

# State approves paying \$1.66 million for site of new National Guard center in Redmond

By Gary A. Warner  
Oregon Capital Bureau

The state has agreed to pay \$1.66 million to buy 20 acres in Redmond as the site for a new Oregon National Guard Readiness Center.

The State Land Board — made up of Gov. Kate Brown, Secretary of State Shemia Fagan and Treasurer Tobias Read — voted 3-0 on Tuesday to purchase the land, which will be assigned to the Oregon Military Department.

The sale is part of a larger, long-range plan involving the Department of State Lands, Oregon Military Department, the City of Redmond and Deschutes County.

A 945-acre project would allow for expansion of the county fairgrounds. The project also includes new industrial parks and technology centers that supporters say would bring higher-paying jobs to the area.

The new Readiness Center would replace Redmond's 65-year-old armory, but have an expanded mission of training National Guard soldiers from around the state. Officials have said earlier it will be the most seismically advanced National Guard facility in Oregon.

The center is also marked as a likely component of a Bend-area command post for state government and federal emergency response in the event of major disaster caused by movement of the Cascadia Subduction Zone, off the coast of Oregon.



Oregon Capital Bureau file photo  
**The House chamber in the state Capitol in Salem.**

Scientists have predicted a possible 9.0 scale earthquake and subsequent tsunami along the 700-mile subduction zone that could kill up to 25,000 people in the Pacific Northwest.

Most areas west of the coastal range would be inundated by waves, while road, rail, air, utilities and communications west of the Cascades would be heavily damaged.

While the earthquake would be felt in Central Oregon, areas east of the Cascades are expected to escape with light to moderate damage.

State surveys found the Redmond Airport would likely be the closest airfield that would still be fully operational following an earthquake. Fixed-wing aircraft could land supplies from around the country and then helicopters could

be used to fan out to areas throughout the Willamette Valley expected to be severely affected.

Previously, the state had set Salem as the center of earthquake relief operations, but studies showed the largest earthquakes along the fault would make the airport runways unusable to fixed wing aircraft.

"When constructed, this new readiness center will be a resilient facility that is more capable of surviving, and being a local and state asset, during an earthquake or other natural disaster," Stan Hutchinson, the Oregon Military Department's director of installations, said Tuesday.

State plans call for the Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program's Bend campus on Dodds Road to also serve as a fallback site for emergency coordination in a major earthquake if other facilities in the Salem area are knocked-out.

The Land Board was established in 1859 to oversee transactions for the state's Common School Fund. The board's administrative agency is the Department of State Lands, charged with managing property and resource to fund schools while protecting wetlands and waterways for the future.

The Oregon Military Department is the state component for the National Guard, which can be used for state emergencies or be activated for federal service. There are 37 armories and other centers in Oregon.

## Censures and security top agenda in D.C. and Salem

By Gary A. Warner  
Oregon Capital Bureau

With January's ceremonial start of the year out of the way, both Congress and the Oregon Legislature have moved on to sometimes turbulent issues, including disciplinary action against their own members.

### Bentz backs Cheney

U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, has confirmed he backed U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyoming, in a secret GOP vote on Feb. 4 to decide if she should retain her position as House Republican Conference Chair.

Cheney was one of just 10 House Republicans to vote Jan. 13 for impeachment of then-President Donald Trump on the charge of "incitement of insurrection" for agitating a mob that attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, resulting in five deaths and injuring over 140 police officers.

The impeachment, the equivalent of an indictment, passed 232-197. The trial of Trump, now out of office, begins this week.

Angry Trump loyalists wanted Cheney removed from the No. 3 post in House

GOP leadership. But she won the conference vote 145-61. Cheney, the eldest daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney, did not back down from her vote.

Asked about the conference challenge, Cheney said on Fox News Sunday that she had no apologies.

"The oath that I took to the Constitution compelled me to vote for impeachment, and it doesn't bend to partisanship, it doesn't bend to political pressure," she said. "It's the most important oath that we take."

During a break in the debate, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-California, had signaled that he backed Cheney.

"Liz has the right to vote her conscience," McCarthy said. "At the end of the day, we'll get united."

