



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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## New Oregon laws effective Jan 1st

### New laws for 2024 to tackle opioid overdoses, DUI, paramilitary activity, wildfire insurance and Styrofoam concerns

By Chris Sykes

Over time, the number of laws being added to our existing laws is increasing. In the state of Oregon alone, there are already thousands of laws in place. The Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) serve as the official codified laws of the state, and they are updated and published every two years. Each edition of the ORS includes all existing laws and any changes made by the Legislative Assembly up until the regular session of the odd-numbered year, as indicated in the volume titles of that edition.

As an example, the 2021 edition of the ORS consists of 21 volumes, encompassing all the laws that were in effect at that time. During the 2021 Regular Session, a total of 714 bills out of the 2,519 bills introduced were passed into law. In the subsequent 2022 Regular Session, only 127 out of the 275 introduced bills became law.

#### Opioid overdose medication

Oregon Senate Bill 1043 requires health care and drug treatment facilities to provide opioid overdose reversal medications and other overdose-related medical supplies to discharged patients who were admitted for opioid abuse. The bill also establishes civil liability protections for people who administer overdose reversal medication to someone experiencing an overdose. The law is aimed at reducing the number of opioid-related deaths in

Oregon by ensuring that people who are at risk of an overdose have access to the medication they need to survive.

Under the law, hospitals and other specified facilities that provide substance use disorder treatment are required to provide two doses of opioid overdose reversal medication and necessary medical supplies to administer medication to specified patients upon discharge or release. The law also provides immunity from civil liability for people who in good faith provide opioid overdose reversal medications and necessary medical supplies to administer medications. The law is expected to help save lives by ensuring that people who are at risk of an overdose have access to the medication they need to survive.

Curricula teaching students about the dangers of synthetic opioids: Under SB 238, the Oregon Health Authority, State Board of Education, and the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission will be required to develop curricula teaching students about the dangers of synthetic opioids. Students will also be required to learn about legal immunity for people who report drug or alcohol use along with protections for people seeking medical treatment for themselves or others for drug and alcohol overdoses.

#### DUI

Oregon House Bill

2316 expands the offense of driving while under the influence of intoxicants to include any substance that, when taken into the human body, can impair the ability of a person to operate a vehicle safely. The bill is aimed at improving road safety in Oregon by expanding the definition of "intoxicant" for purposes of the Oregon Vehicle Code.

The bill also provides for an affirmative defense and decreases fines for driving while under the influence of intoxicants while riding a bicycle. It eliminates driving privilege suspension imposed for driving while under the influence of intoxicants while riding a bicycle. The bill also expands eligibility to participate in diversion programs when a defendant previously participated in treatment as a juvenile or as a parent or guardian pursuant to a juvenile court order.

The bill is expected to help improve road safety in Oregon by expanding the definition of "intoxicant" for purposes of the Oregon Vehicle Code. The bill also provides for an affirmative defense and decreases fines for driving while under the influence of intoxicants while riding a bicycle. It eliminates driving privilege suspension imposed for driving while under the influence of intoxicants while riding a bicycle. The bill also expands eligibility to participate in diversion programs when a defendant previously participated in

treatment as a juvenile or as a parent or guardian pursuant to a juvenile court order. Expands offense of driving while under influence of intoxicants to include any substance that, when taken into human body, can impair the ability of person to operate vehicle safely. Lawmakers expanded the definition of "intoxicant" under state law to account for that blind spot. The bill also reduced fines and other penalties for people caught bicycling while under the influence, reasoning that they pose less of a danger to others than someone behind the wheel. Those carve-outs don't apply if a person has a blood alcohol content of at least 0.15% or is riding an e-bike.



#### Ban on Styrofoam

Senate Bill 543 Ban on polystyrene containers: A ban on polystyrene containers has been implemented in Oregon. Oregon has implemented a ban on polystyrene containers as of January 1, 2024. Senate Bill 543, which was passed by the Oregon Legislature, bans food vendors from serving meals in containers made of polystyrene foam, commonly known as Styro-

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## Lutcher retires after 11 years



(L-R) Chairman David Sykes, Roberta Lutcher, Commissioner Jeff Wenholz, and Commissioner Roy Drago Jr. - Contributed Photo

Morrow County recently bid farewell to Roberta Lutcher, who retired after serving as the Executive Assistant to the Board of Commissioners for an impressive 11 years. The county took to their official Facebook page to express their gratitude and extend their best wishes to Roberta on her well-deserved retirement. Describing her as an individual with an unwavering attention to detail and a remarkable dedication to her position and the county. To honor Roberta's service and ex-

press their appreciation, the county organized a potluck at the Bartholomew Building on December 15th. This event provided an opportunity for staff members and friends to come together, share heartfelt stories, and convey their best wishes to Roberta. Delicious food was available, adding to the warm and celebratory atmosphere. Morrow County expressed their utmost hope for her to cherish these moments and wished her all the luck in her future endeavors.

