

## Willamette Week

### The Year in Numbers

Stats tell the story of Portland in 2015.

*By WW Staff*

*December 29, 2015*

#### **137**

The number of statistics we believe it takes to tell the story of how life in Portland changed in 2015.

#### **GROWTH**

#### **78,173**

Out-of-state driver's licenses turned in to Oregon DMVs through November by people moving into the state. That number is more than last year but less than 1996's peak of 83,383.

#### **5,104**

New residential units added in Portland so far this year. That's five times as many as were added in 2009.

#### **341**

Applications for home-demolition permits in Portland in 2014.

#### **396**

Applications for home-demolition permits in Portland in 2015, as of Dec. 22.

#### **1,100**

Average rent in dollars for a market-rate one-bedroom apartment in Portland in January.

#### **1,175**

Average rent in dollars for a market-rate one-bedroom apartment in Portland in December.

#### **1,888**

Average rent in dollars for a market-rate one-bedroom apartment in the Pearl District in January.

#### **2,039**

Average rent in dollars for a market-rate one-bedroom apartment in the Pearl District in December.

#### **1,357**

Refugees who arrived in Oregon in fiscal year 2015.

#### **8**

Syrian refugees who arrived in Oregon in fiscal year 2015.

#### **3,740**

Airbnb listings active in Portland, a 53 percent increase since last December.

#### **513**

Short-term rental hosts (including those using Airbnb) that have applied for the supposedly mandatory city permit and safety inspection.

**76,144**

Reported lobbying expenditures in dollars by ride-sharing app Uber at Portland City Hall in 2015, as of Sept. 30.

**22,500**

Reported lobbying expenditures in dollars by Broadway Cab at Portland City Hall in 2015, as of Sept. 30.

**55.7**

Miles of Portland streets that remain unpaved at year's end.

**27.1 million**

Dollars raised by Portland web data company Janrain, the largest funding round for a Portland tech startup this year.

**37.2 billion**

Purchase price in dollars for Precision Castparts by multinational holding company Berkshire Hathaway, the largest acquisition of an Oregon company this year.

## **THE GREAT OUTDOORS**

**800,000**

Dollars paid in September to save three Eastmoreland sequoias from being razed for infill housing.

**1,714,207**

Number of Hawthorne Bridge crossings by bike in 2014.

**1,681,445**

Number of Hawthorne Bridge crossings by bike in 2015, as of Dec. 22.

**128,549**

Number of bike trips on Tilikum Crossing since it opened Sept. 12.

**14.97**

Inches of rain in Portland in December as of press time. The previous record was 13.35 inches.

**39**

Hours protesters spent dangling from the St. Johns Bridge to block an icebreaking ship headed to an Arctic oil-drilling site.

**69,624.66**

Acres of Oregon State Forest land burned in 2015 in wildfires caused by lightning.

**16,992.52**

Acres of Oregon State Forest land burned in 2015 in wildfires caused by people.

**1.7 million**

Visitors in 2015 to Valley of the Rogue State Park outside Grants Pass. It was the most-visited state park in Oregon.

**170**

Inches of antlers on the largest whitetail deer shot in Oregon this year. It's a new all-time record.

**85**

Number of wolves living in Oregon in 2015. That's a four-wolf increase from 2014.

**1.3 million**

Number of cows living in Oregon in 2015.

## **THE GAMES WE PLAY**

**4**

Number of players who can simultaneously gobble dots on Pac-Man Battle Royale, the most popular cabinet game at downtown retro arcade Ground Kontrol.

**12.6 million**

Biggest Oregon Lottery payout, in dollars, in 2015, to John Cason, who purchased a Megabucks ticket March 4 at a 7-Eleven in Beaverton.

**303,464**

Dollars in Oregon Lottery commissions generated so far this year by the video poker and Keno machines at Shari's Airport Way No. 218 in Northeast Portland, the largest amount paid by the state to a single lottery vendor.

