

# Wage rules require employers to track workers

By Paris Achen  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Proposed rules for Oregon's new three-tiered, regional minimum wage law would require employers to pay employees based on where the employee actually works.

Starting in 2017, employers will have to track not only the hours their employees work but also the location, under the draft rules. Employees who work for more than four hours per week in another region would earn that region's wage for those hours.

"Let's say they just did a brief meeting or a short job that took less than four hours, they would get the same pay. If they do more than four hours, say they do half of the week in one region and half of the week in another region, then they would have to pay two separate rates," said Paloma Sparks, legislative director

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Paloma Sparks

Legislative director for the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

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The agency will hold a public hearing at 2 p.m. April 25 at the Portland State Office Building, Room 1B, 800 N.E. Oregon St. The agency also will accept comments until May 22. The agency expects to finalize the rules by June.

The first-of-its-kind law takes effect July 1, bumping up the state's minimum wage from \$9.25 to \$9.75 statewide. In 2017, wage increases will diverge according to region. By 2022, wages will reach \$14.75 in the Portland area, \$12.50 in most rural and coastal counties and \$13.50 in the rest of the state.

That's when the proposed rules could become complicated for some employers.

For example, an employee who works in Salem for 35 hours and in Portland for five hours per week in 2017 would earn \$10.25 per hour for the time in Salem and \$11.25 per hour for the time in Portland.

The new law, passed in February, directed the labor bureau to make the rules relating to employer location.

Determining how to pay employees who work in different locations is the main issue the agency is trying to resolve with the rules, Sparks said.

An advisory committee has helped to shape the rules. There is

little agreement about how the regional wage should be determined, Sparks said.

"The worker advocates would like the threshold to be a lot lower, like one hour; employer advocates would like it to be where the employer is located. There is not a lot of meeting in the middle," Sparks said.

Committee members are the NW Grocery Associations, Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Association of Nurseries, Association of Oregon Industries, Oregon Business Association, PCUN, AFL-CIO, Family Forward, SEIU, CAU-

SA and Oregon Center for Public Policy. Representatives from the offices of Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, and Rep. Paul Holvey, D-Eugene, serve on the committee.

Under the law, the minimum gradually climbs to \$14.75 in 2022 in the Portland urban growth boundary, which includes parts of Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties. It will rise to \$13.50 in Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Deschutes, Hood River, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, Wasco and Yamhill counties, and parts of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties outside Portland's urban growth boundary.

In rural areas, the wage increases to \$12.50. Those areas include Malheur, Lake, Harney, Wheeler, Sherman, Gilliam, Wallowa, Grant, Jefferson, Baker, Union, Crook, Klamath, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Umatilla and Morrow counties.

## Deadline extended for Title II project proposals

Blue Mountain Eagle

The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has confirmed seven new members of the Northeast Oregon Forests Resource Advisory Committee.

The NEOFrac now has full membership and will convene in June 2016 to recommend project proposals to improve or restore national forests in the Blue Mountains. The NEOFrac

meeting will be held at the John Day Airport in June. More details will be released when a final date and meeting agenda is determined.

Year-two Title II proposals were originally due on April 1, but the deadline has been extended to April 22.

Nonprofit organizations, local governments and others are encouraged to pro-

pose projects that restore watersheds, decommission or maintain roads, control noxious weeds, enhance recreational experiences or otherwise improve the condition of the forest. Proposed projects do not need to be implemented on Forest



Service lands, but must show a benefit to national forest resources.

Application forms, instructions and submission guidelines can be

found online at [www.fs.usda.gov/main/wallowa-whitman/workingtogether/advisorycommittees](http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/wallowa-whitman/workingtogether/advisorycommittees). New Title II projects must be initiated by Sept. 30, 2017, and all Title II funds must be obligated by Sept. 30, 2018.

For more information, contact Susan Garner, [sgarner@fs.fed.us](mailto:sgarner@fs.fed.us), 541-575-3039.

## County geographic "squaw" references renamed

Blue Mountain Eagle

The federal agency responsible for naming natural features has changed 13 names in Grant County that contained the word "squaw."

Thursday, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names approved five names proposed by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and seven proposed by the Grant County Court as alternatives to the tribal proposals, according to Oregon Geographic Names Board President Phil Cogswell.

One replacement name — Wewa

Creek after a notable Paiute chief — was supported by the county and the tribes, he said.

"It appears that the BGN took into account both tribal and county concerns as it made its decision from two competing lists," Cogswell said after he was notified of the federal action.

The Oregon board, an affiliate of the Oregon Historical Society, assists the federal board in reviewing proposals for Oregon and makes recommendations on them. Neither board initiates proposals, but rather, they deal with those received from individuals or entities.

Cogswell said the Grant County changes are part of a process of changing "squaw" names that began in Oregon in the mid-1990s and has led to more than 80 names being changed in Oregon and more than 250 nationally on the basis that many American Indian people consider the word offensive and derogatory.

In all, the U.S. board action affects the names of one rock, three meadows and nine streams in the county.

The next edition of the *Blue Mountain Eagle* will include a map detailing the new names for the locations in Grant County.

## Prescribed burns planned in Malheur National Forest

Blue Mountain Eagle

Malheur National Forest fire managers are evaluating conditions for conducting prescribed burns across the forest this spring.

As part of Malheur's hazardous fuels reduction program, each of the three districts are preparing for spring landscape prescribed burning in various areas of the forest.

Burning planned may include these units:

- Emigrant Creek Ranger District: Dairy and George.
- Prairie City Ranger District: Knox.
- Blue Mountain Ranger District: Crawford Creek, Balance, Damon and 18 Road.

Burning may have some short-term impacts on air quality levels, but any burning activity will be done

during weather conditions that should minimize the impact of smoke on local communities.

Updates and maps will be available at [fs.usda.gov/malheur](http://fs.usda.gov/malheur).

For more information, call one of the local Forest Service offices: Blue Mountain, 541-575-3000; Emigrant Creek, 541-541-573-4300; or Prairie City, 541-820-3800.

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