

**GUN**

*Continued from Page A1*

"I think it's silly, of course," he said. "I don't think there's any gray area whatsoever. The Second Amendment doesn't allow for deviation — the right of people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed," he said. "There's a fundamental problem with the U.S. Supreme Court's interpretation (of the amendment)."

"I would call the ban unconstitutional," Leuenberger said. "But that's just one man's opinion. In order to have the right to do something, you have to convince a panel of judges you have the right."

Rep. Greg Barreto of Cove, the deputy leader for the Oregon House Republicans, said the ban was a topic of discussion at the party caucus last week. He said he is doubtful the gun ban is constitutional.

"Right now, I don't think they can do that," Barreto said. Legislative counsel is looking at the policy and has yet to offer an opinion, but Barreto said his constituents have already weighed in.

"I've heard from a lot of them, and none of them see it as a good idea," Barreto said.

Barreto owns a manufacturing business in Union County and said he has employees who pack. He said he's OK with that because businesses have the right to set policies as long as they don't break the law.

"But that's different in the public arena," he said.

**Rule support**

Some citizens think the ban has merit. Paul Kemp, of the group Gun Owners for Responsible Gun Ownership, said his organization sees the ban as an update of a current rule.

"My understanding is that this is an attempt by the governor's office to clarify an already-existing human resource policy that was implemented almost 20 years ago," Kemp said. "They haven't taken anyone's gun away. They've asked them not to bring it into the workplace. It's within the privilege of the governor to make that order."

He added that Governor Kate Brown has been very supportive of gun violence prevention measures.

"Do we have to wait until there's a shooting in a state

**"I would call the ban unconstitutional. But that's just one man's opinion."**

**James Leuenberger**  
*a Medford attorney*

office building to say, 'the governor was right?'" Kemp said.

Kemp said one goal of his group is to advocate for safe storage laws for guns — of which Oregon has none. He said Oregon's requirements for getting a concealed handgun license are also fairly loose and require no training, which members of his organization find risky.

The group was formed in 2012 after a shooting at Clackamas Town Center. The two victims were related to Kemp and another group member.

The shooter, who did not know either victim, got the gun from a friend who had purchased it legally but left it fully loaded and unlocked. Kemp said one of the biggest problems with Oregon's lack of safe storage laws is that it allows access to people who shouldn't have it.

"Us in the group — our guns are secured," he said, adding that when their guns are not with them, they're secured and unloaded.

Kemp said his group hopes advocating for safe storage and responsible handling of guns will cut down on suicides and accidents — especially with young kids.

"There are too many kids getting injured or killed senselessly," he said. "Suicides, too. If you put a temporary road bump, make them more difficult to access — you reduce the ability for someone to act on impulse — you can make a change."

**DAS perspective**

Matt Shelby is the spokesperson for the Department of Administrative Services. He said the policy applies only to state employees in state buildings, not the general public in state buildings.

While some policy revisions come down from on high, he said this was not one of them.

"This was a response to requests the (human resources) shop was getting from state employees," Shelby said.

Administrative Services policy has banned weapons in state facilities since 1998, but Shelby said it was a "blanket, no-weapons DAS buildings policy," and "silent

on concealed carry."

However, the Legislature is the only body that can set a law governing firearms, and the overly broad policy could read like a law.

"It was not really enforceable," he said. "It didn't align with state law or the Constitution."

Several state agencies also had specific weapon restrictions as conditions of employment, such as the Department of Human Services, the Oregon Youth Authority and Oregon Department of Corrections.

The change for corrections came in the wake of the 2011 murder of Buddy Ray Herron of Helix. The husband and father was on his way to his job as a corrections officer at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, Pendleton, when he stopped on Highway 11 to help a motorist. That man stabbed and killed Herron and is serving a life sentence for the murder.

"As a result of that," Shelby said, "the DOC got a statutory change to allow their corrections officers to carry on their way to and from work."

Uncertainty about guns in state workplaces remained, however, so Administrative Services' human resources staff started looking into the issue and found the old facilities policy. That began the process of developing a more formal and legal policy. The work took about a year, he said, and included input from human resources across the state, as well as Oregon State Police and the Oregon Department of Justice.

The new policy narrows the weapons restrictions to just state employees. DAS does not have the authority to regulate or restrict firearms for the general public, he said, "but as an employer, just like any other employer, we have the ability to restrict weapons as a condition of employment."