**90**

Consecutive sellouts of Providence Park by the Portland Timbers.

**255**

Most game minutes the Timbers went between scoring goals. They scored at the end of their game against New York on April 19, went scoreless against the Sounders and the Whitecaps, then scored 64 minutes into their match against Montreal on May 9.

**313**

Most game minutes the Portland Thorns went between scoring goals. They were scoreless for three games before getting a goal in the 33rd minute of their match against the Western New York Flash.

**2**

Major league soccer championships won by Portland teams in the past three years. The Timbers won in 2015, while the Thorns won in 2013.

**38**

Years since the Trail Blazers have won an NBA championship.

**80 million**

Dollars that LaMarcus Aldridge will be paid over his four seasons with the San Antonio Spurs.

**108 million**

Dollars that Aldridge could have received over five seasons if he'd signed the league-maximum contract offered by the Portland Trail Blazers.

**361**

Days between July 8, 2014, when The Oregonian reported that Aldridge would sign a contract extension with the Trail Blazers, and July 4, 2015, when he signed with the Spurs, ending Portland's title hopes for the foreseeable future.

**602**

Points the Oregon Ducks football team scored during its run to last season's national title game.

**518**

Points the Ducks football team scored in this year's run to the Valero Alamo Bowl.

**22**

Points that separated the Ohio State Buckeyes from the Ducks in the 42-20 title game blowout Jan. 12.

## **LAW & ORDER**

**31**

Number of homicides so far in Portland in 2015.

**24**

Portland homicides that involved a firearm.

**6**

Portland homicides police believe were gang-related.

**9**

Number of people murdered at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Ore., by a 26-year-old gunman Oct. 1.

**250**

New applications for concealed handgun licenses in Multnomah County in November 2014.

**573**

New applications for concealed handgun licenses in Multnomah County in November 2015.

**15,244**

Lawyers who are active members of the Oregon State Bar.

**119**

Oregon State Bar lawyers who identify as black.

**25 million**

Dollars awarded in the largest individual legal judgment in Oregon this year. The Oregon Court of Appeals upheld a Multnomah County Circuit Court's award from tobacco giant Philip Morris to the estate of Michelle Schwarz.

**818,366**

Dollars raised on GoFundMe for the hospital bills of Christopher Mintz, a victim of the Umpqua Community College shooting. It was the biggest Oregon campaign on GoFundMe in 2015.

**13.2 million**

Dollars raised by the Coolest, a Portland cooler company that had 2015's biggest Kickstarter campaign in the city. Some who backed the Coolest Cooler are still waiting for their coolers with radios and blenders built in, but you can buy one on Amazon now for \$379.

**517,000**

Dollars raised by Sweet Cakes by Melissa since the state ordered it must pay \$135,000 to the lesbian couple whose wedding cake the company refused to bake.

**176**

Days following the state order it took the owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa to deposit a check with the state, pending the outcome of their court appeal.

## **SCHOOLING**

**2,925**

Number of students at David Douglas High School, the high school with the largest enrollment in Portland.

**395,000**

Square footage of David Douglas High School.

**135**

Square feet per student.

**522**

Number of students at Jefferson High School, the high school with the smallest enrollment in Portland.

**321,000**

Square footage of Jefferson High School.

**692**

Square feet per student.

**310,731.22**

Dollars spent in the race for the Zone 3 seat on the Portland School Board.

**0**

Salary in dollars of a member of the Portland School Board.

**1,373**

Number of Portland State University students studying management, the school's most popular major. That's 7 percent of the school's undergraduates.

**1,022**

New hair design certifications issued in Oregon so far in 2015.

**123**

New journeyman plumber licenses issued in Oregon through November 2015.

**59**

Contributors who gave \$1 million or more to Oregon Health & Science University's billion-dollar Knight Cancer Challenge. The total number of donors was more than 10,000.

## **FOOD, DRINK AND SMOKE**

**71,773**

Barrels of Deschutes Brewery beer sold in Oregon in 2015 through the month of October, the most of any Oregon brewery including Widmer Brothers.

