

Oregon prosecutor rehired four years after gun incident

KLAMATH FALLS (AP) — An attorney has been rehired by the Klamath County District Attorney's Office a few years after he resigned following a gun incident.

District Attorney Eve Costello told the *Herald and News* that Cole Chase was the most qualified applicant her office received for a position that opened up.

Chase resigned January 1, 2015, while facing criminal charges that he threatened two men with a gun during an argument outside a martini bar.

He later pleaded no contest to unlawful use of a weapon and menacing. He was sentenced to probation, and required to undergo treatment for anger management and alcohol abuse.

The Oregon State Bar suspended Chase's law license for six months and placed him on probation for 18 months.

Oregon State studies embers to fight spread of wildfires

CORVALLIS (AP) — An Oregon State University professor is using federal funds to conduct research on how embers form and spread during devastating wildfires.

Assistant professor David Blunck's team is testing variables such as temperature, wind speed, timber species and branch diameter to figure out how to predict when embers will form, the *Statesman Journal* reported Friday.

The project is being funded by the federal government's Joint Fire Science Program and the team is sharing results with the U.S. Forest Service, the newspaper reported.

Wind-blown embers that jump far ahead of the fire line and start new spot fires have long been the bane of firefighters in the American West. In extreme fire weather, the blaze can create its own winds and toss embers hundreds of feet — or even miles — ahead of the main blaze.

Last fall's fire in the Columbia River Gorge jumped across the Columbia River to Washington when the wind carried an ember two miles (3.2 kilometers) across the water.

That blaze burned for three months and scorched 78 square miles (202 square

kilometers) before it was contained.

Researchers at OSU hope their results can be used to create a model that would calculate probabilities for how many embers could form and how far away they might land.

“Our working hypothesis now is that ponderosa generates a lot of embers because it has a very high fuel loading, or more needles.”
—Tyler Hudson

In the lab, they've used a small-scale wind tunnel to study ember formation in dowels made of different types of timber.

“With a camera, we determine how long it takes for a large piece of dowel to break off,” Blunck said. “Ultimately, how long it takes to break off is indicative of

how long it takes to generate embers.”

In the field, they've burned more than 120 trees that are 12 to 14 feet (3 to 4.5 meters) tall, counting and measuring the embers that are released.

The researchers also use an infrared camera to look at embers lost into the air.

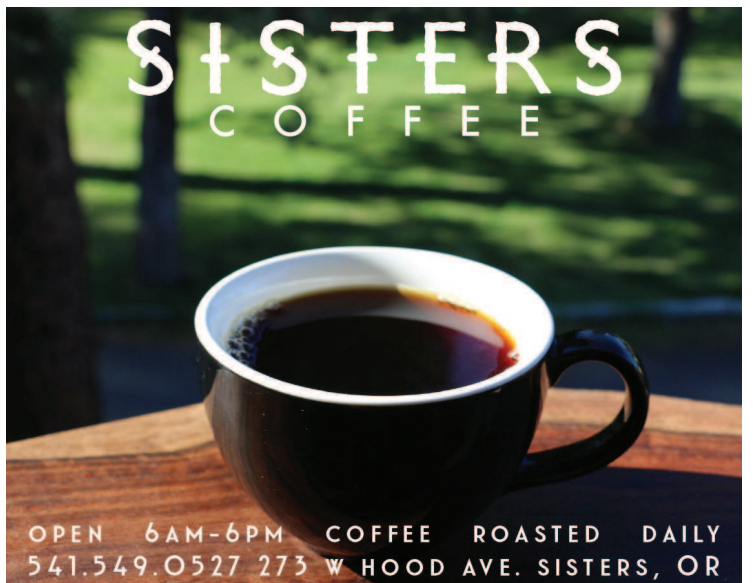
So far, the team has tentatively found that branch diameter is the biggest factor determining the formation of embers.

“Our working hypothesis

now is that ponderosa generates a lot of embers because it has a very high fuel loading, or more needles,” said Tyler Hudson, a graduate student in the College of Engineering who is working on the project.

And, working with The Nature Conservancy of Oregon, they've observed controlled burns in the forest.

“We were able to put fireproof fabric around and collect embers on that, getting data representative of an actual fire,” Blunck said.



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