

# E-board approves \$11.5 million for flood relief

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
NEWS EDITOR

Oregon's 2020 Legislative Session may have ended in a stalemate, but Eastern Oregon will still get its flood recovery funding from the state.

The legislature's emergency board met Monday morning, unanimously approving emergency allocations of \$11.5 million for flood relief in Umatilla County, \$5 million for COVID-19 efforts, and \$2.7 million for the Office of Emergency Management to implement new preparedness programs.

The funding was meant to be approved during the regular session, but more than 200 bills died in the legislature after Republicans walked out and refused to return unless cap and

trade was taken off the table — something Democrats declined to do.

On Friday, Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer said he received a call from Gov. Kate Brown letting him know that the legislature's emergency board planned to allocate the money.

"There was no hesitation on leadership's part on either side to give those funds," Shafer said.

The money includes \$4 million for the "expedited purchase and installation of manufactured homes" to replace homes destroyed in February's flood; \$2 million to build new affordable housing units for flood victims and \$1.5 million for "rapid rehousing" and rent assistance; and \$3.2 million for the Oregon Business Development Department



Oregon Capital Bureau Photo/Sam Stites

**Senate President Peter Courtney listens as Legislative Fiscal Office Ken Rocco explains the breakdown of \$11.5 million in funding for Umatilla Basin flood relief.**

to assist businesses recover and Pendleton repair its levee.

"A lot of people lost their homes to this flood, and with this money they will have an opportunity to have a place to call home again,"

Shafer said.

Commissioner George Murdock said the county would work with numerous partners, including affected cities and the Community Action Program of East Central Oregon, in putting

the money to good use. He echoed Shafer's point that many Umatilla County residents are still living with friends and family or in other "pretty shaky" housing situations.

He also said the money from the state would not take the county's focus off of also pursuing federal disaster relief funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency with the assistance of Rep. Greg Walden, Sen. Ron Wyden and Sen. Jeff Merkley. The county's road department has been hard at work making area roads and bridges usable again, but there are still tens of millions of dollars in damage to be repaired.

At Monday's Emergency Board meeting, all seven Republicans were present and engaged.

In addition to the flood recovery money, the committee approved the COVID-19 funding without specifying how it would be used. Senate President Peter Courtney said that the Emergency Board could definitely be back again to allocate more money.

The Emergency Board also approved by 12-8 vote — with all Democrats except Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, voting yes — to give \$5 million to the state Department of Environmental Quality to establish 10 new positions to start drafting rules to implement the expected executive order by Gov. Kate Brown aimed at reducing Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions.

*Oregon Capital Bureau reporter Sam Stites contributed to this report.*

# Gov. Brown orders state action on climate change

By **JAKE THOMAS**  
OREGON CAPITAL BUREAU

Gov. Kate Brown signed a sweeping executive order on Tuesday that directs state government to significantly cut greenhouse emissions in Oregon.

The governor's move was in response to the Legislature adjourning on Sunday without having passed a bill with similar goals.

Flanked by students at the Capitol, Brown said that the order would put the state on a path its children could be proud of and was needed urgently to address climate change.

"We are all in this together and if we can make progress on climate change we just might have a world we can pass onto our children," Brown said.

The order updates and adds more teeth to the state's existing greenhouse gas reduction goals. It sets a 45% reduction from 1990 levels by 2035 and an 80% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050.

The order directs the Department of Environmental Quality to put caps on emissions from the state's three largest sources including transportation fuels, natural gas and large industrial polluters. It also doubles the state's clean fuels program, requires higher efficiency for buildings and appliances while requiring all state agencies to view their actions through a climate change lens.

The executive order updates the existing state carbon emissions goals to reflect the current science, setting a standard of 45% reduction from 1990 levels by 2035, and an 80% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050. The order also outlines



Oregon Capital Bureau Photo/Sam Stites

**Activists pack the steps of the Oregon State Capitol on Feb. 11, 2020, to show support for a cap and trade bill being considered by lawmakers. In response to the Legislature adjourning for the second time Sunday without having passed a bill capping emissions, Gov. Kate Brown signed a sweeping executive order to cut greenhouse emissions state wide on Tuesday.**

a variety of means to reach the new goals, including:

On Monday, the legislative Emergency Board voted to direct \$5 million to the state Department of Environmental Quality to begin drafting rules aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the state.

A statewide program to cap greenhouse gas emissions has been a priority for Democrats who control the governor's office and lopsided majorities in the Legislature. But previous attempts were stymied after legislative Republicans walked out of the Capitol in the last two sessions, denying lawmakers a quorum to conduct business.

The most recent walk-out occurred during the most recent legislative session that ended on Sunday.

Senate Republican Leader Herman Baertschiger Jr. has questioned the governor's move, saying it would open the state to an expen-

sive lawsuit.

Oregon Business & Industry released a statement saying the move "sets a concerning precedent about the use of executive administrative authority absent a statutory mandate from the Legislature."

"This use of executive orders is likely to lead to prolonged and costly litigation, as was the experience in Washington state," the statement said. "It took years to resolve lawsuits over Washington's carbon reduction orders, and much of the executive actions did not survive the legal challenges."

On Tuesday, Brown said that her order had been carefully vetted to ensure it was in compliance with state law and constitution.