**901,384**

Gallons sold in 2015 of the state's most popular liquor, HRD Vodka, which retook its traditional top spot from Fireball Cinnamon Whiskey.

**52,000**

Estimated pounds of chicken fried up at Reel 'M' Inn during the course of the year.

**115**

Price in dollars of the most expensive steak in Portland, a 40-ounce Tomahawk bone-in ribeye at Ruth's Chris downtown. The petite hostess swears she almost finished one all by herself.

**250,000**

Price in dollars of the most expensive menu cocktail in Portland, a heady mix of Thunderbird and Night Train at Le Bistro Montage called the Ex-Wife. The price of the drink is payable in monthly installments for the rest of your life.

**20**

Price in dollars of the lamb burger at the Feisty Lamb, the most expensive hamburger in Portland since the last \$20 hamburger in Portland, which was the foie gras burger at the now-defunct Gilt Club.

**834**

Price in dollars for a shot of John Walker, the most expensive shot of whiskey available to the public at the Multnomah Whiskey Library. ("There are more expensive whiskeys," said our interlocutor over the phone, "but those are all in private collections.")

**1,200**

Price in dollars for a 3-liter Jeroboam bottle of Bollinger La Grande Année 1999 Brut Champagne at Pix Patisserie, which is its most expensive bottle. By the glass, Pix's costliest bubbly is a mere \$28, for a stem of the Boizel Brut Millesime 2002.

**22**

Percentage of Multnomah County residents with an active Oregon Trail card, our state's fancy term for "food stamps."

**6,121**

Distance in miles to the seventh Voodoo Doughnut, in Taipei, Taiwan.

**4,839**

Distance in miles to Blue Star Donuts' fifth location, in a Tokyo shopping mall.

**29.72**

Percentage of THC in the strongest strain tested by Cascadia Labs, a batch of White Super Skunk. (Sorry, Portland, the identity of the grower is confidential.)

**14**

Cannabis dispensaries along Sandy Boulevard's "Green Mile."

**10.2**

Actual distance in miles of "The Green Mile," which starts at Southeast 7th Avenue and ends at Northeast 153rd Avenue.

**136**

Dispensaries selling recreational marijuana in Portland. State lawmakers authorized medical dispensaries to sell weed to all Oregonians beginning Oct. 1.

**311**

Dispensaries selling recreational marijuana in the rest of Oregon.

**34**

Number of liquor stores in Portland.

**249**

Liquor stores in the rest of Oregon.

## **POLITICS**

**3.6**

Number of times registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans in Multnomah County. (There are 227,179 Dems to 61,806 GOP voters.)

**32**

Days between Gov. John Kitzhaber's swearing-in for a fourth term and the day he announced his resignation.

**237,800**

Value in dollars of consulting contracts accepted by former Oregon first lady Cylvia Hayes from energy groups while working as an energy policy consultant to Kitzhaber.

**2018**

Year by which Hayes planned to write the first of three books, according to emails leaked to WW in February.

**1,502**

Number of pages in the Oregon State Police report on who leaked Kitzhaber's emails to WW. The whistle-blower, Michael Rodgers, provided the emails to WW after he received an order to delete them from state servers.

**56,000**

Pages of former Gov. John Kitzhaber's emails released by Gov. Kate Brown in response to public records requests.

**847**

Bills passed in the 2015 legislative session, out of 2,641 introduced.

**0**

Bills vetoed from the 2015 session.

**11,846**

Dollars allocated for foster children that Mary Holden, executive director of foster care agency Give Us This Day, spent on Louis Vuitton luggage. A WW report in October led to a state shutdown of Give Us This Day and a shakeup of leadership at the Oregon Department of Human Services.

**4.29 million**

Dollars the state of Oregon has spent so far on litigation with Oracle over responsibility for the failed health-insurance exchange Cover Oregon.

