



The Eagle/Rylan Boggs

**Oregon Department of Agriculture Director Alexis Taylor, right, and Sharon Livingston talk about agriculture in Oregon in the Carter Rest Area near Long Creek Aug. 16.**

**TAYLOR**

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One way she intends to help those stepping into agriculture, either for the first time or to fill the shoes of an older generation, is to ensure programs and resources exist to help new farmers.

This, coupled with having a strong succession plan in place, will help Oregon agriculture prepare for the next generation.

Taylor wants to be an advocate for the industry, and help farmers both big and small.

“Being able to help them is something that’s important to me personally,” she said. “It’s not hard to do when it’s something you really love doing.”

During her tour of the counties, she has been exposed to the diversity of the state’s agriculture as well as vast range of geography and climates.

“I think it makes us stronger as an agricultural sector,” she said. “I think it’s one of our greatest assets, but it also can create challenges as well.”

Taylor has worked extensively with the federal government and said her experience with the bureaucracy will be helpful in assisting Oregonians.

Before coming to Oregon, she oversaw the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, which is comprised of the Farm Service Agency, Risk Management Agency and Foreign Agricultural Service.

“Having those relationships and knowing how the federal bureaucracy works, and sometimes doesn’t work, I think is helpful,” Taylor said.

She plans to work to better leverage federal dollars and maximize the resources available.

Taylor also served in the United States Army Reserves for eight years and completed one tour in Iraq with the 389th Combat Engineer Battalion.

“She’s somebody to really look up to,” said Grant County Commissioner Boyd Britton after meeting Taylor.

**PAST**

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for a short feature on Kam Wah Chung, Ph.D. student Eric Brand said.

“Professor Zhao is working with the Discovery Channel on a fully funded TV series focused on Chinese herbal medicine, and he feels that the Kam Wah Chung collection would be an ideal cultural story to include in the series,” Brand said.

Brand had previously visited the museum and described it to Zhongzhen, who became very enthusiastic about the Kam Wah Chung collection. The two organized a trip to bring a group of scholars from Hong Kong, Taiwan and China to see it in real life.

“This is the first time, but not the last time,” Zhongzhen said. “I will be here again.”

During their visit, the professors pointed out an apricot tree near Kam Wah Chung.

Some traditional doctors would accept payment from less-fortunate customers in the form of them planting an apricot tree, Brand said.

The apricot tree was planted at roughly the same time as Hay had been practicing medicine and Brand speculated it could be a form of payment from a customer.

The main part of the trip was to visit the museum. Brand called it the “centerpiece” of the trip.

The group, which consists of a number of experts on traditional herbs, has traveled together for a decade.

“Every year, we go to a different province in China to see markets and farms,” Brand said.

He wrote a chapter of his thesis on Kam Wah Chung and wanted to share what he found with professors and friends.



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**Yu-Ling Ho and Eric Brand examine a rattlesnake in a jar that is part of the Kam Wah Chung collection Aug. 8.**

**FUNDING**

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expects about \$20,000 more from the new deal, to increase as the fuel tax increases by 2 cents every other year after the initial 4 cent increase in 2018. While beneficial, he said that amount will not allow the city to accomplish much more than it has been.

“We’re grateful to have it, and it’s better than what we

had before, but we still haven’t really addressed the long-term cost differential between what smaller cities receive and what it costs to maintain a \$6.5 million asset, and that’s what our streets are currently valued at,” he said.

Replacing Fourth and Fifth streets, which are in such poor condition they can no longer be maintained, would cost the city about \$400,000, he said, when it only has \$450,000 in its entire street fund.

The transportation package also includes a substantial increase in the special cities allotment — a competitive grant program for cities with populations less than 5,000 — from \$1 million to \$5 million, which Green said could have a significant impact in rural Oregon.

Grant County will receive a much larger increase, starting at about \$400,000, which Grant County Commissioner Boyd Britton said would allow the Road Department to continue operating for years to come. He said the county is one of few with a healthy road reserve fund, about \$50 million, but the funding will be very beneficial to many Eastern Oregon counties.

