

EOU wins series finale



Elementary school class visits baby goats, 2A



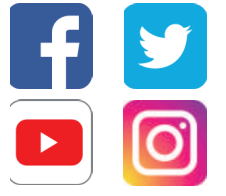
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Collins sentenced to more than 41 years

Lack of remorse, no apology leads to longer prison sentence

By Cherise Kaechele
The Observer

Corey Collins showed no remorse for his actions on Friday in his sentencing hearing. The 21-year-old who was found guilty of multiple sex abuse charges in February pointed his finger at the five victims during his statement to Union County Circuit Court Judge Thomas Powers. It was Collins' lack of empathy that led Powers to sentence the Elgin resident to more



Collins

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Francisca Benitez/The Observer

Officer Kaleb Cole patrolling for the La Grande Police Department.

Police departments see fewer applicants

By Francisca Benitez
The Observer

Across the nation, fewer people are deciding to become police officers, and a rising distrust in law enforcement may be the reason.

According to data from the Department of Justice, the number of police officers per 1,000 people in the U.S. has gone down 11 percent since 1997. Nationally, police departments are finding it more difficult to fill vacancies.

The Oregonian reported earlier this month the Portland Police Bureau currently has 75 unfilled officer positions it is struggling to

fill, and new recruits are dropping or failing out of training at double the rate they used to.

La Grande Police Chief Brian Harvey said he can see the trend in La Grande as well. He said in the past when there was a vacant officer position he would likely receive 90 to 100 applications but now the department gets only about 20. He said that even though there are fewer applicants, the positions are still being filled with good candidates, so there hasn't been a shortage of cops in La Grande.

"Locally we've been very

See Police / Page 5A

Oregon bill targets potential health risks of electronics

By Francisca Benitez
The Observer

A bill introduced in the Oregon Senate would require the Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority to review studies on the potential health risks of exposure to radiation from electronic devices in classrooms.

SB 283 focuses on microwave radiation emitted from electronic devices like Wi-Fi routers, computers and cellphones.

The bill calls for the Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority to review scientific studies about the effects of radiofrequency (RF) radiation and create a strategic plan for safety based on their research. It would also require schools to "prepare a statement that discloses the potential health risks of wireless network technology" and distribute them in public and private elementary and secondary schools in the state.

But what exactly is radiofrequency radiation from electronics?

Davison Soper, a physics

professor at the University of Oregon, explained that it sounds scarier than it is. "Radiation is an unfortunate word," he said.

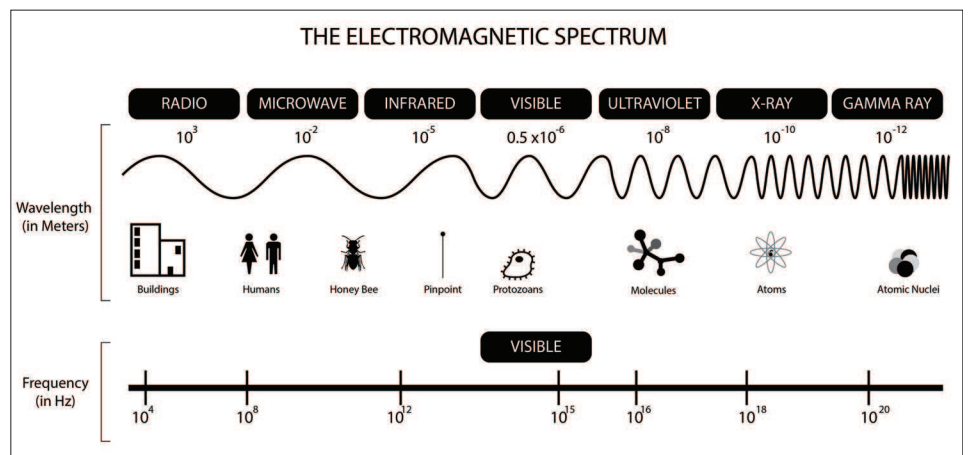
According to the FDA, the electromagnetic spectrum is a measurement of waves of energy and how they move. The American Cancer Society's website says High-energy radiation is radiation that can damage DNA and cause cancer and is called "ionizing radiation." X-rays and gamma rays are examples of ioniz-

"The results add evidence to the idea that RF radiation might potentially impact human health."

