

## Veterans

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"You thought you may never get to this day, so it's incredibly exciting to be a part of something like this," Tobiason said Thursday. "It's kind of mind blowing to have witnessed the county and the city and the citizens work on this project."

The village will be the first of its kind in Central Oregon, and is largely possible thanks to House Bill 4212, which passed the state Legislature this summer and allows local governments to create emergency shelters without having to go through the regular land use process, which can be costly, takes a long time to review and requires public comment periods.

The village is also possible thanks to a mix of funding that comes from Deschutes County, the city of Bend and individual donations, Tobiason said. About half of the project is funded so far, which will be enough to build the 15 tiny homes in phases over the course of three months.

The foundation still needs funding for a 2,500-square-foot community building, which would have communal dining and showering facilities, said Tobiason.

It will take \$300,000 a year to operate, Tobiason said. His vision is to have the city, the county and private donations pay each a third for it. So far, the county has contributed \$100,000, and the city has established a construction excise tax, which will generate revenue from commercial building permits over time.

Central Oregon Veterans Outreach will be the organization managing the housing,



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Employees with York Bros. Excavation level an area of soil at the Central Oregon Veterans Village project currently under construction in Bend.

and helping residents connect with services.

Kathy Skidmore, the executive officer of the organization, said the nonprofit is looking forward to the village coming online, especially since she has seen first hand this year how housing-first programs for homeless veterans are effective.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Central Oregon Veterans Outreach used special state money to put vulnera-

ble homeless veterans in hotel rooms. Having more veterans in a shelter enabled the nonprofit to find permanent housing for more veterans, Skidmore said.

Central Oregon Veterans Outreach was able to find permanent housing for 40% of the 57 veterans it housed in hotels, Skidmore said — a rate that is much higher than usual.

Part of it comes down to improved communication, said

J.W. Terry, executive director of the veterans organization. Many homeless people don't have phones, or if they do they have limited minutes, making regular communication about connecting with services difficult.

But even more than that, giving someone regular shelter strips away the chaos and stress that comes with living without shelter, Skidmore added.

"When you feel safe, you feel healthier. You can focus on

things to improve and not just survive day to day," Skidmore said.

The project has been met with objections, however. In emails to the Bend City Council sent in the fall, some residents of the adjacent neighborhood expressed concerns about how homeless people could affect their comfort and safety.

In 2019, the Chestnut Park neighborhood experienced

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— Kathy Skidmore, executive officer of Central Oregon Veterans Outreach

issues. It is next to the warming shelter that was held at the county's public safety campus, said Annette Wilson Christensen, a resident of the neighborhood.

"While all of us recognize the tremendous need for the warming shelter, the neighborhood's experience was negative: trash was left all along Poe Sholes (Drive), people knocked at the day care center mistaking it as a place for food, and garbage cans were (rifled) throughout the entire neighborhood over to Harvest Park," Christensen wrote in an email. "The overflow of homeless people had a real impact on our livability and sense of safety. How will the area outside of the Village be patrolled?"

Bend City Councilor Barb Campbell, who has been a proponent of the village project for over four years, said she understands people's concerns.

Campbell said she believes that when you give someone a home and a community they will want to take ownership and take care of it, and in turn, be motivated to be good neighbors.

"I really do believe that most of our homeless population are folks who would like to be a part of the community," Campbell said. "They don't want to feel like outcasts."

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## Trump faces mounting demands to leave office or face impeachment

The Washington Post — WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is facing mounting pressure for his immediate ouster after he incited Wednesday's violent siege at the Capitol — an increasingly louder drumbeat chastising his actions that threatens not only to imperil Trump's waning tenure but also potential legal jeopardy once he leaves office.

In Congress, a growing cadre of House Democrats are pushing to rapidly impeach Trump a second time before he is scheduled to leave office on Jan. 20. They are preparing to introduce articles charging him with inciting an insurrection and having "gravely endangered the security of the United States" and its institutions.

In public, Trump has come as close as he is likely to come to admitting he has lost, acknowledging there will be a transfer of power and confirming Friday that he will not attend President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration. But in private, the president has tried to rationalize his actions, saying he wanted only to encourage a large protest that garnered news coverage and rattle members of Congress — not for his supporters to actually storm the Capitol in the worst breach of its security since the War of 1812.

Legal advisers to the president and his allies expressed increasing concern about possible criminal liability in the wake of Wednesday's melee, according to a person familiar with the conversations.

## Madras

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Jefferson County recently bought the property from ODOT for \$205,629 with the intent to sell or lease the space for immediate development.

Jeff Rasmussen, administrative officer for Jefferson County, said the county is open to a broad range of possibilities for the property, including a retail, dining or office space.

A meeting is scheduled Jan. 12 for interested parties, and a suggested deadline for proposals is Feb. 4. Proposals can be submitted through the project website.

The county hopes to select a developer by March 24.

"If you have a great idea that would make a project work, we are interested," Rasmussen said.

Nick Snead, Madras community development director, said the city is working closely with the county to find the right developer for the property.

Snead said the property is suited for a restaurant, deli or a mixed-use space for multiple businesses. But Snead does not want to limit ideas.

"There may be some use that we don't know about that

actually makes sense," Snead said.

No matter what the property becomes, it is important that it meets design standards and is appealing as a gateway to the city, Snead said. The city wants buildings that don't look industrial and have creative elements, such as covered entrances, he said.

