

ROADS

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that National Environmental Policy Act reviews either were not done, did not specifically cite the roads to be closed, or lacked the required public notice.

Geiger and others in the group pressed the Court to send a letter – a draft was submitted to the Court earlier – to declare the Forest Service in violation. They want the agency to rescind the order for all Grant County roads.

The Court resisted that move, with County Judge Scott Myers calling it “premature.”

“I’m not willing to sign a letter at this point,” Myers said.

He said the Court is awaiting a report from Beverlin on the order, how the agency will proceed with the closures, and whether the roads were legally closed.

Board members said the

failure to take the order to the Court and sheriff first made the closures illegal.

Sproul questioned what support the Court has found for the closures, noting the opponents were evident, right there in the room.

Commissioner Boyd Britton, while lauding the committee for doing a great job, said he believes Beverlin will review the road orders and report back to the Court.

The meeting included some verbal sparring over who was in charge, the Court or the board, and the Court cautioned one member who interrupted Beverlin with a loud aside about getting a shovel.

Commissioner Chris Labhart said he’d like to have a separate meeting to focus on the issues, and review maps of the area.

“This isn’t working,” he said of including the issue on the regular agenda. “We’re trying to work together on this, and keep it civil.”

BROWN

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The governor’s fall

After a tumultuous week, Kitzhaber, 67, announced his resignation in a news release.

In his statement, he was critical of the news media and legislative leaders who had called publicly for his resignation.

“I must also say that it is deeply troubling to me to realize that we have come to a place in the history of this great state of ours where a person can be charged, tried, convicted and sentenced by the media with no due process and no independent verification of the allegations involved,” he said. “But even more troubling – and on a very personal level as someone who has given 35 years of

public service to Oregon – is that so many of my former allies in common cause have been willing to simply accept this judgment at its face value.

“It is something that is hard for me to comprehend – something we might expect in Washington, D.C., but surely not in Oregon.”

Since Oct. 8, when Willamette Week first reported Hayes’ efforts to use her position as honorary first lady on behalf of her private consulting business, there has been a steady stream of new disclosures.

They were not enough to deter Kitzhaber’s re-election Nov. 4, although his once-commanding lead over Republican Dennis Richardson, a conservative state representative from Southern Oregon, had dropped sharply.

The course of events changed with a Jan. 27 story by the EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group Capital Bureau about \$118,000 that Hayes received for consulting work that she would not discuss. Other

news organizations then reported that Hayes apparently did not report that income on tax returns that had been released to them.

Kitzhaber then declared at a Jan. 30 news conference that Hayes would no longer have a policy or political role in his administration. But his appearance and responses raised more questions.

The investigations

Kitzhaber and Hayes face an investigation by Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and a possible probe by the Oregon Ethics Commission.

In his statement Friday, Kitzhaber said they would cooperate with those probes.

Rosenblum issued her own statement, saying the resignation would not affect the ongoing criminal investigation.

“Oregonians deserve nothing less than a full and fair investigation of all the facts, as well as the opportunity to reach a resolution that will truly allow our

state to move forward,” she said.

The pressure intensified further last week as officials confirmed that the U.S attorney for Oregon has subpoenaed emails and other documents of Kitzhaber, Hayes and several organizations that paid Hayes for consulting services. The subpoena also covers records relating to 15 other state employees, across 11 state agencies.

The Oregon Department of Administrative Services received a subpoena for the records just hours after Kitzhaber announced his plan to resign, agency spokesman Matt Shelby wrote in an email.

The subpoena is a preliminary step toward a meeting of a federal grand jury, which wants the materials by March 10.

The list of subpoenaed records is lengthy, but they focus on dealings that Hayes and her consulting firm had with the state going back to Jan. 1, 2009, more than two years before Kitzhaber took office for a third term in 2011.

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MILL

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The Dodge family owns Blue Mountain Lumber Products at Reith and Boardman Chip Co., as well as logging and cattle operations in Northeastern Oregon.

Porter said the company seems to be moving right along with permits and other preliminary work. Even with the opening date uncertain, the company has

put two local people to work on the set-up, he said.

Just seeing activity at the industrial site is a boost for the town, Porter said.

“If you had asked me back at Thanksgiving about the prospects for the industry returning to Long Creek, I would have said not good,” he said.

Porter said when he became mayor about nine years ago, Long Creek’s business future looked dire.

“No restaurant, no store, no gas, nothing,” he said. “We didn’t even have a vending machine in town – you couldn’t buy a Coke.”

Today, the town – population 190 – has two stores, a restaurant, and a gas station, in addition to the motel, a longtime landmark.

Leslie Barnett, owner of the Long Creek Lodge, said people are feeling really positive about the mill plan. Even a few jobs can

have a big impact in Long Creek, she noted.


Barnett said the motel already has seen a benefit as workers have stayed there this winter.

“They’ve been great – they seem like really good neighbors,” she said.

The new mill opportunity comes on top of other jobs gained when the Grant County Road Department reopened its shop in Long Creek, and the North Fork John Day Watershed Council established its headquarters there.

The development of the plant coincides with increasing activity on the Malheur National Forest, which launched a 10-year stewardship plan and accelerated restoration work last year. The forest staff is rolling out new landscape-scale projects that are expected to produce abundant small-wood materials.

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Dr. Monticelli completed his training at the University of Colorado and practiced in Eugene for 16 years before moving to Central Oregon. Dr. Winters trained at the University of Oklahoma and recently completed his fellowship at Fletcher Allen Health Care at the University of Vermont. Koehler received her masters of physician assistant studies from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and worked for a practice in Medford before moving to Bend.

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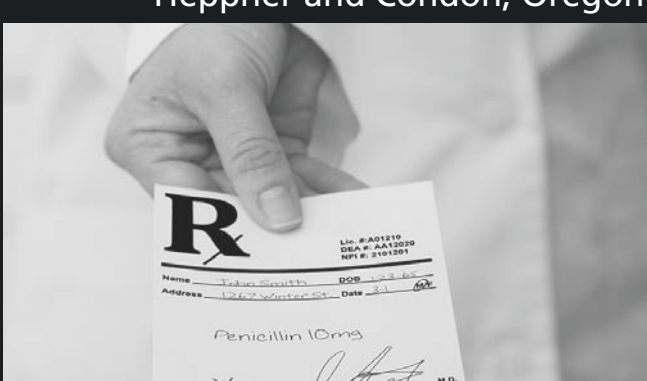
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