— American Cancer Society

ing radiation. Non-ionizing radiation is not powerful enough to affect DNA. Visible light is a form of non-ionizing radiation.

The radiation in question is radiofrequency radiation, which is a non-ionizing form of radiation. It occurs naturally in space and on



Courtesy of Creative Commons

This graphic features a visual representation of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Earth and through man-made sources like TV, cell phone signals and Wi-Fi signals. It's also used to heat food in microwave ovens.

Soper said because RF radiation waves cannot affect DNA and can only cause cells to vibrate or heat up, it is unclear how they could cause cancer. He noted the amount of radiation from electronic devices is highest when holding a cellphone to your head. The radiation is much greater when a cellphone is broadcasting a signal — like during a call — and because it cannot travel far, radiation is reduced greatly by talking on speakerphone or using a hands-free device.

The National Toxicology Program released a study in November of 2018 that showed a link between RF

radiation and cancer.

However, the study exposed rats and mice to much higher levels of RF radiation than humans would experience, and the results were still mixed. Only male rats had an increase in cancerous tumors, and their lifespans were actually longer than rats that had not been exposed.

The American Cancer Society's website refers to this study and states, "Some aspects of this study make it hard to know what these results might mean for people, but the results add evidence to the idea that RF radiation might potentially impact human health."

The International Agency for Research on Cancer lists RF radiation — next to aloe extract and pickled vegetables — as "possibly carcinogenic (cancer-

causing) to humans." The American Cancer Society's website is also inconclusive on the possible link between cellphones and cancer, saying, "Although some studies have shown a possible link, many others have not."

Soper said that he is never opposed to reviewing studies and therefore isn't necessarily opposed to the bill, but he is skeptical that RF radiation poses any risk to humans.

SB 283 is one of three concerning electronics in classrooms. SB 281 would require stricter labeling of health risks associated with electronics, and SB 282 focuses on the psychological and health risks associated with children and extended time with screens, at home and in the classroom. ■

Preserving Union's lone pharmacy

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Union's pharmacy, the Union Drug Company, is in peril.

The pharmacy could close as early as July, but its owner, Walt Brookshire, and local health organizations are set to take innovative steps to save it.

The future of the pharmacy is in danger because its building, at 105 N. Main St., may be sold this spring. Brookshire said a prospective buyer has a purchase option agreement with Brookshire, who owns the building and the individual might exercise it by May 1.

Should this happen, Brookshire said, his pharmacy would have 90 days to relocate. Brookshire, local health organizations and community members do not want Union to be left without a pharmacy, and they are looking at long-term solutions.

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Preventive care keeps the doctor away, says CHD

By Amanda Weisbrod
The Observer

The age old adage of eating an apple a day to keep the doctor away may have some truth to it after all.

Preventive health care and services like screening tests, immunizations and health behavior counseling are "key to improving America's health and keeping rising health costs under control," according to the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention. However, the CDC website reports Americans are using preventive services at only about half the recommended rate largely because of financial barriers and sometimes due to lack of awareness.

Preventing at-risk behaviors for youth as well as adults, according to Carrie Brogoitti, public health administrator at the Center for Hu-

man Development in La Grande, is the first step in living a healthy life.

"With public health, our big thing is to create an environment in the community to allow people to make healthy choices," Brogoitti said. "A big part of that is to influence the trajectory of a child or adolescent, stopping the initiation of whatever it is we're trying to prevent."

That's why CHD start-

ed an art contest to bring awareness to the health risks associated with underage drinking three weeks ago.

Jasmine Joy Smith, strategic prevention framework coordinator at CHD, is heading the contest and hopes to connect with youth and their parents by taking a health-based approach.

"We want to focus on brain and body development (with underage

drinking) because studies show a health-effects focus has more of an impact on kids and their parents," Smith said.


Teens ages 14-18 can upload their photograph or artwork based on the consequences of underage drinking to CHD's website at chdinc.org until June 15. The submission with the most likes on CHD's website will be the winner of

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