The allocation would be used to hire 10 new positions. During Monday's Emergency Board meeting, Richard Whitman, director of the Department of Environmental Quality, said that

the new hires would help complete initial rulemaking for a greenhouse gas reduction program by 2022. That's roughly the same timeline laid out in the bill killed last session to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

After a similar bill failed to pass during last year's legislative session, a coalition of businesses environmental groups and others called Renew Oregon began preparing a greenhouse gas reduction initiative for the 2020 ballot.

Renew Oregon applauded Brown's move in a statement following her announcement.

"Oregonians have organized, advocated, worked and voted for years demanding our state take bold action to reduce climate pollution, improve our health, and transition to clean energy. Governor Brown delivered today with strong and comprehensive action," said Tera Hurst, executive director of Renew Oregon, in a statement.

# Umatilla teacher has been missing since Feb. 27

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
NEWS EDITOR

A Umatilla High School math teacher was reported missing on Feb. 27 and has not been seen since.

Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe said she reported Lorenzo Sanchez, 29, missing on Feb. 27. His roommates told her that he had not returned home the night before, which was unusual, and he has not reported to work since.

On Monday, the Cache County Sheriff's Office in Utah said they found Sanchez's gray Honda Accord in Providence, Utah, but had not located Sanchez.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office is investigating. Undersheriff Jim Littlefield said Sanchez had taken some of his personal belongings with him when he left, but after the school district filed a miss-

ing persons report the sheriff's office has attempted to contact him by email and phone and received no reply, leading them to continue to list him as a missing person.

Littlefield said a family member in Colorado reported that Sanchez had sent them a Facebook message on March 7 but did not reply when they responded.

Sipe said a substitute has been covering Sanchez's classes, and counselors are available to speak with students who are upset. She said in addition to teaching math, Sanchez had been offering stress relief programs to students and taught a martial arts class at the after school program.

"He was just a positive guy," she said.

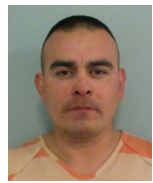
Anyone with information regarding the case can call the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office at 541-966-3600.

# Hermiston man arrested on felony forgery charges

HERMISTON HERALD

A Hermiston man is facing seven felony charges for forgery after being arrested on accusations of using a counterfeit \$100 bill at a Dutch Bros on Sunday.

The Hermiston Police Department received a report of the counterfeit and arrested Benjamin Muniz,



Muniz

41, near Rogers Toyota on North First Street in Hermiston, where he was subsequently found in possession of meth and identified as a suspect in a report of a counterfeit bill used at a Dairy Queen.

On Monday, Muniz

was arraigned on 11 total charges, including three counts of first-degree forgery and four counts of first-degree possession of a forged instrument, all of which are felonies.

Muniz is also facing one misdemeanor count for possession of meth, one count for failure to appear in court and two counts of probation violation.

Muniz is currently held at the Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton with his bail set at \$85,000, and he was set to appear in court for a preliminary hearing at 1:15 p.m. on Monday, March 9.

# Boardman woman sentenced for fatal crash

HERMISTON HERALD

A Boardman woman was sentenced to more than six years of incarceration on Friday after pleading guilty to negligent homicide for driving under the influence, killing her 7-month-old infant and seriously injuring

her 3-year-old daughter in a crash.

Judge Eva Temple also sentenced Veronica Andrade, 40, to three years of post-prison supervision and suspended her license for five years.

Andrade also pleaded guilty to DUII and third-de-

gree assault for the crash, and had charges of reckless driving and recklessly endangering another person dismissed as a part of her plea deal.

The crash occurred June 2, 2019, on Interstate 84 near milepost 175, and the preliminary investigation

revealed Andrade was driving east with her two children when she veered off the road onto the right shoulder and rolled. The crash ejected the 7-month-old, who suffered fatal injuries.

Andrade is currently being held at the Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton.

ELKHORN MEDIA GROUP  
RADIO • DIGITAL • SOCIAL • VIDEO  
presents

**March 20th-22nd**

FRI: 12pm – 6pm  
SAT: 9am – 5pm • SUN: 10am – 2pm

**3rd Annual HERMISTON HOME & OUTDOOR SHOW**

NOW AT EASTERN OREGON TRADE & EVENTS CENTER

**FREE ADMISSION! • OVER 60 BOOTHS! • BEER AND FOOD CONCESSION! • SMITTY'S ACE HARDWARE KID ZONE!**

in partnership with

**One solution for oxygen at home, away, and for travel**

Introducing the INOGEN ONE - It's oxygen therapy on your terms

No more tanks to refill. No more deliveries. No more hassles with travel. The INOGEN ONE portable oxygen concentrator is designed to provide unparalleled freedom for oxygen therapy users. It's small, lightweight, clinically proven for stationary and portable use, during the day and at night, and can go **virtually anywhere** — even on most airlines. Inogen accepts Medicare and many private insurances!

Reclaim Your Freedom And Independence NOW!

Call Inogen Today To Request Your FREE Info Kit  
**1-855-839-0752**

© 2020 Inogen, Inc. All rights reserved. MKT-P0108

*Call today to connect with a*

## SENIOR LIVING ADVISOR

INDEPENDENT LIVING • ASSISTED LIVING • MEMORY CARE

A Place for Mom has helped over a million families find senior living solutions that meet their unique needs.

There's no cost to you!

(888) 651-5669

! We're paid by our partner communities