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New Jackson County Animal Shelter that will double capacity in the works



JULIE ANDERSON / Daily Courier, 2025

Recovering from being spayed, a shepherd looks out from a kennel at the Jackson County Animal Shelter near Talent last year. Jackson County has committed to building a new shelter that will about double the capacity and be more efficient to operate. A bid to form a special shelter district failed in 2025, but the county set aside reserve funds and purchased land in the White City area.

Will be built in White City, using reserve funds

By Emma Maple
 of the Daily Courier

MEDFORD — Jackson County is starting work on a new dog shelter, which is expected to double the size of the current facility that has suffered from overcrowding in the past.

The shelter will likely be completed a year after construction starts, according to County Administrator Danny Jordan, and will typically hold only dogs — in line with its current policy.

Unless cities agree to pay Jackson County for its services, the county is also taking a step back from holding animals taken in criminal hoarding cases, like the recent Central Point case where over 60 cats were found in one home in various states of health.

The new dog facility is still in the early stages of development. At the moment, the county is working on pre-construction steps, such as contracting with a construction manager and finalizing the building design.

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Courtesy of KSW Architects

This computer-generated image is based on KSW Architects' current plans for a new animal shelter for dogs in Jackson County. Commissioners approved a fee for a contractor this week.

SOU budget reduction plan leans on layoffs, not programs, as consultant recommended

By Emma Maple
 of the Daily Courier

A cost-savings plan approved by the Southern Oregon University Board of Trustees largely relies on faculty and staff cuts to meet a balanced budget, a departure from consultant recommendations that advised the university to focus on eliminating academic programs.

The plan, approved last week, eliminates the equivalent of just over 65 full-time positions and cuts three majors in hopes of reducing the university's annual costs by almost \$11.9 million.

However, it spares several majors and academic programs that consultants recommended the university cut, including music, sociology and anthropology, outdoor adventure leadership, economics, mathematics, and gender, sexuality and women's studies.

SOU is no stranger to budget cuts. The university has made two rounds of previous budget-slashing efforts, in 2023 and again in 2025, to balance a budget that has been strained by declining enrollment.

Both previous rounds of budget cuts also relied heavily on employee reductions.

In 2023, the university cut the equivalent of almost 82 full-time positions, or about 13% of the workforce. In 2025, it planned to cut the equivalent of 70 full-time positions over the next several years, according to the university.

The university also set the course in 2025 for the elimination of 22 majors and minors, including chemistry, Spanish, and math programs.

The latest round of proposed cuts means the university will have eliminated around 217 employees since 2023, once the recent cuts go into effect, according to the university.

It's not clear if all of those cuts will actually happen, however. When asked how many employees the university will have once the reductions go into effect, SOU spokesperson Joe Mosley said that will be "somewhat of a moving target, as some areas of reduction may shift along the way."

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Service district for county jail, juvenile justice, eyed for JoCo

By Chrissy Ewald
 of the Daily Courier

The five-year levy that supports Josephine County's adult jail and juvenile detention service expires in December, and county leaders are considering pitching a service district to voters to pay at least some of what the levy covers on a more long-term basis.

At a meeting of the Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, Sheriff Dave Daniel said the existing levy rate of 93 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value is not going to be enough to underwrite both the county jail and juvenile detention.

Interim County Commissioner Gary Richardson noted that costs increase most years more than increases in tax revenue can cover, as a result of a state law passed in the 1990s that limits the annual growth rate of taxable property to 3% of the assessed value, which is below the average rate of inflation, especially during the COVID pandemic.

Daniel proposed setting up a service district to fund juvenile detention, which currently receives about 4 of the 93 cents, separately. The remaining 89 cents go to the county jail.

"There's enough to fund our jail operations, but not enough to fund both," he said.

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State's new prosperity council urges cuts in taxes, regulations

By Carlos Fuentes
 The Oregonian

Gov. Tina Kotek's economic prosperity council on Thursday recommended that state leaders lower taxes, cut burdensome regulations and bolster workforce development programs to boost Oregon's stagnant economy.

The release of the council's report now focuses the pressure on Kotek to decide which of the recommendations she will champion as she seeks reelection this fall. It also raises

questions about whether she and top Democratic lawmakers are willing to support tax changes that will almost certainly be controversial.

"I think she knows that things have to change, or she wouldn't have asked us to do the job," Curtis Robinhold, executive director of the Port of Portland and co-chair of the council, told The Oregonian/OregonLive Wednesday. "I think she has the intent to take action, and we wrote it in a way where she can take action."

Throughout the report, the council

argues that high taxes, lengthy permitting processes, a shortage of industrial land and a disjointed economic development system have made Oregon less competitive for business investment than neighboring states.

Notably, nearly all of the recommendations received unanimous support from the council, which included several business leaders and two labor representatives. That included proposals to revamp the state's economic development agency, establish statewide permit-

ting guidelines and shift to a market-based carbon emissions program consistent with those in neighboring states.

The council pitched the recommendations as strategies to make Oregon more attractive to business investment compared to neighboring states like Washington and California.

Some of the recommendations include:

- Replace Business Oregon, the

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