

Local & State

Lawmakers could boost their pay

■ Bill would boost legislators' annual salary by almost \$20,000, a 63-percent hike

SALEM (AP) — Oregon lawmakers are considering raising their annual pay by nearly \$20,000, a move the sponsors say will attract more diverse candidates to the statehouse.

"We're a diverse state, we need a diverse Legislature," Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, one of the legislators leading the effort, told Oregon Public Broadcasting. "Because of the low pay, we are automatically screening out people who really should be represented here."

The move comes only a few weeks after a 28 percent legislative pay raise went into effect on Feb. 1. Lawmakers were not behind that raise,

"This is public service. But if it gets to the point where you can't feed your family, that's where the problem is"

— Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick

and the increase was tied to collective bargaining agreements that affected nearly 40,000 state employees.

Legislators now make \$31,200, plus an extra \$149 a day when the Legislature is in session every other year.

Burdick, a Democrat from Portland, said that the current pay isn't a living wage and makes it more likely that retirees or indepen-

dently wealthy candidates pursue office. She noted that legislators make far less than some city and county elected officials.

She's proposing a measure that would raise wages by 63 percent, to more than \$50,000 per year. That would make Oregon's Legislature one of the highest paid in the country, compared to other statehouses with lawmakers working for a similar amount of time.

But it's unclear if the state has the money to fund a salary bump. The most recent pay raise will cost Oregon \$1.6 million every two years, and the increase floated in the proposal will be much

more.

State budget leaders have already called for cuts across nearly all state programs, and are trying to dig deep to come up with more money for schools and health care.

Still, Burdick is undeterred. And although she concedes that the plan will likely be politically unpopular, she maintains that it's necessary to create a well-rounded statehouse that better reflects state demographics.

"This is not a get-rich-quick scheme down here," she said. "This is public service. But if it gets to the point where you can't feed your family, that's where the problem is."

LOCAL BRIEFING

Conner Cline completes basic training

SAN ANTONIO — U.S. Air Force Airman Conner J. Cline of Baker City has graduated from basic military training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.



Cline

The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical fitness, and basic warfare principles and skills.

Airmen who complete basic training also earn four credits toward an associate in applied science degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Cline is the son of Lance and Shauna Cline of Baker City. He is a 2018 graduate of Baker High School.

Mounted Posse collects cowboy boots

The Baker County Mounted Posse is collecting cowboy boots to replace those lost when the Posse's cargo trailer was stolen and burned in Baker City in late February.

The kids who participate in the Posse's annual Trail Ride must wear cowboy boots if they ride a horse. The Posse provides boots to kids who don't have a pair. The Posse is collecting boots in sizes 6 to 14.

Boots can be dropped off at Step Forward Activities, 3720 10th St. (across from The Little Pig).

More information is available by calling Jodie Radabaugh at 541-524-9358 or at Step Forward, 541-523-7475.

Ladies Golf and Bridge luncheon April 3

The Baker Ladies Golf and Bridge association will have its season-opening luncheon on Wednesday, April 3 at Quail Ridge Golf Course. Weather permitting, golf will start at 8:30 a.m., with lunch at 12:30 p.m. followed by bridge. Cost is \$9 for lunch, a one-time charge of \$5 for the membership fee and \$1 for the social club fee.

To reserve a place for lunch, call Dianne Ellingson at 541-523-4553 or 541-519-4703 by Tuesday, April 2.

Mothers of preschoolers plan yard sale

The annual yard sale for MOPS — Mothers of Pre Schoolers — is set for April 13 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Nazarene Family Life Center, 1250 Hughes Lane. Spots are available for tables, at \$10 per space, and MOPS asks that people who have a table donate 10 percent of their proceeds to the organization.

More information is available by calling Kimberley Godes at 541-403-3174.

Use recycled items for artwork

Ginger Rembold will offer a kids' class during spring break that uses recycled items to create flowers and critters. This one-day workshop will be Friday, March 29, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Crossroads. Cost is \$10 for members, \$15 for nonmembers, or \$25 for a family of three or more.

Students should bring recyclables to share and a creative mind. To register, call 541-523-5369, visit the art center at 2020 Auburn Ave., or go online to www.crossroads-arts.org.

BMS soliciting donations for spring carnival

The Baker Middle School Leadership class is soliciting donated items, and cash contributions, for its annual Spring Carnival on April 19. The event is the primary fundraiser for BMS students.

Donations can be brought to BMS, 2320 Washington Ave., or students will be collecting donations the week of April 15. More information is available by calling Jebron Jones, Leadership teacher, at 541-524-2500.

'The Bully Project' to be shown March 29

A free screening of the film "The Bully Project," for ages 13 and older, is planned for Friday, March 29 at 7 p.m. at the Churchill School, 16th and Broadway streets.

New Directions Northwest, along with the Baker County Safe Communities Coalition, is hosting the screening of the documentary that examines how bullying has affected five children and their families.