"We want development that reflects the way we think about our great community," Snead said.

Jefferson County Commissioner Wayne Fording, who owns Madras Paint & Glass just south of the "Y" property, said he wondered what ODOT would do with the property and was pleased to see the county take ownership.

Before ODOT bought the property, it was used as an administration office for the Crooked River National Grassland, Fording said.

Fording is eager to find out who wants to develop the property.

"I will be really interested to see what kind of interest there is in it," he said. "Hopefully we'll find a nice project that suits that end of town and makes that gateway look nice."

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## Wyden

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"We're going to get \$2,000 checks out to Americans as soon as we can," Wyden said. "We're going to get those \$600 federal unemployment benefits back. We've got folks who are hurting desperately — they're not able to pay their rent, buy their groceries, get medicine for their kids."

Wyden said the political change in Washington, D.C., will reveal the reality that Wyden said Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky, have tried to hide: The COVID-19 crisis is deep, hard and won't be under control for months, even a year.

"These safety net issues are so essential, they should not depend on whim of one political person," Wyden said of McConnell. "There was a strategy before not to admit how bad things are."

Congress is ready to help Biden lift the fog of conflicting policies and statements about the pandemic that has killed more than 367,000 Americans. Democrats believe they will get significant Republican support for a major push to get vaccines created, transported and into the arms of Americans as swiftly as possible.

"Deployment without delays," Wyden said.

Because President Trump at first dismissed, then downplayed the exploding spread of the virus, Wyden said, Trump could never get beyond what the crisis meant to him personally. The national response became politicized. When Trump himself was infected, he was given emergency treatment using rare medicines that allow for a swift recovery. Instead of being chastened by his brush with COVID, Trump told Americans not to let it control their lives, and he personally rarely wore a mask.

"People can have widely different political philosophies, but will come together when they see a way to get a job done."

— Sen. Ron. Wyden, D-Ore.

Even when the Trump-initiated Operation Warp Speed helped scientists create two vaccines in less than a year, with more to come, Trump was still holding parties and large rallies with supporters who did not wear masks, spreading the infection.

"He didn't want to do the hard work needed," Wyden said of a national fight against COVID-19.

One of the hardest challenges will be to level with Americans that COVID-19 will kill more people and cripple more businesses for much of 2021. In a separate press call on Friday, Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen said the limited amount of vaccine and the priority list of who should get the shot means that many in the state will have to wait until as late as autumn of this year for their turn. Other estimates have pushed the date into 2022.

"It is hard to turn away from the reality," Wyden said. "The fact is we have a coronavirus spike that is greater than spring. We're starting to get projections of other mutations of the virus."

Wyden said that's why aid programs need to be untethered to artificial end dates created by guesses on how bad the situation will be months or a year down the road.

"You don't want people constantly worried about what is next," Wyden said.

Wyden said that on a practical level, that means federal aid to people, businesses, cities and states will be needed for as long as it takes.

Wyden will mark 25 years in the Senate in February. At 71 years old, he announced recently his plan to seek another six-year term in 2022. Wyden

said the reason is simple: "There is so much to do."

Other items on his personal legislative agenda include reviving a bipartisan effort to limit prescription drug prices and making mental health care easier to obtain, particularly in rural areas like Central and Eastern Oregon.

"People can have widely different political philosophies, but will come together when they see a way to get a job done," Wyden said.

Wyden also hopes to continue his efforts to ensure the security and apolitical direction of the nation's intelligence agencies.

The Senate operates based on seniority, and by running again in 2022, he says a little state can have a big presence on Capitol Hill. He pointed to his ability to get answers on the allocation of COVID-19 vaccines.

"There have been questions if Oregon is getting its fair share," he said.

Democrats' ability to get their objectives through Congress and on to Biden's desk rely on fragile majorities in the Senate and House.

With the twin victories of Democrats Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff in Georgia's two U.S. Senate races on Tuesday, the Senate will have a 50-50 split between Democrats and Republicans. The vice president is the president of the Senate and can cast a tie-breaking vote when necessary. Democrats will become chairs of the committees — Wyden will lead the Senate Finance Committee.

Enjoying good relationships with Republicans means finding common ground based on shared principles — that

usually leads to better legislation, Wyden said. But it is not a catch-all.

"It's not just agree to agree." Wyden said he is ready to work with the Oregon delegation's newest member, U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario. Bentz joined a splinter group of Republicans to challenge some of the Electoral College votes this week, the focus of the riots at the Capitol.

Asked about Bentz's position and any linkage with the Trump supporters' rampage, Wyden said that's a private matter.

"The Oregon delegation has a history of not commenting on members' votes," Wyden said. "I have worked with Rep. Bentz when he was in the Legislature and talked with him about crucial economic issues facing Oregon. There are many issues on which there can be common ground, like energy and natural resources."

Wyden is well aware that historically, the party of the president loses seats in the House during midterm elections. On the Senate side, 34 of the 100 seats are on the ballot in 2022. While the electoral map gives Democrats a strong chance to add to their majority, any unexpected losses would throw the Senate back to Republicans.

While hoping voters' reactions to the chaos under Trump and McConnell will help Democrats hold off any losses, the reality is they have two years to get their priorities enacted before the elections change the math.

There's a simple rule, Wyden said, to making the 21 months until the next election as good as they can be for Democrats and, Wyden says, for his constituents in Oregon.

"We need to stick to issues that, in a straightforward way, respond to needs of working people," Wyden said.

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