

Oregon holds the line on hunger... but for how much longer?

by Chris Thomas, Oregon News Service

At first glance, the new national figures on hunger from the U.S. Department of Agriculture seem like good news for Oregon. The rate of what is known as "very low food security" in the state has held steady at just over six percent (6.1%). The term means people eat less or skip meals, even for an entire day, when they can't afford food.

Oregon also looks better compared with the nation as a whole – but that's because the national rate has climbed.

Rachel Bristol, chief executive officer of the Oregon Food Bank, says the USDA numbers show hunger is being held in check only through a coordinated effort – and not for everyone. "It tells us that, despite all the federal food and nutrition programs, despite what the state does, what the counties do; what this huge nonprofit emergency food network does, there's still six percent of our population going hungry."

One in five Oregon households is part of the SNAP program, formerly known as food stamps, compared with one in seven households nationally, Bristol says. Oregon Food Bank locations across the state are still seeing increases in requests for emergency food.

Dr. Mark Edwards, associate professor of sociology at

Oregon State University, tracks food insecurity. In Oregon, he says, even groups which are traditionally less likely to go hungry – such as two-parent families and people with year-round, full-time employment – show up in the statistics. To Edwards, that's evidence that paychecks aren't stretching far enough, "From my work, looking at the kinds of data that we use and the way the numbers do track with economic conditions, I'm confident that the data tell the right story. And so then, the question to anybody is, what do they want to do once they've heard that story?"

Bristol's current concern is that emergency federal food programs put in place during the recession already are winding down. She says those programs increased the agricultural commodities coming to Oregon last year from 8.5 million to 17 million pounds, "That was a combination of stimulus funding, as well as bonus buys that the secretary of agriculture made. We're projecting this year, our best picture is a drop of 50 percent in those federal commodities."

The six percent figure means more than 223,000 Oregonians are going hungry – and that 13.7 percent, or more than 500,000, at least occasionally aren't sure where their next meal is coming from.

The USDA report is online at ers.usda.gov.

ODFW has new wildlife viewing map

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has introduced a new Wildlife Viewing Map to help people learn where and when to see Oregon's fish and wildlife species. The Google-based map is available via the ODFW website and details 235 great places to see wildlife in the state.

Through the Wildlife Viewing

Map, viewers can discover where to see bald eagles, migrating snow geese and sandhill cranes as well as Oregon's large mammals including black-tailed and mule deer and Rocky Mountain and Roosevelt elk. Tufted puffins, bighorn sheep and spawning salmon viewing sites are included.

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Members wanted for transportation CAC

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times during the next 18-24 months.

To ensure the CAC is both a manageable size and reflects a broad range of perspectives, county residents who can represent multiple interests and have multiple affiliations are encouraged to apply. Commissioners also want to encourage Washington County residents who have not been active in the past and can bring new perspectives to the process to apply.

Transportation issues continue to be of major concern in

Washington County and throughout the region. As growth continues and the challenge of accommodating travel needs becomes more difficult, these concerns are unlikely to abate.

The existing transportation plan was adopted in 2002 and identifies system needs and characteristics through the year 2020. A new regional transportation plan adopted last year extends the region's planning horizon to 2035 and provides a new framework for local government planning work. CAC members will have

a central role in helping local government officials within Washington County, residents and other stakeholders carry out that work.

Washington County residents interested in staying current with plan update progress and participation opportunities may contact the Long Range Planning Division at lutplan@co.washington.or.us or by calling 503-846-3519. You'll be provided with project updates and be informed of public outreach events as they are scheduled.

Banks staff gets nod to apply for grant

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development matter and is pleased to get good press from its investment in the Banks Trailhead.

- The city is continuing efforts to get an Electric Vehicle Charging Station installed in Banks. There are a number of potential projects that might work, but in the long run it may be best if the city installs two systems similar to those currently installed in Hillsboro. Hough advised council that the city will investigate various programs.

- The city is working with CCIS and the city's insurance agent, Tom BeLusko, in attempts to reduce the city's insurance premium by attending specialized training and by documenting more of the city's policies. City Recorder Jolynn Becker will be designated as Risk Management Person when she completes the training.

Council adopted a resolution

creating Water Utility Capital Equipment Reserve Funds #15, #16, and #17. In 2010, the Council adopted resolutions creating Capital Equipment Reserve Funds #12, #13, #14. While conducting the current audit, the Auditor noted that some of the funds being reserved are from an enterprise fund that must be reserved in separate funds.

City staff was given approval to explore the possibility of installing solar panel arrays on one of the city buildings. A local company has begun the process of installing photovoltaic solar panels on three buildings in the city. Some of the incentive funding for solar panel installation has expired, and the single remaining federal reimbursement fund will expire on December 31, unless extended.

Council approved a Technical Assistance Grant application to the Ford Family Foundation for the Banks Public Li-

brary, Phase 2 expansion project.

A first reading was conducted by title only of an ordinance revising the Urban Forestry chapter of Banks Municipal Code. A second reading and consideration for adoption will be on October 11.

After reviewing a proposed ordinance to revise the City's Bulk Water Permit and Sales Policy, Council directed staff to proceed with drafting the ordinance.

Council adopted the Financial Management Policies and Procedures that resulted from revisions of a draft that was presented to council by Stephen Bechler on August 9. This final draft compiles the city's current and proposed financial management policies into a single document.

The next Council meeting will be held at Banks City Hall on October 11 at 7:00 p.m.

Reward increased in elk killing case

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late August near Wolf Creek Road, off Highway 26 in Clatsop County.

With the support of the Clatsop and Portland Chapters of the Oregon Hunters Association, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust, a reward of up to \$4,000 is being offered for information leading to an arrest in this case.

According to OSP Trooper Joseph Warwick, four illegally

killed elk, three cow elk and one bull elk, were found August 23, about one mile up Wolf Creek Road from Highway 26. Some meat was stripped from two of the elk and the remains of all four poached elk were left to waste. Preliminary investigation indicates the elk were killed within a couple weeks of being found.

The Humane Society of the United States and The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust are offering a reward of up to \$2,500. This reward offer

adds to an existing \$1,500 reward from the Oregon Hunters Association.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is asked to contact Trooper Warwick at 503-468-8727 or Sergeant Tim Schwartz at 503-791-5249.

Questions regarding the HSUS reward can be directed to Stephanie Twining at 301-258-1491 or stwinning@humanesociety.org.

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