

Report knocks Oregon property tax system

By Claire Withycombe
Capital Bureau

A new report from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities is critical of Oregon's property tax limits, which could be a target of reform in 2019.

The new report, released Wednesday, examined Oregon and three other states — Michigan, Massachusetts and New York — with limits on property taxes.

The limits have driven cities and counties to squeeze revenue out of fees and charges that disproportionately affect low-income people, the authors of the report from the Washing-

ton, D.C., think tank argue.

Oregon's unusual, and complex, system was enacted through a series of ballot measures in the 1990s.

Supporters say the limits protect taxpayers from sharp annual increases in property taxes and require local governments to be thrifty.

But detractors say the system, which among other caps and restrictions, typically taxes owners on the assessed value of a property — rather than its real market value — creates significant disparities in property taxes, even between similar properties in the same area.

In May, Oregon Gov. Kate

Brown expressed interest in working with state lawmakers to make changes to the system next year, when the legislature convenes for a roughly five-month-long budget writing session.

Lawmakers have proposed tweaks to the scheme in previous sessions. Any changes to the state constitution, as a property tax overhaul would require, need a referral to voters for their approval.

Localities can ask voters for levies to fund services, but advocates argue that the system has adversely affected school funding, to the detriment of students.

"Oregon schools have never recovered from the damage wrought by the property tax limits enacted in the 1990s," Daniel Hauser, a policy analyst with the Oregon Center for Public Policy, said in a statement released in conjunction with the report. "The Oregon legislature failed to fully make up for the loss of property tax revenue, and a whole generation of Oregonians have paid the price."

To support services such as schools and police, localities have increasingly relied on new fees and service charges, which can be more burdensome for low-income residents, the Cen-

ter for Budget and Policy Priorities study finds.

"For example, a \$50 fee to participate in the school band is harder to pay for a parent working at minimum wage than for a millionaire," the authors write.

In 1977, local governments in Oregon got about 16.7 percent of their revenues from fees and charges. By 2015, that share had leapt to 26.6 percent.

The study recommends states with property tax limits reexamine their systems.

"Every state with a property tax limit would do well to examine the consequences of its limit and consider relaxing or repealing it," the study's

authors write. "States can employ more targeted alternatives, such as circuit breakers (which provide refunds to households whose property taxes are deemed too high) and homestead exemptions (which exempt a flat amount of home value from the tax), to relieve property taxes for seniors and others who might have difficulty affording them."

Wendy Johnson, a lobbyist for the League of Oregon Cities, says her group is surveying its members and considering whether property tax reform will again be among its legislative priorities for the long 2019 session.

COPS AND COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Circuit Court

Ashley Perkins, 22, John Day, pleaded guilty July 20 to misdemeanor interfering with a peace officer committed on May 9. A felony count of hindering prosecution was dismissed.

Ryan G. Gunn, 25, John Day, pleaded guilty July 19 to misdemeanor driving under the influence of intoxicants. A reckless driving charge was dismissed. He was sentenced to 24 months probation, 80 hours community service and \$1,355 in fines and fees. His license was suspended for one year, and he was ordered to install an ignition interlock device.

Larry W. Hart, 58, Mt. Vernon, pleaded guilty July 19 to being a felon in possession of a firearm, a misdemeanor. He was sentenced to 24 months probation and \$900 in fines and fees. He was ordered to forfeit his firearm.

Dillon G. Winters, 21, John Day, pleaded guilty July 19 to felony first degree criminal mischief and misdemeanor menacing constituting domestic violence committed on May 13. Winters was sentenced to 20 days in jail, 48 months probation and \$400 in fines and fees. Two charges of first degree burglary were dismissed.

Darren W. Mortimore pleaded guilty July 19 to two counts of strangulation, two counts of fourth-degree assault constituting domestic violence and one count of menacing constituting domestic violence, all misdemeanors. Thirteen additional counts were dismissed, including kidnapping, assault, menacing, strangulation, criminal mischief and interference in making a report. He was sentenced to 24 months in jail.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of July 18:

Concealed handgun licenses: 9

Average inmates: 17

Bookings: 10

Releases: 10

Arrests: 2

Citations: 3

Fingerprints: 0

Civil papers: 7

Warrants processed: 4

Asst./welfare check: 0

Search and rescue: 0

July 13: Hana Maaiah, 23, Corvallis, was cited for speeding 58/30 zone.

July 13: Anthony Palmer, 35, Portland, was cited for driving uninsured and warned for speeding 38/25 zone.