**404,000**

New Oregon Medicaid patients who signed up since Obamacare went into effect Jan. 1, 2014.

**450,000**

Dollars that Wieden + Kennedy founder Dan Wieden saved on his state income taxes over five years by buying energy tax credits from TriMet at 75 cents on the dollar.

**3**

Former Portland mayors who announced they were endorsing Mayor Charlie Hales' challenger, Ted Wheeler, in the 2016 election.

**12**

Days after the former mayors' announcement that Hales declared he wouldn't run for re-election.

**143,222**

Campaign donations in dollars Mayor Charlie Hales accepted in 2015 before announcing he wouldn't run for re-election.

**18**

Years since Garth Brooks previously toured Portland.

**82,000**

Total fans who attended the five sold-out Garth Brooks shows at Moda Center, an all-time record for the venue.

**30**

Years since Madonna previously appeared in Portland.

**148**

Price in dollars of the most expensive ticket sold at Moda Center for the Madonna concert Oct. 17, which our reviewer called "the best arena show I've ever seen."

**1989**

Birth year of Taylor Swift, the most popular artist among users of the Multnomah County Library. Her album 1989 was checked out 454 times.

**1**

Rank of the song "Where Are Ü Now" (with Justin Bieber), from the Diplo/Skrillex project Jack Ü on Spotify's list of most-listened-to songs in Portland.

**619**

Copies of the Decemberists' What a Terrible World, What a Beautiful World sold by Music Millennium, making it the store's best-selling album.

**611,977**

Twitter followers of the Decemberists, Portland's most popular account. (Nike has Oregon's most followers, at 5.65 million.)

**7**

Twitter accounts followed by the Decemberists. In addition to four members of the band, the Decemberists follow Rosanne Cash, NPR's All Songs Considered, and local singer-songwriter Laura Veirs.

**47**

Copies of Björk's Vulnicura sold at Beacon Sound records, making it the store's top-selling vinyl record.

**109**

Copies of Colleen's Everyone Alive Wants Answers sold at Beacon Sound, making the 2003 re-release the store's top-selling cassette tape.

**21**

The number of Pilots who recorded "Tear in My Heart," the most-requested song on KNRK 94.7.

**1,500**

Estimated minimum number of times Live 95.5 played Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars' "Uptown Funk," the station's most-played track of the year. The most requested song was Justin Bieber's "What Do You Mean." (Our appreciation to staff for this disparity.)

**744**

Number of times singers at Voicebox Karaoke cued up Maroon 5's "Sugar," making it the most popular song sung at Voicebox's two locations.

## **THE LOOKS**

**687**

Beards trimmed at the downtown Bishop's Barbershop.

**286**

Beards trimmed at the Hollywood Supercuts.

**2,658**

Number of times Multnomah County Library patrons checked out Game of Thrones: The Complete Fourth Season, the library's most popular DVD.

**9,500**

Viewers who watched Mad Max: Fury Road at Laurelhurst Theater, making it the most popular movie of the year.

**79,000**

Visitors to Portland Art Museum's most popular exhibit, Italian Style: Fashion Since 1945.

**200,000**

Visitors to OMSI's most popular exhibit, Ripley's Believe It or Not!

## **WORDS**

**53**

Stories in The New York Times published in 2015 that featured the word "Portlandia." The most recent usage, published Dec. 22, 2015, in a story about culture wars at Oberlin College: "'When you're defending the cultural authenticity of GENERAL TSO'S CHICKEN, you're a living Portlandia sketch,' Fredrik deBoer, an academic, wrote on Twitter, in a reference to the IFC show that satirizes Oregon hipsters."

**350,000**

Price in dollars of the most expensive book at Powell's City of Books, a two-volume set of the 1814 Lewis and Clark journals.

**2,774**

Patrons who checked out the library's most popular novel, All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr.

**2,199**

Check-outs of the Multnomah County Library's most popular adult nonfiction book of 2015, The

Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing by Marie Kondo.

