

This non-partisan report was prepared by volunteer members of the League of Women Voters of Lane County.

## **Measure 20-380**

### **Lane County 4-H Youth and OSU Extension Programs**

**Official Title:** Supporting 4-H youth and OSU Extension Programs across Lane County

**Question:** Shall Lane County support 4-H/Extension's 5-year local option for operations and capital; 5.0 cents per \$1000 assessed value; beginning 2027? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

**Referral:** This measure was referred to voters by the Lane County Board of Commissioners.

#### **Financial Impact**

If approved, Lane County would assess a dedicated local option tax supporting 4-H youth and OSU Extension Service programs across Lane County at the rate of \$0.05 per \$1,000 of assessed value, beginning in 2027. A property assessed at approximately the median value of \$236,000 would pay \$11.80 per year, which is an increase from the current levy of \$0.028 per \$1,000, or an increase of about \$5.19 per year for this property.

*Note: Assessed value (AV) is the value used to calculate property tax. It is shown on the property tax statement. It is NOT the same as real market value (RMV), which is the market price of the home.*

The proposed rate will raise approximately \$2,403,934 to \$2,758,569 over the five years, for an approximate total of \$12,891,013.

#### **Probable Result Of A “Yes” Vote**

A “Yes” vote would allow expansion of 4-H and OSU Extension services, including 4-H programming, youth educational programs, and programs focused on emergency preparedness and natural resources education. Taxes will increase.

#### **Probable Result Of A “No” Vote**

No new programs will be created and existing programs, such as the Master Gardener, Master Food Preserver, and the 4-H program may see cuts. Taxes for this purpose will decrease when the current levy expires.

#### **Background**

The extension services of Lane County are supported by a combination of federal, state, and county funds.

- State (15%) and federal (7%) funds allow Extension to employ faculty and provide centralized support and services.
- County funds (60%), including funds from the current levy, support local program support and office staff, facilities, and operations.
- Supplemental funding, including grants, gifts and fees (18%), provides additional support.
- Trained volunteers extend reach and impact (15,443 volunteer hours in 2025).

The levy currently in place was passed in 2021 at a rate of \$0.028 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The measure passed with 70% voter support. With these county funds, OSU Extension grew programming to reach large and smaller Lane County communities — including Florence, Elmira, Deadwood, the upper McKenzie corridor, Lowell, Oakridge and Westfir — and a broader audience. Program focus areas included 4-H youth development; horticulture, including Master Gardener volunteers; small farms, forestry and natural resources; seed and

cereal crop production; livestock, forages and dairy; family and community health; and food safety and preservation, including Master Food Preservers.

### **Proposal**

The purpose of the levy is to

- Expand 4-H and other youth programming opportunities to all communities
- Maintain volunteer programs such as Master Gardener, Master Food Preserver, Compost and Pruning Specialist, Food Pantry, and Master Woodland Manager
- Provide technical assistance to farmers, woodland owners and nursery growers
- Expand youth educational programs encouraging high school completion and college access
- Develop programs focused on community emergency preparedness and resilience
- Develop programs focused on natural resources education

### **Supporters Say**

- The resources that the extension services provide, both on-line and in personal conversations are outstanding.
- Interaction with Extension professionals brings a sense of community to newcomers and to long-time residents as well. This expertise is far reaching, from forestry information to Master Food Preservers and Master Gardeners, from information for first generation farmers in the Small Farms program to nutrition education for schools.
- The levy helps to leverage the work of hundreds of volunteers, who provide free help to our community.

### **Opponents Say**

- Times are tough for people, particularly those on fixed budgets; every levy request should be scrutinized carefully.
- The levy doesn't meet requirements for being modest, being for urgent needs, and being affordable. The County should return with a more affordable request.
- This levy, an increase of over 40%, is an example of steep tax creep that layers new taxes on existing ones and can raise total tax bills noticeably, even if individual amounts are small.

### **Editors' Notes:**

There are now Voter's Pamphlet Supporting and Opposing comments: <https://oregonvotes.gov/voters-guide-military/Measure20-380ArgInFavor.html#:~:text=Argument%20in%20Favor,4%2DH%20and%20Master%20Gardener%20s>. And <https://oregonvotes.gov/voters-guide-military/Measure20-380ArgOppose.html#:~:text=Argument%20in%20Opposition,-Taxpayers%20Association%20of&text=Vote%20No%20to%20Unaffordable%20Property,tax%20hikes%20like%20this%20one>.

There is a PAC registered with SoS supporting this measure: [https://secure.sos.state.or.us/orestar/sooDetail.do?sooRsn=105799&OWASP\\_CSRFTOKEN=UAR1-NL64-02KD-A4KK-G4J8-BP5E-GHVA-0E50](https://secure.sos.state.or.us/orestar/sooDetail.do?sooRsn=105799&OWASP_CSRFTOKEN=UAR1-NL64-02KD-A4KK-G4J8-BP5E-GHVA-0E50)

Lane County Median Assessed Value: [https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_3585797/File/Government/County%20Departments/Assessment%20and%20Taxation/2025-2026-Tax-Documents/2025%20Median%20AV%20](https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3585797/File/Government/County%20Departments/Assessment%20and%20Taxation/2025-2026-Tax-Documents/2025%20Median%20AV%20)

Eugene-Springfield Lookout, March 17, 2026: “The increase would help Extension increase its presence in the McKenzie River valley and open a third satellite office at the McKenzie River Discovery Center near Vida. That falls in line with how Extension has used levy funding in the past. After the 2021 levy passed, Extension opened satellite offices in Oakridge and Florence.

Those two offices each have a full-time staffer and the new levy would allow staffing to increase. Work at those locations includes a project helping the Oakridge School District develop a [garden for students to learn](#) about agriculture, nutrition and the environment.

The levy’s passage enables Extension to continue its work and grow.