July 13: Brett Domenighini, 21, Mitchell, was cited for speeding 44/25 zone.

Oregon State Police

July 8: Following a traffic stop for traveling 63 mph in a 45 mph zone on Highway 26 near Mitchell, a trooper detected the smell of alcohol from the driver and saw signs of intoxication by the driver and passenger and an opened beer carton in the rear seat of a gold Lexus. The driver's breath sample test showed 0.153 percent blood alcohol content. A search of the vehicle turned up drug paraphernalia and numerous empty beer cans. Tyler M. Regory, 29, Portland, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants.

July 8: Following a traffic stop for traveling 70 mph in a 55 mph zone and overtaking a patrol car on Highway 26 near Moon Creek Road, a trooper detected the smell of alcohol from the driver. The driver was shaking when asked about drinking the previous night. Two breath samples showed 0.0 percent blood alcohol content. Andrew N. Smith, 58, Forestville, California, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants.

July 11: Robert D. Herrera, 60, John Day, was arrested during a welfare check on North Canyon Boulevard in John Day and charged with violation of a restraining order.

July 16: Responded to a single-vehicle noninjury crash at Bridge Street and Seventh Street in John Day. Cooper J. Wellington, 28, John Day, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants. His blood alcohol content was 0.28 percent.

July 20: Responded to a single-vehicle noninjury crash on Highway 26 near Mitchell. The 38-year-old female driver was adjusting the air conditioning when she lost control of the vehicle and left the roadway.

Justice Court

Violation of speed limit: Robert W. Houghton, 65, Mt. Shasta, California, July 2, 53/35 zone, fined \$165; Darrell Preakor, 55, Lebanon, Maine, June 26, 67/35 zone, fined \$440; Megan S. Lee, 53, Edmonds, Washington, July 4, 47/30 zone, fined \$165; Philip J. Stuwe, 59, Milwaukie, July 4, 67/45 zone, fined \$265; Christopher T. Lynch, 29, Portland, June 20, 43/25 zone, fined \$165; Gisele L. Baker, 76, Dillard, July 2, 50/35 zone, fined \$165; Richard N. Boren, 61, Dayville, July 4, 67/45 zone, fined \$225.

Exceeding speed limit: Shawn D. Morehead, 42, Bruneau, Idaho, July 1, 80/55 zone, fined \$265; Jeffrey P. Walkwitz, 55, John Day, July 4, 79/65 zone, fined \$165; Luis A. Dela Cruz, 39, Universal City, Texas, June 25, 51/40 zone, fined \$165.

Violation of basic rule: Jason N. Loun, 32, Oregon City, July 2, 79/55 zone, fined \$265; Kimberly A. McKrola, 44, Mt. Vernon, June 18, 85/55 zone, fined \$225; Lorraine J. Ndusha, 56, Canyon City, June 27, 78/55 zone, fined \$225; Austyn L. Nelson, 21, La Grande, July 5, 83/55 zone, fined \$265; Melanie J. Finch, 28, Hines, July 8, 83/55 zone, fined \$265; Michael J. Moshof-

sky, 62, Brownsville, June 28, 75/55 zone, fined \$165; Robert L. Ledgerwood, 28, Mt. Vernon, July 8, 89/55 zone, fined \$440; Stephen R. Kolseth, 75, Albany, July 2, 79/55 zone, fined \$265; Brian K. Henson Jr., 30, Prineville, June 28, 70/55 zone, fined \$165; Teresa M. Tallman, 45, Salem, July 5, 75/55 zone, fined \$165; Dorothy J. Miroslavich, 30, Long Creek, June 18, 75/55 zone, fined \$165; Ronald S. Ditullio, 56, Bend, June 30, 75/55 zone, fined \$165.

Driving uninsured: Ryan D. Mings, 51, Redmond, July 6, fined \$265.

Driving while suspended: Jason N. Loun, 32, Oregon City, July 2, fined \$440; Ryan D. Mings, 51, Redmond, July 6, fined \$440.

No operator's license: David G. McBride, 58, Corbett, July 2, fined \$265.

No seat belt: Juliann Evans, 56, John Day, June 30, fined \$115.

Failure to properly use safety belt: Larry D. Northey, 58, Hines, July 9, fined \$100; Timothy J. Hueckman, 62, John Day, July 9, fined \$115. Richie Colbeth, 80, John Day, was convicted of third-degree criminal mischief. He was fined \$500.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 179 calls during the week of July 16-22, including:

• **John Day Police Department**

July 16: Responded to a bar on Main Street in John Day. Dakota Stout, 21, John Day, was arrested and charged with a probation violation, and Jeremiah Alsop, 36, Prairie City, was arrested and charged with theft.

