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The first phases of construction are planned at John Day's Innovation Gateway in 2018. Eagle file photo

John Day expects progress on projects in

2018

Construction planned this year

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The city of John Day has six capital projects on the books with investment horizons ranging from 20 years to more than a century, City Manager Nick Green told the city council. But he doesn't expect to see more big capital projects in the immediate future.

"This next year is all about execution," he said.

To present these capital projects to the residents of John Day and Grant County, Green plans to deliver a state of the city address early in the year followed by less formal town hall meetings at multiple venues through June.

He also wants to create a Community Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee to provide public input and assistance in the planning process for these projects.

The first committee would be well rounded, with no special requirements and representative of all perspectives, Green said — including the young, elderly, business and education sectors. They would pass on ideas to the second committee, which would include people who are more detail-minded and have professional expertise, he said.

See PROJECTS, Page A9



Nick Green

“This next year is all about execution.”

Nick Green
John Day city manager

12 new laws to keep in mind for the new year

By Jade McDowell
EO Media Group

You can now pump your own gas 24 hours a day — one of many laws that changed with the new year.

Thanks to one of more than 850 laws passed during the 2017 Oregon legislative session, fuel stations in counties east of Portland with fewer than 40,000 residents can allow self-service fueling 24 hours a day.

A few other interesting laws to keep in mind that took effect this year:

- Drivers must change lanes or slow down when passing



EO file Photo

Oregon voters became the fifth state in the nation to raise the minimum age for purchasing tobacco products to 21 years old.

any vehicle with flashing hazard lights, flares or other signs of distress parked along the side of road not in a designated parking space. The previous law only required drivers to move over for emergency vehicles and tow trucks. Now, if there are more than two lanes going in the same direction, the driver must change lanes away from the stopped vehicle. If there is only one lane in each direction the driver must slow down to at least five mph under the posted speed limit instead.

• One of the most controversial bills of the 2017 session, which allows a judge to order someone to give up their firearms, kicked in on Jan. 1.

If a family member or police officer presents the court with convincing evidence that a person “presents a risk in the near future, including an imminent risk, of suicide or of causing physical injury to another person” a judge can issue an order of protection banning the person from possessing deadly weapons for one year.

• Oregonians under the age of 21 can no longer purchase any tobacco products. The state became the fifth in the nation to raise the smoking age to 21 this summer.

• The voting age in the United States remains at 18, but

See LAWS, Page A9

Voter primer on Ballot Measure 101

By Claire Withycombe
Capital Bureau

On Jan. 23, Oregon voters will have a chance to weigh in on Measure 101, helping decide how the state pays for its Medicaid program.

President Trump noted earlier this year that “nobody knew that health care could be so complicated” and this measure, which deals with insurance premiums, managed care organizations and federally regulated hospital taxes, is not an easy read. Here are the basics:

• **When do I need to understand this?** Ballots will be mailed to voters between Jan. 3 and Jan. 9, according to the Secretary of State's Office. Ballots must be received by elections officials by 8 p.m. Jan. 23.

• **Why is this on the ballot?** This summer, Democrats in the Oregon Legislature pushed through a bill providing temporary funding for the state's Medicaid system. Three Republican lawmakers — State Reps. Julie Parrish, of West Linn; Cedric Hayden, of Roseburg; and Sal Esquivel, of Medford, decided they wanted to refer parts of the law to voters. They led a petition campaign to gather signatures and are now urging voters to vote “no” on the measure, which would repeal those parts of the state's Medicaid law.

• **Remind me, what's Medicaid?** Medicaid is a government health care coverage program for the poor and other qualifying groups. Oregonians earning up to 138 percent of the federal poverty lev-

el (\$16,100 for an individual; \$32,900 for a family of four) are eligible for the program. In Oregon, the Medicaid program is known as the Oregon Health Plan and covers about 1 million people, including 400,000 kids.

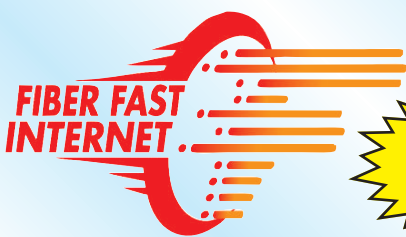
• **How is the Oregon Health Plan financed?** Both the state and the federal government pay for it with public funds, but the federal government picks up most of the tab. Plus, hospitals, insurers and coordinated care organizations all pay taxes — described in the measure as “assessments” — to the state. Oregon uses that money to get matching funding from the federal government.

• **How much do hospitals pay?** Hospitals pay a 5.3 percent assessment on net revenues, which, once matched by the feds, is returned to them as a group and redistributed. Under the state law passed earlier this year, they also pay a 0.7 percent assessment on net revenues that is not returned to them, but put into a state fund for health care.

• **What does a “yes” vote mean?** A “yes” vote means you want the state to impose and keep the nonrefundable 0.7 percent assessment on hospitals, as well as assessments on insurers, the Public Employees Benefits Board and coordinated care organizations — regional networks of OHP providers.

• **What does a “no” vote mean?** A “no” vote means you wish to repeal the nonrefundable 0.7 percent assessment,

See MEASURE, Page A9



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See Page A3