**12**

Pairs of socks our moms made us thank for service and then throw away after they read Powell's best-selling book of the year, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*.

**6**

President Jimmy Carter's rank in Powell's most attended events of the year, behind No. 1, nerd queen Felicia Day, followed by famously displeased feline Grumpy Cat, Elizabeth "Eat Pray Love" Gilbert, gentrification spirit animal Carrie Brownstein, and punk queen Patti Smith.

**140 million**

Average distance in miles between Earth and Mars, the planet where Powell's second-best-selling book, Andy Weir's *The Martian*, takes place.

**4**

Years since Powell's third-best-selling book, *Wildwood* by the Decemberists' Colin Meloy, was published.

**82**

Weeks that *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, Powell's fourth-best-selling book, has spent on The New York Times' best-seller list.

**1**

Number of racist Atticus Finches in Powell's fifth-best-selling book of the year, *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee.

**155**

People who thru-hiked the 2,600-mile Pacific Crest Trail in 2011, the year before Cheryl Strayed's memoir *Wild* came out.

**271**

People who thru-hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in 2013, the year after the book *Wild* came out.

**527**

People who thru-hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in 2015, the year after *Wild* the movie came out.

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Contributors: Lizzy Acker, Martin Cizmar, Peter D'Auria, Lisa Dunn, Coby Hutzler, Nigel Jaquiss, Sophia June, Matthew Korfhage, Aaron Mesh, Matthew Singer and Beth Slovic.

Sources used to compiled this feature:

Governor's Office, Oregon State Police, Oregon Department of Justice, Oregon Health Authority, TriMet, Secretary of State's Office, National Weather Service. Oregon Health & Science University, Oregon Legislature, Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles, Oregon State Bar, Oregon Lottery, Oregon Student Access Commission, PitchBook, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Portland Housing Bureau, Portland Bureau of Transportation, Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Lutheran Community Services Northwest, Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, GoFundMe, Kickstarter, PitchBook, Oregon Parks and Recreation, Portland Bureau of Development Services, National Weather Service, Powell's Books, Oregon Public Broadcasting, Oregon Liquor Control Commission, Le Bistro Montage, Multnomah Whiskey Library, Pix

Patisserie, Old Salt, Reel 'M' Inn, Ruth's Chris, The Feisty Lamb, The Oregonian, Pacific Crest Trail Organization, Nicky USA, Moda Center, Beacon Sound, Music Millennium, Jackpot Records, 94.7 FM, 95.5 FM, Portland Tribune, Twitter, Twitaholic.com, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Portland Art Museum, OMSI, Trimet, Laurelhurst Theater, Multnomah County Library, Oregon Public Health Authority, Vital Records, Portland Timbers, Portland Thorns FC, Cycle Oregon, Planned Parenthood, mapdevelopers.com, Google Maps, Port of Portland, Oregon Humane Society, Zipcar, car2go, Bishops Barbershop (downtown location), Supercuts (Hollywood location), Oregon Zoo, Stumptown, Ground Kontrol, UP Department of Public Safety, Goducks.com, Boy Scouts of America Cascade Pacific Council, Oregon Medical Board, Multnomah County Health Department, Portland State University, Cascadia Labs, Oregon Secretary of State, Center for Responsive Politics, Portland Parks and Recreation, New Seasons Market, Helium Comedy Club, Portland Center Stage, Artists Repertory Theater, Portland Expo Center, Oregon Convention Center, Taxifarefinder.com, Pacific Crest Trail Association, Conduit, Polaris, Northwest Dance Project, Oregon Ballet Theater, Airbnb, Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board, Voicebox, Portland Community College, Oregon Department of Transportation, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, Portland Winterhawks, Northwest Big Game, Inc.

## The Portland Mercury

### 2015 Was Important—and Messy

#### The Mercury's Definitive Rundown of the Year That Was

*By Dirk VanderHart  
December 30, 2015*

LOOKING BACK on the thing, 2015 feels important. Like, way more important than 2014.