Bentz said late Friday, though he opposed impeachment, he backed retaining Cheney after she told the conference her vote was an individual choice, not as a party leader reflecting the GOP consensus on the issue.

The tally was secret, but members were free to make public how they voted.

### Hernandez expulsion vote possible Feb. 16

Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said Monday that Rep. Diego Hernandez, D-Portland, would likely face a Feb. 16 vote to expel him from the House.

Five women have accused Hernandez of using his position as a state lawmaker to sexually harass them. The House Conduct Committee voted 4-0 last Friday to sustain 18 findings of violation of House rules.

As of Monday, Gov. Kate Brown, Treasurer Tobias Read, Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, Kotek and 26 of 37 House Democrats have called on Hernandez to resign, which he has refused to do. The Feb. 16 vote would require votes of two-thirds of the House — 40 members — to expel him. Hernandez was seen as a potential political star when he was elected to the House in 2016 at age 29.

### Salem security under discussion

The plywood boards that covered the lower level windows of the Oregon Capitol in case of violent demonstrations around the Jan. 20

inauguration of President Joe Biden in Washington, D.C., are being removed.

The boards were put up after a Department of Homeland Security alert to states that right-wing groups that back Trump might attack state capitols. The Oregon Capitol was assaulted by groups on Dec. 21 during a special session of the Legislature. They used lower level side doors and windows in an attempt to enter the rotunda area. After fighting with state police, they were ejected.

Hardware is being installed to make it easier and faster to put up the boards if necessary in the future.

### Nearman investigation continues

The Marion County District Attorney's office has been sent the Oregon State Police investigative report on the alleged role of Rep. Mike Nearman, R-Independence, in aiding the Dec. 21 rioters to enter the Capitol, Kotek said Monday.

# PSU: 90,000 Oregon COVID evictions loom, at \$3 billion cost

By Zane Sparling  
Oregon Capital Bureau

A new report from Portland State University shows that an avalanche of looming evictions across Oregon could come with an eye-popping cost to society: \$3.3 billion.

According to a new report, researchers with PSU's Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative believe that number "is likely an underestimate."

"We're talking about a scale of disruption that we've never seen before," said Associate Professor Lisa K. Bates, the study's co-author. "We haven't turned the corner on the virus, let alone gotten into a place of economic recovery."

Bates' analysis of U.S. Census pulse data suggests some 89,000 families statewide owe back rent. An earlier PSU survey of 460 Oregonians extrapolated that more than a third of Oregon's renters — and more than half of renters of color — have skipped rent checks.

That money is coming due fast. While state lawmakers approved a new moratorium on evictions for nonpayment of rent in December, the partial ban ends June 30. Repayment is legally required by July 1.

Plugging that hole in landlords' wallets could cost as much as \$378 million, per a September report by financial advisory firm Stout. But if government stimulus money can't cover the gap, the strain to the social safety net will be far greater, the report concludes.

"With a combination of state and federal funds, this is a size that one could wrap their arms around," said Bates. "The alternative is really stark."

The six-page report relies on a cost calculator devel-

oped by the University of Arizona College of Law. Shelter expenses alone could cost as much as \$1.98 billion, assuming 62% of those to be evicted stay in shelters an average of 130 days.

The high-end projected costs also include \$613 million for in-patient medical care, \$239 million for emergency room care, \$318 million for foster care and \$191 million for child delinquency services.

Using the most optimistic estimates, the total cost drops from \$3.3 billion to a mere \$1 billion, though the report cautions that many externalities are excluded from the final price tag.

"The estimate does not include costs due to lost income, increase in public assistance, gaps in education, or the long-term impact to health, education, and earnings," according to the report. "Neither does it capture the costs of building new shelters and creating new emergency support as a result of exceeding current system capacity" or costs associated with increased spread of the novel coronavirus.

Bates' recommendations to policymakers include creating mediation, repayment planning and tenant education programs, boosting funding for affordable housing and rental assistance programs, as well as providing public legal advisers for defendants in eviction courts.

The professor, who holds a Ph.D. in city and regional planning, notes that the vast majority of those facing the boot lost employment through no fault of their own.

"We have a dire situation caused by a public health emergency that is caused by all types of policy failures," she said.

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