## Gates goes nationwide



Billy Gates, Digital Sports Producers for KXAN of Austin Texas, talks sports on News Nation network. - Contributed Photo

#### By Annalynn Black

Billy Gates, the son of Tom and Arlynda Gates from Ione, has recently made his television debut on the nationwide news network, News Nation. Gates, a graduate of Pacific University in Forest Grove with a degree in Journalism, has always had a passion for media and sports coverage. Starting his career at the East Oregonian, he quickly gained experience and recognition, eventually becoming a regular on the radio, covering sports in Portland.

In 2019, Gates and his wife, Jessie, made the decision to move to Texas. Since then, he has been working as a Digital Sports Producer for the reputable news network KXAN in Austin. In this position, Gates covers and live-streams the sports events of the esteemed University of Texas.

It comes as no surprise that the News Nation

network has reached out to Billy Gates, given they have reached out in the past regarding his exceptional coverage of Super Bowl articles. Having recognized his talent and expertise, they have sought to feature him on their live television broadcasts. This recent opportunity allowed Gates to showcase his abilities on a larger-scale platform, reaching a nationwide audience. The decision to move to Texas was a significant one for Gates and his wife. However, it has proven to be a strategic move as it has opened doors to exciting opportunities in the media industry. His role as a Digital Sports Producer at KXAN has allowed him to further immerse himself in the world of sports and broadcasting. Providing comprehensive coverage and live streaming of the University of Texas sports events has added to his experience and expertise.

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## City of Irrigon halfway through fiscal year

By Chris Sykes

Upon reviewing the Irrigon city managers' report from December 19th, they reached the halfway mark of the fiscal year in the month of December. The law enforcement vehicles have finally been delivered, and they are focusing on enhancing public safety and presence within the City of Irrigon by reviewing and improving the processes.

In collaboration with the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) and other municipalities, Irrigon has submitted a request for approximately 2.5 million dollars to assist in infrastructure development for new housing projects in Irrigon.

According to Palmquist, housing grant opportunities have been affected by the current economic conditions and lending rates, leading to a slowdown. However, property owners and developers can still benefit from grants to help cover System Development Charges (SDC) for new homes within the city limits. For more information on this program, detailed information can be found on The City of Irrigon's webpage. Additionally, the city's staff is available to provide further assistance upon request. If you're interested in learning more, please reach out

to the City Clerk via email at clerk(@ci.irrigon.or.us).

Regarding court and law enforcement matters, Irrigon's Judge and court have established a Violations Bureau, which allows staff to make decisions and resolutions with individuals who have been cited, expediting the process before their scheduled court dates. Additionally, Irrigon will be hiring a part-time Code Enforcement personnel to ensure more consistent processing of properties and court cases involving non-compliance with code requirements.

The city is in discussions with MCSO regarding contract renewal. It should be noted that all of Morrow County has negotiated significant pay scale increases for their staff, which will impact contracting and their budget.

The US 730 Sidewalk Project, which is funded by HB2017, is making good progress in terms of Public Works. Despite the winter season and the closure of asphalt plants, the concrete work is still ongoing, although at a slower pace due to the colder weather. There might be some temporary pooling of water in certain areas after receiving limited rainfall, but the contractor is aware of these locations.

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## Scholarship auction dinner honoring Barney Lindsay

The community of Heppner is set to gather at the Gilliam & Bisbee Building on Saturday January 27th for a heartfelt scholarship dinner and auction in memory of Barney Lindsay, a local farmer, and dedicated Morrow County School Board member. The doors will open at 5pm, with dinner to be served at 6pm. The highlight of the evening will be the live auction commencing at 7pm, featuring an array of both live and silent auction items. Barney Lindsay, a prominent figure in the community, left a lasting impact through his contributions as a farmer and his commitment to education as a member of the Morrow County School Board. To honor his legacy and dedication to the community, the Lindsay family is organizing this event to establish scholarships for graduating seniors in Irrigon, Boardman, Ione, and Heppner. The dinner, catered by Ashley Lindsay, promises to be a delightful experience for all attendees, providing an opportunity for the community to come together and support a worthy cause. All proceeds from the auction

will go directly towards funding the scholarships for deserving students in the aforementioned areas. Kim Lindsay, wife of Barney, expresses her gratitude for the overwhelming support received in organizing the scholarship dinner auction. Kim Lindsay, the wife of Barney, is expressing her heartfelt gratitude for the overwhelming support received in the organization of the scholarship dinner auction. "My children and I are dedicated to establishing a scholarship in Barney's name, something he would be very pleased

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