This is the year Portland really acknowledged its housing crisis—then properly began arguing over how to fix it. It's a year in which the city sharpened its disdain for fossil fuels, and staged one of the more spectacular protests the country's seen to make its point. We successfully convinced yet another mayor to leave office, took our first-ever legal toke (which didn't feel all that different), and saved some huge trees (while failing to save a bunch of houses).

It was sad and messy, joyous and interesting—and we can't wait to do it all again. For now, here's the Mercury news staff's clichéd year-end list of the stories we'll carry with us into 2016.

#### **Camping Ban Allowed!**

Early this year, Portland's public defenders had the City of Portland's ban on homeless camping dead in their sights. They'd found a client—a young homeless woman named Alexandra Barrett—bent on fighting her frequent arrests for camping, and ready to take a case to trial. The argument Barrett's attorneys employed has become well known: That Portland doesn't have anywhere to put all of its homeless people, so its camping law essentially punishes people for being homeless. The same logic has since been adopted by the US Department of Justice in an Idaho case, but it ultimately held little sway here in Multnomah County. In early February, Circuit Court Judge Stephen Bushong issued a stern ruling that Portland's ban is "not the solution to this complex problem," but nonetheless affirmed its legality. The ruling, attorneys said, put the camping ban on its strongest footing in years.

## **Pulling the Plug on Pembina**

Pembina Pipeline Corporation thought Portland was a shoo-in for its next gigantic propane export and storage facility, and with good reason: When the Canadian fossil fuel giant initially came knocking at the Port of Portland's door, port administrators and city lawmakers appeared welcoming. But after a 300-person-strong protest at the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and a resounding "NO" from many Portlanders, Mayor Charlie Hales yanked his support for the \$500 million project. Pembina vowed to return, and it looked like Commissioner Nick Fish might aid them, but climate change activists prevailed and it appears the project has been scrapped.

## **Goodbye, Guvnah!**

It was a shocking end to a historic career. Three months after becoming the first person elected Oregon's governor four times, John Kitzhaber abruptly resigned in mid-February. An ethics scandal that had been nipping at Kitzhaber's heels for months had finally overtaken the governor—with Democratic Party leaders calling for his head, and then-Secretary of State (and now Governor) Kate Brown making Kitzhaber look unglued in a press release detailing odd behavior. Despite his resignation, the jury's still out on exactly how bad the former governor's ethical lapses were. Evidence indicates his fiancée, Cylvia Hayes, may have traded her position as first lady for cushy appointments, and there are allegations Kitzhaber tried to erase his emails from state servers. While Kitz has taken tentative steps back into the spotlight lately, federal authorities are still investigating the matter.

## **\$15 When?**

State lawmakers failed to get a minimum wage increase through during the 2015 legislative session, and activists working for "poverty wages" weren't pleased with the incremental steps legislators were proposing anyway. So the \$15 Now movement took measures onto their own clipboards, and are working to gather more than 80,000 valid signatures by next summer. If they make it, the proposal to increase the statewide minimum wage will go to the voters on the November 2016 ballot.

## **It Happened Here (And Lots of Other Places)**

On October 1, a 26-year-old student at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg walked into his freshman writing class packing an arsenal, then calmly murdered eight fellow classmates and the professor. Christopher Harper-Mercer killed himself after being shot by responding officers, and Oregon became the latest alarming backdrop for the mass-shooting epidemic that's overtaken the country. It's since been eclipsed by domestic terrorism incidents in Colorado and California. Gun sales are chugging right along. Congress is deadlocked. The same old song.

## **Bike Share at Last!**

After years of delay, misadventure, and disappointment, Portland Bureau of Transportation in September announced a bike share system will finally roll out on city streets next year—and it'll be unlike most of the programs that have sprung up around the country. The bureau is promising a 600-bike system made up of innovative "smart bikes" that will be available near the city center. The business model is more like Car2Go than traditional bike share—rather than being tied to specific docks, you'll be able to park bikes virtually anywhere in town (though you'll pay a penalty if it's outside of certain prescribed zones). More importantly, the system's (relatively) cheap—millions less than what the city had counted on paying.