One in five students report being bullied, according to surveys. Bullying can involve physical violence, verbal abuse and social isolation that can contribute to low self-esteem, anxiety and depression.

More information about the movie screening is available by calling Leigh Ratterman, mental health promotion and prevention coordinator at New Directions Northwest, at 541-524-9086, or by email, lratterman@ndninc.org

— Compiled from staff reports and press releases

GOATS

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Her goat herd has grown since that first 4-H project. When they first started milking, a crew of 12 spent 13 hours a day in a converted barn to milk 250 goats.

Several years ago, the Roveys embraced technology and invested in a barn that is 525 feet long and 80 feet wide. It can hold 1,000 goats, and has curtains that automatically roll up to maintain an ideal temperature.

They also built a new milking parlor using a GEA goat rotary — the only one of its kind in the United States.

Now they can milk 300 goats in an hour.

"We have to be efficient in agriculture, we have to," she said.

When a goat enters the machine, a sensor dispenses grain and a scanner reads the electronic ID. An employee attaches inflations to the udder as the goats circle past at a rate of 3.8 seconds. The machine senses when the milk slows and automatically releases the inflations.

The milk flows into a stainless steel milk line into a 5,000 gallon bulk tank where it is cooled from 101.5 degrees to below 40 degrees.

"The milk is never ever

touching human hands or air," Rovey said.

She sells the milk to Laura Chenel Chevre, a company in Sonoma, California, that produces cheese and yogurt. Its products are available at grocery stores in the Northwest.

The milk is collected twice a week and tested for antibiotics and bacteria. She ships about 1,000 gallons each week.

A computer in the bulk tank room tracks data for the milk collection and also monitors the tank temperature. If there is a problem, an alarm sounds on the Roveys' phones.

"That way we avoid catastrophe," she said.

When asked if her family drinks goat milk at home, she laughs — with five young boys who go through 12 gallons of milk in a week, she uses both goat and cow milk.

To wrap up the school tour, Rovey brought out a tray of crackers and goat cheese so everyone could try a taste. She also explained how, on the diverse farm she runs with her husband, she needs to know biology, chemistry, accounting and more in an ever-changing world.

"You can't stop learning, ever," she said.

ROAD

Continued from Page 1A

Rep. Lynn Findley, whose district includes Baker City, is a member of the committee.

The bill does include a system of providing grants to help with retrofitting or replacing vehicles. The grant money would include the amount remaining from the \$53 million the state was awarded in a 2016 settlement with Volkswagen. It is not clear how much, if any, of that money would go to Baker County. Findley says that the \$30 million to \$40 million remaining from the Volkswagen fund would disappear quickly with this bill because some of the vehicles that would need to be replaced cost well over \$100,000.

Smith says the county could possibly benefit from that money, but it will be highly competitive for coun-

'The bill is going to be hard on most of Oregon's counties.'

— County Roadmaster Jeff Smith

ties not in the Portland area.

The bill would likely have great impact on rural Oregon governments because many of them purchase their vehicles from the Oregon Department of Transportation and are mostly from the 1990s and early 2000s. Many counties, such as Baker, can only afford to replace one or two vehicles a year due to the size of their tax base.

The bill states that the Department of Environmental Quality will consider a number of factors when awarding grants including: if it would benefit sensitive populations or areas, if the applicant is a "disadvantaged business enterprise," if the project is supported by the community,

if the vehicles have at least three years of useful life remaining, if they involve small fleets and more. Oregon defines a disadvantaged business enterprise as a business that is owned by more than 51 percent of individuals who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

There are exemptions in the bill for vehicles only used for farming and other agricultural operations as well as training vehicles. Findley says he would like to see an amendment to the bill that would exempt public works and road departments for municipalities in the state. Smith said that it is hard to tell what the effect of the bill could be in Baker because it could be amended.

"The bill is going to be hard on most of Oregon's counties," said Smith.

Supporters of the bill say that the effects on air quality from diesel can be felt across

the state, but Findley would like to see if there is data to support that statement.

Multiple lawmakers say the bill is meant to address a problem that is mostly present in Portland. Of the bill's 14 sponsors, all of them represent districts in the Willamette Valley. Findley says that he has requested data from the Department of Environmental Quality that will indicate where air quality is mostly affected by traffic.

Findley says that Eastern Oregon residents should be worried about the current version of the bill. Findley says he is in favor of reducing carbon emissions as long as the economic viability of such a bill is considered.

Despite his opposition to the current version of the bill, Findley says he has compassion for those who are affected by air quality issues caused by diesel.

Bloodmobile to visit Baker

The American Red Cross will bring its Bloodmobile to Baker City on April 1.

Blood will be drawn from noon to 6 p.m. at the Calvary Baptist Church, 3910 Broadway St.

To make an appointment, cancel or reschedule, call Myrna Evans at 541-523-5368.

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