July 16: Responded to a report of a noninjury crash at Bridge Street and Seventh Street in John Day.

July 16: Received a theft report from West Main Street in John Day.

July 17: Advised of a theft on West Main Street in John Day.

July 17: Responded to the Grant County Fairgrounds in John Day for a report of a

burglary in progress.

July 18: Received a report of a drive-off at a gas station on West Main Street in John Day.

July 18: Advised of a noninjury crash near a grocery store in John Day.

July 18: Responded to Southeast Dayton Street in John Day for a report of telephonic harassment.

July 19: Following a traffic stop on West Main Street in John Day, Pamela Heard, 57, Seneca, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants.

July 20: Responded to a grocery store in John Day for a hit-and-run crash.

July 21: Dispatched to West Main Street for a missing person.

July 22: Following a traffic stop on East Main Street in John Day, Kayla Lambeth, 23, John Day, was cited for speeding 43/25 zone.

• **Oregon State Police**

July 18: Advised of a suspicious person.

• **Grant County Sheriff's Office**

July 16: Received a fraud report in Prairie City.

July 16: Responded to a burglary report on Screech Alley Loop in John Day.

July 16: Caitlin E. Brooks, 34, John Day, was arrested by Portland police and charged with a Grant County warrant.

July 18: Received a report of identity theft on Nelson Road in Canyon City.

July 20: Advised of a suspicious person on South McHaley Avenue in Prairie City.

• **John Day ambulance**

July 16: Responded to Violet Street in Mt. Vernon for a 68-year-old man.

July 16: Dispatched to Dog Creek Road in John Day for a 55-year-old man with a back injury.

July 17: Responded with Prairie City ambulance to

South Johnson Avenue for an elderly woman.

July 17: Dispatched to East Fifth Street in John Day for a 78-year-old woman.

July 18: Responded to a senior home in John Day for a woman with low pulse and dizziness.

July 18: Dispatched with Prairie City ambulance to a senior home in Prairie City for a transport.

July 18: Responded to Violet Street in Mt. Vernon for a 70-year-old woman.

July 18: Dispatched with Long Creek ambulance to East Main Street in Long Creek for a 56-year-old man.

July 19: Responded to North Washington Street in Prairie City for a 51-year-old woman.

July 19: Dispatched to Southwest First Street in John Day for a woman with flu-like symptoms.

July 20: Responded to East Fifth Street in John Day for a 79-year-old woman.

July 20: Dispatched to Northwest Fourth Street in John Day for a 76-year-old woman who couldn't move.

July 22: Responded to Northwest First Street in John Day for an 89-year-old woman.

July 22: Dispatched to a senior home in John Day for an 85-year-old man.

July 22: Responded to Screech Alley Loop in John Day.

• **John Day fire**

July 22: Stood down with Dayville fire from a report of an ATV accident on Widows Creek Road.

• **Forest Service**

July 17: Advised of heavy smoke in the Monument area coming from a fire in Morrow County.

July 17: Received a report of a possible fire on Canyon Mountain.

July 19: Advised of a possible fire in the Hamilton Road area north of Long Creek.

Your Rural Family Health Clinic

Grant County HEALTH Department
528 E. Main, St. E., John Day

Monday - Thursday 7am - 6pm
Friday 8am - 5pm
Mendy Sharpe FNP

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RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PUBLIC BIDS ACCEPTED

The public is invited to bid on residential property owned by Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc. in Granite, Oregon. The property will be open for inspection on Friday July 27, 2018, 10am -3pm. Minimum bid is \$28,375; deadline for bids is 2pm August 10, 2018 in La Grande Oregon. Contact Rochelle Hamilton at 541-963-3186 for a bid packet.

Michael Rushton, DPM
Podiatric Physician and Surgeon

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The Doctor speaks Spanish - el doctor habla Espan-ol.

CAUTION

Old Photos
Kids - Family - Trophy
Wildlife - Etc.

NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL YOUR TROPHY WAS
or you just want to share a hunting adventure,

SEND OR DROP OFF YOUR BEST HUNTING PHOTOS to

195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845 • kim@bmeagle.com

Your photos will be published in this year's **EAGLE HUNTING JOURNAL**
Please have them to the Eagle by August 11th.