## **Bloody Thursday**

Make no mistake, gun violence has taken hold of the city this year. Portland police say there's been a record number of gang-related attacks in 2015—more than 173 as of this writing. And though some community members dispute the "gang" designation as lazy, there's no question violence has surged this year. Much of the bloodshed has been on the city's fringes, but one of the city's most popular events—Last Thursday on NE Alberta—was interrupted by a hail of gunfire in May. Three people were shot that evening, by a teenager who said someone looked at him wrong. Meanwhile, other attendees shamefully pouted that the crime had prevented them from getting into Salt & Straw.

## **South Park Saves "The Giants"**

In a city where some feel the landscape is under attack by home demolitions and quick-rising apartment buildings, the Eastmoreland Neighborhood Association decided to take action against Everett Custom Homes' owner Vic Remmers, whose employees arrived with chainsaws to take out three 100-plus-year-old sequoia trees in September. Neighbors and other Portlanders sick of seeing mature trees cut in the name of development staged a days-long standoff that finally culminated in South Park creator Matt Stone stepping in with a chunk of cash. Together with other donations, Stone's money was able to save the trees by buying the land back from Remmers for upward of \$500,000. The lot where the trees stand will become a public park.

## **Moving Camp**

Lots happened—and is still happening—in news of Portland homeless camps this year. First, after searching for more than a year, Mayor Charlie Hales and Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced in April they'd found a new site for Right 2 Dream Too. It's in Southeast Portland, near the east end of the Tilikum Crossing (which opened this year, by the way!). Logistics of a move are still being debated. Meanwhile, the city saw the emergence of its latest sanctioned homeless camp. Hazelnut Grove, near the intersection of North Greeley and Killingsworth, will likely receive a formal city permit in coming weeks.

## **The City That Works (For One Term)**

For much of the year, 2016's mayoral race looked nonexistent. Mayor Charlie Hales was Hoovering up cash from supporters, and no one seemed likely to challenge. Then Pembina happened (see above), upsetting some of the city's business interests enough that folks began actively looking for a Hales alternative. State Treasurer Ted Wheeler entered the fray in September, ensuring Portland would have two viable candidates to choose from. Then it had one again! Hales announced in October he'd decided not to run—making him the third straight mayor to bail after one term. And now? It's a race! Multnomah County Commissioner Jules Bailey will officially enter the race in January. Fun times.

## **Shell No!**

Royal Dutch Shell sent one of its ice-breaking ships, the Fennica, to Portland for repairs, and our green city didn't miss the opportunity to fuck with the company. Local "kayaktivists" took to the Willamette River near Cathedral Park in an attempt to block the ship's departure, and were joined by 13 Greenpeace activists who'd dangled themselves beneath the St. Johns Bridge. The hullabaloo kept the ship at port for 36 hours longer than scheduled, made national news, and culminated in Mayor Charlie Hales taking a message to President Barack Obama urging him to pull the plug on Arctic oil drilling.

## **No More Fossil Fuels**

The climate love kept coming. In a resounding win for climate change activists, Portland City Council in November enacted two resolutions. The first cemented the city's commitment to opposing mile-long "bomb trains" transporting crude oil through Portland. The second, passed a week later, made it a city policy to oppose any new infrastructure that would increase the capacity for storage or transport of fossil fuels.