Britton said, with so many bridges, roads and culverts, more funding would be needed for a long-term solution, but he praised the bipartisan effort to pass the package.

“It’s a heck of a lot better,” he said. “It’s a nice, good start.”

Oregon Department of Transportation Region 5 Manager Craig Sipp said the package provides funding beyond lottery proceeds for the ConnectOregon grant program, as well as dedicated funding for Safe Routes to Schools and



Pamplin Media/Jaime Valdez

**Gov. Kate Brown holds up copies of the signed transportation funding bill during a signing ceremony at Portland Community College Southeast Tuesday.**

funding for bike and pedestrian projects.

Through a 1/10th of 1 percent payroll tax deducted by employers — about \$0.39 per week for a minimum wage worker — the package also provides new funding for public transit.

Angie Jones, transit manager for the People Mover, said the organization expects to receive more than \$100,000 each year starting in 2019. The People Mover has primarily been funded through

state and federal grants, she said. With the new funding source, she said more free rides may be offered for people in need, fares may be lowered, operating hours may be extended and the service area may increase.

“I think, overall for Oregon for public transit, it’s an amazing opportunity,” she said. “It’s the first time Oregon has ever had a designated funding source for transit. It’s a big deal, and we’re very excited.”

Brown actually signed the legislation into law Aug. 18, the deadline to enact bills from the 2017 Legislature, which adjourned early last month.

The transportation pack-

age was a chief victory for both Democratic and Republican lawmakers during the legislative session.

As the bill appeared ready to combust over discontent among interest groups, Brown intervened to help negotiate a deal that would save the package she’d been promising to constituents for the past two years.


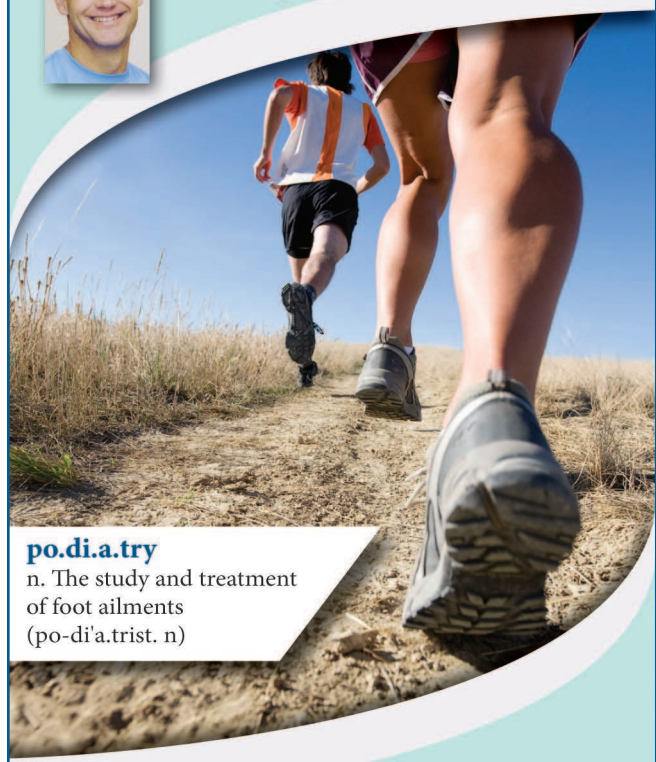
“Passing the transportation package was no easy feat,” Brown said. “We faced some significant challenges this last legislative session but we worked across the aisle and toward a shared vision for a better Oregon.”

The eight-year transportation plan includes staggered hikes in the gas tax, increases to registration and title fees, and new taxes on payroll, new vehicle purchases and bicycles priced more than \$200. The package also calls for congestion-priced tolling at some of Portland’s bottlenecks, which could include certain lanes on Interstate 5 and Interstate 205, to pay for congestion-busting projects.

Among major projects specified in the plan are congestion relief on Highway 217, widening northbound I-205 from Powell Boulevard to Interstate 84 and initial investment in adding new lanes to I-5 through Portland’s Rose Quarter.

Paris Achen is a reporter for the EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group Capital Bureau.

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