

BRACKETS ARE BACK

SPORTS PULLOUT, A5-8

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

- OREGON No. 6 seed (Alamo Region)
- OREGON STATE No. 8 seed (Hemisfair Region)

MEN'S TOURNAMENT: BEAVERS' BID IS THEIR 2ND IN 31 YEARS

The Bulletin

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A QUESTION OF BASIC NEEDS

Bend homeless camp cleanups spark conversation



Rebecca Hall holds her dog back as she eats a burrito that was donated to her at a homeless community on Hunnell Road in Bend on Thursday. Dean Guernsey/Bulletin photos

BY BRENNA VISSER
The Bulletin

Rejena Wenciker has lived on Hunnell Road in north Bend in her RV for the past two years.

Before a few months ago, tasks like taking care of trash and finding a place to go to the bathroom were a daily struggle, she said. But two recently added amenities have made her life just a little bit easier: a dumpster and a portable toilet.

"They make our lives a lot better," Wenciker said.

One of the most frequent complaints public agencies hear about when it comes to local homeless camps is about trash. Complaints about trash often prompt cleanup or camp-removal efforts, most recently on land owned by the Oregon Department of Transportation. They cost lots of time and resources: the last one at the highway interchange at Revere Avenue cost \$18,000, according to ODOT.

For some advocates for the homeless, who have been making their case through public comments over several Bend City Council meetings, the answer to this problem seems simple: bring portable toilets and dumpsters to camps.

The camp at Hunnell Road, which has dozens of cars and RVs parked along it, is unusual because it has both a dumpster, provided by the city of Bend, and a portable toilet, provided by the non-



Danny Taylor with Little John's Portable Toilets Inc. maintains the facilities at a homeless community on Hunnell Road in Bend.



Kurt Axell and Jackie Capasso appreciate the amenities offered to homeless people on Hunnell Road in Bend.

profit Community Shower Truck. The two amenities are intended to help address trash concerns and provide basic hygienic services to people who find themselves with few options for shelter in the region.

But the city, ODOT and social service providers say the solution is more complicated than it appears.

Amenities help people

The situation at Hunnell Road, along with two

cleanup operations on Oregon Department of Transportation properties last week near Murphy Road and Revere Avenue, have brought the issue of homeless camps and how they should be managed to the forefront.

ODOT has argued the cleanups are necessary, after receiving numerous complaints from neighbors concerned about trash, crime and fire risks that come with open fires near neighborhoods.

The cleanups, which have been occurring for months, have energized homeless advocates, who argue such actions are ineffective and destabilizing for those who live in the camps.

But one common concern public agencies and social service providers have revolves around management.

See **Homeless** / A14

SALEM

Legislative logjam rolls on toward do-or-die Friday

BY GARY A. WARNER

Oregon Capital Bureau

With a third of the session gone, the Oregon Legislature has 4,000 bills on its plate, with House Republicans using a parliamentary slow-down to delay legislation already running late because of COVID-19.

About 90 committees are scheduled to meet this week, and the House and Senate have each scheduled floor sessions. A busy week, but also one that will push a big portion of the logjam into the legislative abyss.

Friday is 'do-or-die' deadline

The logjam will get looser this Friday with the first "witching hour," the Legislature's self-imposed deadlines for most bills to move or die. Most policy bills that are not scheduled for a work session by Friday go into the trash can for this year's regular session.

The deadline does not affect budget bills or those in "safe harbor" committees such as Rules or Ways & Means, which are exempt from the time rules. The size of the cull won't be known until Monday when the chief clerks of each chamber will have a list of surviving bills.

More bills will fall away on April 13, the deadline for those work sessions — where committees amend and vote on bills.

See **Legislature** / A14

'GREATER IDAHO'

'A million questions, for sure,' about moving border

Jefferson County officials meet over movement that would redraw state boundaries

BY PAT KRUIS

Oregon Capital Bureau

As voters demanded, Jefferson County commissioners have explored the possibility of the county leaving Oregon and joining Idaho, along with other Oregon counties east of the Cascades.

The county's voters in November passed a measure that requires commissioners to discuss the issue twice a year.

"There's a million questions, for sure," said Kelly Simmelink, Jefferson County Commission chair.

Chris Taylor of the Move Oregon's Border campaign argued why it's worthwhile to tackle those million questions. "Unfortunately, the boundary between Oregon and Idaho is really outdated because it doesn't match the cultural boundary between people who like Portland and Salem's leadership and people who don't."

Despite any support or votes in Oregon counties, the idea would need the approval of the legislatures in Oregon and Idaho. If a portion of California is included, that legislature would have to approve the idea too. Approval by Congress would also be required.

See **Border** / A4

