, the press release stated. The odor from the house could be smelled from outside.

Water service for the home where the animals were found had been turned off in September of this year, according

to the reporting party. Davis had since moved to Baker City.

Deputies were first made aware of the situation on Tuesday after they received information that the animals at the property weren't being cared for.

After searching the property the next day, members of the Sheriff's Office seized the animals and then went to Davis' current residence and placed her under arrest. She remained in custody today at the Baker County Jail where she is being held in lieu of \$12,000 bail.

When officers first arrived at the home, they found several chickens loose in the front yard, which was littered with trash. Multiple dogs were visible inside through the front windows, the press release stated.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Winter sports workout class Nov. 28

A free workshop for people who want to get in shape for skiing and other winter sports is set for Wednesday, Nov. 28 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the YMCA Fitness Center, 3715 Pocahontas Road.

Kim Zinn, a physical therapist and certified athletic trainer, will present the workshop, which is open to ages 12 and older, and to YMCA members as well as non-members. Participants should wear workout clothes and bring a yoga mat if possible.

Zinn will demonstrate exercises designed to help you prepare for activities such as skiing, snowshoeing, snowboarding and even shoveling snow.

She will also explain trunk-strengthening exercises to encourage spine health and overall fitness, and discuss common winter injuries and how to prevent them.

To RSVP, call 541-523-9622 or stop by the Fitness Center.

LDS plans day of service on Dec. 1

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is inviting people to participate in the "Light The World" campaign, including a worldwide day of service on Dec. 1.

You can go to lighttheworld.org to learn about ways to share your time, talents and resources. You can also print a 4-week calendar containing ideas on ways to serve, starting with Dec. 1.

Mental health committee to meet

The Baker County Mental Health and Developmental Disability Advisory Committee/Local Alcohol and Drug Planning Committee will be meet at noon on Tuesday, Nov. 27.

The group will meet in the Total Health office building at the back of the hospital at 3325 Pocahontas Road. The committee will be discussing behavioral health and wellness, the developmental disability program and its schedule for 2019.

— Compiled from staff reports and press releases submitted to the Baker City Herald.

Oregon links investments to gun safety

SALEM (AP) — Oregon has joined a coalition of states intent on changing how they invest money in the firearms industry to push gun safety reforms.

The Statesman Journal reports the move by the Oregon State Treasury — which manages the multi-billion-dollar Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund — reflects an increased level of scrutiny for gun-related manufacturers not just from the halls of Congress, but from low-profile corners of state govern-

ment that seek to influence how the industry does business.

The coalition's investing principles support universal background checks, safer technology for firearms and training for gun retail employees.

The principles aren't a set of rules that forbid any investment in the industry. Instead, they are a broader framework for investors doing business with companies.

Oregon joins California, Connecticut, Florida, Maine and Maryland in the

coalition. In their entirety, member states manage more than \$4.8 trillion, much of it for government retirees.

The Oregon pension fund's investment in the firearms and munitions manufacturing sector is a tiny part of the state's overall portfolio — just a fraction of 1 percent. The fund has positions in four companies with a net value that was less than \$7 million in November 2017, when the state last ran a report on its holdings in the firearms sector.

BOAT RAMP

Continued from Page 1A

The Wallowa-Whitman ended up receiving \$200,000 from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and \$75,000 from the Marine Board for the project, which started earlier this month.

The contractor, HP Civil Inc. of Stayton, is on schedule to finish the new ramp by Dec. 15, Plummer said.

The ramp — grooved concrete rather than asphalt — will be about 430 feet long, 20 feet wide and 6 inches thick, he said.

The ramp extends as far into the reservoir as the previous ramp.

John Anderson of Baker City said he was pleased to learn that the Mason Dam ramp, which is on the north shore of the reservoir just off Highway 7 about 15 miles southwest of Baker City, is being replaced.

Anderson said he sent a complaint letter to the Marine Board a few years ago after seeing how dilapidated the asphalt had become.

"I couldn't imagine anyone wanting to put a boat in there after the water got low," Ander-

son said.

Plummer said the Mason Dam ramp is unique in that it's usable even when the reservoir recedes substantially. The other ramps, at the Wallowa-Whitman's Union Creek and Southwest Shore campgrounds, are stranded well above the water when the reservoir drops as low as it has during this year of drought.

The Mason Dam ramp's other advantage is that it's open year-round — the Union Creek Campground ramp, by contrast, is closed during the fall, winter and part of spring.

Phillips Reservoir is holding

about 5,800 acre-feet of water now — about 8 percent of its capacity.

"This was a great year to put (the new ramp) in because the water level is so low," Plummer said.

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