Some cities, including

Portland, have banned guns in public spaces. Shelby said this state policy does not go that far.

"We are certainly not restricting visitors, people who are not employees of the state of Oregon," he said. "We are not restricting their ability to conceal to carry — if they have a permit — from carrying in our buildings."

Administrative Services has received a lot of positive feedback from state employees, he said, thanking the agency for the clarification. He also acknowledged restrictions on guns raise red flags for plenty of people.

"And we get that," Shelby said. "The reason this policy was created: We were receiving request for clarification and we provided it."

They also said the policy aligns with the kinds of weapons restrictions Oregon cities and counties use as conditions for employment.

**No policy cops**

"At the end of the day, this is like any other HR-type policy," Shelby said. "From proper use of email to offensive language at work. And we don't have policy cops that go around and try to regulate that kind of stuff. It's more of a complaint-driven process."

Employees who spot a violation can reach out to a supervisor or their human resources office. And like any other policy violations, discipline would be progressive.

Lawmakers can address the policy, but Starrett with the Oregon Firearms Federation said he does not see that happening, and the federation is not pushing for it. The chance for any success is minimal given the Democrat majority in the Legislature and the Democrat governor. And there's another reason the federation is not going to fight this.

"To be honest with you, I think this is an issue that public employees should be addressing," Starrett said. "I think at this point, it is going to be up to them to do it."



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

**Bob Shrive, left, of the DeWitt Museum in Prairie City says the grant funding will be used for an interactive room in the museum dedicated to town of Bates. Standing by Shrive is Chris Lewallen, a member of the Juniper Arts Council.**

**Juniper Arts members hand out grants**

**A total of \$4,550 in funding is awarded**

**By Angel Carpenter**  
*Blue Mountain Eagle*

Six Grant County organizations received a total of \$4,550 in Oregon Cultural Trust funding for their art-related projects.

Kris Beal, president of the Juniper Arts Council, welcomed an audience of about 20 to the council's meeting Thursday. Beal said Juniper Arts exists to promote arts and arts culture in the county.

Oregon Cultural Trust grants money for projects in Grant County through Juniper Arts, their fiscal agent. Beal said the Cultural Trust gives grants to all the counties in Oregon for everything from the Shakespearean Festival in Ashland to the Fox Valley Church, which received a fresh coat of paint and other renovations last year, as well as an artist in residence at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School.

Of the six county organizations requesting funding, only one was not fully funded. Beal, vice president Chris Lewallen and several other council members helped hand out the grants.

Beal gave a special highlight of the council's two youth members Alexis Hafer and Shiranne Carter, both Grant Union seniors.

"They have done an outstanding job attending all the meetings," she said, adding

**Grant recipients**

- Denise Porter and Jennifer Garinger of Long Creek School, who received \$760 for improvements to lighting and sound for the school's stage.
- Ashley Armichard, the Blue Mountain Community College coordinator, \$790 for easels to be used for "fun, interactive, basic art lessons" on a monthly or bimonthly basis.
- Bob Shive of the DeWitt Museum in Prairie City, \$750, for an interactive room at the museum dedicated to the town of Bates.
- Jeannette Harrison and Jeanne Day of the Grant County Genealogical Society, \$250, to host a genealogy seminar speaker. The group is holding a genealogy seminar on April 15 at the Mt. Vernon Community Center.
- Kathy Smith and Judy Jacobs of the Prairie City Community Association, \$1,500 for electrical upgrades to the Prairie City Community Center.
- Shelly Whale and Cindy Kalin of HEART of Grant County, \$500 for art therapy to help those affected by domestic and dating violence.

some junior high students will also begin participating in the council.

Juniper Arts meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the John Day Fire Hall.

"More members are welcome to join," Beal said.

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The Chamber office is receiving numerous requests everyday for lodging and RV camping spots for the Solar Eclipse coming in August. We desperately need more available space and we would appreciate hearing from you if you have anything available. This will be a great opportunity for you to make a few extra dollars. Spaces are now being rented from \$50-\$200 per night.

Our board and business meeting will be Feb. 15, 11:00 AM at the Chamber of Commerce Office and noon at the Outpost discussing Chamber Activities and Eclipse. See you there.

2017 Solar Eclipse Accommodation Amenities 2017

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Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Available Facilities:

Home  Room(s)  RV Site  Tent Camping

Home/Room Amenities: # Rooms \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the number of each sleeping location on the line provided:

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