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## Crook County gets its first Measure 37 claim

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By Ernestine Bousquet

The Bulletin

At the same time the Crook County Court received its first Measure 37 claim, the county commissioners appointed hearings officers who will evaluate the claims and make rulings.

Measure 37 went into effect on Dec. 2 and requires government entities to compensate landowners or waive a land-use restriction if it limits how they can develop or use their land. The claims are subject to certain conditions, and landowners have to prove that the land-use restriction reduced their property value.

The county received its first Measure 37 claim on Thursday from Gary Romine, a Prineville resident who wants to partition land he has owned since 1949.

Romine declined to say why he filed a claim, saying only that the property was north of Prineville, and a portion of it is considered farmland.

The city of Prineville has yet to receive a Measure 37 claim.

The county court also selected three hearings officers, who will be assigned Measure 37 claims on a rotating basis and paid through processing fees collected from claimants.

Crook County Judge Scot Cooper said the county appointed:

- Greg Lynch, an attorney who lives in Crook County and is a partner in the Bend-based law firm, Hurley, Lynch and Re;
- Noreen Saltveit McGraw, a Prineville attorney and former vice president of the Oregon State Bar Association;
- James Minturn, a former Crook County district attorney and retired partner of the former law firm Minturn, Larson, VanVoorhees and Dixon.

Cooper said they were chosen because of their familiarity with Crook County issues, their knowledge of land-use laws and their credibility in



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the community.

There will be one hearings officer assigned per case, and they will be paid \$100 an hour to review a claim, hold a hearing and make a written decision, Cooper said. The claims will be turned over to the hearings officer once the Crook County counsel has deemed them complete.

The hearings officers will be neutral parties who have broad discretion to make decisions, Cooper said.

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But as stipulated in Crook County's ordinance, the county will grant waivers for most Measure 37 claims that pass muster, because there is no money for compensation, Cooper said.

"It isn't rocket science," Cooper said. "It shouldn't take us long to figure it out, if the advance work is done and we put that burden on the applicant."

The planning director and members of the public will be allowed to comment during the hearing. Crook County commissioners can also challenge a hearings officer's decision within 10 days.

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