

# Appeal Tribune

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## Turner police chief sued by former officers

**Ben Botkin**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

What started a year ago as a federal lawsuit against Turner's police chief by a former officer has multiplied into a second suit, a Marion County Sheriff's investigation and potentially career-ending complaints to Oregon's police oversight agency.

Former Turner officers Larissa "Lacey" White and Christopher White and Chief Don Taylor have, at various times, requested formal investigations of each

other's conduct.

Chris White was a Turner officer from 2013 to 2015 before becoming a Marion County sheriff's deputy. His wife replaced him on the Turner force, but left in 2017 after being accused of filing false time sheets.

The trail of litigation began in March 2018 when Lacey White filed a federal whistleblower lawsuit against Taylor and the Turner Police Department, claiming she was fired in retaliation for raising concerns about policy violations within the department.

In turn, the city of Turner has filed its own complaints, vigorously defending the decisions and ac-

tions of its police chief and city administrator.

**False statement, free speech debated**

After Chris White provided a statement — including criticism of the Turner Police Department — in support of his wife's claim for unemployment benefits, Turner city officials complained to the Marion County Sheriff's Office, alleging his statement was false and dishonest.

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**Candy Babel in Silverton** CHRISTENA BROOKS / SPECIAL TO THE APPEAL TRIBUNE

## New businesses in downtown Silverton

### Yogurt, candy shop and BBQ joint open this spring

**Christena Brooks**  
Special to Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

"The only thing constant is change," goes the famous quote by a Greek philosopher, and it's as true in business as anywhere. Silverton's business core is changing this spring, with new food venues opening and other shops closing or moving.

Heavenly Yogurt is slated to open next to Papa Murphy's by May 11, bringing soft-serve frozen yogurt

back to Silverton. Taking the space most recently occupied by Neighbor Dudes Tap House, the new shop will sell multiple yogurt flavors, toppings, cones and creations such as banana splits.

It will be full-serve, featuring five sizes of yogurt ranging in price from about \$2 or \$2.50 up to \$7 or \$8, said owner April Sattler.

Sattler came to Silverton seven years ago and "always wanted to be a part of the community," finally

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## Rwandan genocide survivor to teach forgiveness in Silverton

**Christena Brooks**  
Special to Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Twenty-five years ago this spring, nearly 1 million Rwandans were killed by soldiers, militia members and their former friends and neighbors. The 100-day genocide shocked the world, largely for the ferocity with which civilians in the ethnic majority turned upon those in the minority.

Thirty-five members of Emmanuel Sitaki's family were killed, their deaths coming at the hands of com-



**Sitaki**

munity members with whom they'd lived and worked for years. At trial, Sitaki looked into the faces of neighbors-turned-murderers.

"The people who killed my family were not strangers," he said. "They were people who grew up together, people that we played soccer together. We shared meals together. They were neighbors. They were not strangers."

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## VA patients face grueling wait times

**Ben Botkin**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs clinic in Salem is plagued with long wait times for new patients.

The average delay to see a primary care doctor is 67 days, according to agency data.

It's the second-worst in Oregon and much longer than most Portland-area VA clinics, where wait times average less than a month.

For veterans who move to the Salem area after starting VA treatment elsewhere, the wait is far worse.

It's not uncommon for them to wait years for an appointment. More than 1,100 veterans are caught in this limbo — living in or near Salem and still waiting to see a Salem VA physician because they were assigned doctors elsewhere in the Northwest.

VA officials acknowledge the long waits are embarrassing and attribute it to difficulty in recruiting doctors to the Salem clinic.

Darwin Goodspeed, who became director of the VA Portland Health Care System in November, said he's aware of the situation and wants to see it change.

"Recruiting here has just been challenging," Goodspeed said.

In part, that's because Salem is viewed as a smaller, more rural community with less appeal for younger doctors than cosmopolitan Portland. In response, the VA is offering relocation bonuses to doctors for taking jobs in Salem.

The clinic has four open physician positions, two of which are supposed to be filled this summer.

Each doctor typically has a caseload of about 1,200 patients. As doctor positions go unfilled, patient needs pile up quickly.

VA officials also are turning increasingly to technology to recruit from a wider applicant pool.

And the Salem clinic earlier this year started a tele-medicine program that allows patients to communicate from an exam room with a doctor based elsewhere. For example, a nurse in Salem can check a patient's vitals while a doctor monitors remotely.

So far, the program has two doctors: one in Portland and another in Texas.

**'I kind of lost hope in the VA'**

For veterans who have moved to Salem from other parts of Oregon, it's not unusual to wait more than a

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**Dr. Denise Weil leads a tele-health virtual doctor appointment at the Salem VA Outpatient Clinic.**  
ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL



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