## **All Hail Uber!**

After first denying Uber and Lyft access into the Portland market, then letting them in on a Wild West-style, near free-for-all trial basis, then finding out Portlanders loved the "ride-sharing" companies, city council in December voted to allow so-called transportation network companies (TNCs) a permanent place in the city. Though Portland riders have embraced Uber and Lyft—the companies together now account for six out of 10 for-hire rides—the change came about under a cloud of controversy. Traditional cabbies say they're getting their livelihoods taken away by the interloping companies, riders who need wheelchair-accessible vehicles say they're not getting equitable service, and Portland Auditor Mary Hull Caballero chastised the ride-share companies, Mayor Charlie Hales, and Transportation Commissioner Steve Novick for a lack of transparency after Hales and Novick failed to report a meeting with Uber representatives at prominent Portland consultant Mark Wiener's home. Rule flouting or no, looks like Uber/Lyft are here to stay.

## **Portland Feels the Bern**

Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders had been drawing ever-larger crowds on his US tour, but even Sanders said the 28,000 Portlanders who came to hear him speak at the Moda Center in August were "unbelievable." In addition to the 19,000 of us who crammed into the stands, another 9,000 gathered in overflow areas set up nearby. After the event, Sanders met with six local Black Lives Matter activists. Just the night before, Black Lives Matter protesters in Seattle interrupted a rally, causing enough disruption that Sanders left the stage.

## **Green 2015**

Sure, Oregonians formally voted for legal recreational pot in November 2014, but it wasn't 'til the middle of this year we saw the fruits of that trailblazing (this pun works on many levels). Cannabis became legal in July, meaning Oregonians could possess and plant weed, though they still didn't have a place to legally buy it... until October. The state's real pot emancipation day was October 1, when hundreds of medical marijuana dispensaries got permission to start selling buds to the masses. It's a hell of a thing.

## **Nestlé Not Wanted**

Though much-maligned candy-making Swiss corporation Nestlé has been eyeing Columbia River Gorge water for nearly a decade, 2015 was the year they almost snuck in without going through a public process. That, of course, angered tribes, environmentalists, and pretty much everyone else, which eventually convinced Governor Kate Brown to intervene on the plan to siphon Oxbow Springs' water out of the gorge. After a huge public outcry, a hunger strike by a Warm Springs tribal member, and a ballot measure proposal that could've banned the company, Brown finally nixed a complicated backroom water swap deal between the town of Cascade Locks and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife that would have given Nestlé a green light to build a water-bottling plant.

## **City Action on Skyrocketing Rents**

As Portland saw vacancy rates plummet, a tidal wave of residents got no-cause lease termination notices and steep rent increases. Money was moving in, and renters—a largely unprotected and vulnerable population—were being forced out of neighborhoods and homes. The city initially threw up its hands, saying Oregon's landlord-favoring laws left local officials powerless. Then this summer, tenants' rights group the Community Alliance of Tenants declared a "state of emergency," calling on city administrators to help. Lo and behold, the next day Housing Commissioner Dan Saltzman proposed a set of protections, and a few weeks later Mayor Charlie Hales called for a state of emergency. Now, the city's added about \$67 million to the affordable housing coffers to be spent over the next 10 years and some fixes may be on the horizon for cost-burdened Portlanders.

## **Drunk on Power**

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) is about to take on a huge new task—regulating legal weed. The agency made some... interesting headlines this year. In April, the Mercury reported that OLCC inspectors were following college co-eds around in unmarked cars, causing at least one Lewis and Clark College student to believe she was about to be abducted. The agency's since made changes—mandating uniforms with logos and requiring markings on inspector vehicles. Now, the inspectors feel those changes might make them targets. They want guns, and are in the process of petitioning for their own union, which could give them increased bargaining power to get permission to pack heat.

## **Street Fee, Out of Gas**

The rattling clattertrap that was the "street fee" proposal lurched into 2015 on shaky wheels. Over and over again, Commissioner Steve Novick and Mayor Charlie Hales had changed their ideas for how Portland could find millions in new money to fix roads. On January 7, they announced their latest plan. Then eight days later they shut the thing down altogether—opting to hope for state transportation money that never came. Now, blessedly, the conversation is over, and it looks like Portlanders will finally get to vote on roads money. Novick wants to put a 10-cent local gas tax on the November 2016 ballot.