



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Emergency personnel respond to a shooting at the Forum shopping center in east Bend on Sunday, Aug. 28, 2022.

Gunman sprays aisles of Bend Safeway; 3 dead

By JOE SIESS, ANNA KAMINSKI and ZACK DEMARS
The Bulletin

BEND — A gunman with an AR-15-style rifle opened fire Sunday, Aug. 28, in a shopping center on Bend's east side, killing a person outside Safeway, then walking through the grocery store, spraying gunfire down every aisle, Bend Police and a witness said.

The gunman also killed a person at the rear of the grocery store, said Bend Police spokeswoman Sheila Miller. The gunman is also dead, she said. Police did not say how he died. A shotgun was found near his body.

The shooting prompted shoppers to reach for their own weapons. Bend Police reported they did not fire any shots.

Miller said the incident began about 7:04 p.m. near Costco. The gunman fired shots into the Big Lots store next door to Safeway before shooting and killing an individual in the entryway to Safeway, Miller said. She said the shooter may have had several weapons in addition to the rifle.

One person taken to St. Charles Bend was dead on arrival, and one was reported in good condition, according to Lisa Goodman, spokesperson for St. Charles Health System.

Molly Taroli, 40, said she was shopping for dinner with her husband in the frozen foods aisle when the shooter came in through the western-

most door of the grocery store and went through every aisle "spraying shots," she said. Taroli removed her own handgun from her purse and her husband ran out the front door to get his own gun.

Taroli said she heard a child screaming. She threw her shopping cart in front of her and started running toward the back of the store. Employees were yelling "go, go, go!" and getting shoppers through the stock room and out the back door.

Dozens of police officers from multiple law enforcement agencies and ambulances were on the scene Aug. 28.

Bend Police urged residents to stay clear of the shopping center.

Molly Sanden, a Safeway employee, told The Bulletin that a person walked into the grocery store and opened fire with a gun, firing multiple shots.

Jake Daniels, another Safeway employee, said he heard three shots followed by another six. He said he saw a person running out of the store, pursued by police.

Daniels said after the first shots, he started grabbing people and running out the store doors.

About a dozen Safeway workers huddled outside a nearby business at the Forum shopping center, clearly shaken.

Bend Police said in a tweet: "There is an active investigation in the area of The Forum shopping center. Please avoid the area. More updates to come as the investigation continues."

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MORROW COUNTY

Incoming commissioner subject of ethics inquiry

Wenholz accused of using position for financial gain

By MARCO GRAMACHO
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — An incoming Morrow County commissioner is the subject of a state ethics investigation.

The Oregon Government Ethics Commission on Aug. 19 voted to investigate Jeff Wenholz for possible violations. Wenholz in the May primary won a slim victory to serve in Position 2 on the Morrow County Board of Commissioners. He takes office for a four-year term in January 2023.

The ethics commission scheduled a public meeting to discuss the finding of cause on Feb. 3.

Jonathan Tallman in March sent the ethics commission a written complaint against Wenholz, chair of the Morrow County Planning Commission, indicating Wenholz may have used his position for financial gain and may have failed to report additional income on his 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 Annual Verified Statements of Economic Interest.

In the complaint, Tallman explained that Wenholz, besides the commissioner's position, is the vice president of the board of directors for the Umatilla Electric Cooperative, and director of LS Networks (a high-speed business fiber internet company).

The conflict of interest, according to Tallman, lies in that Wenholz failed to disclose he is compensated from UEC and failed to recuse himself from discussion on several land use proposals involving UEC in his role as a Morrow County planning commissioner.

Wenholz denied there is anything to Tallman's claims.

He explained there is no conflict of interest because UEC is a 501(c) organization. This is a designation under the United States Internal Revenue Code that confers tax-exempt status on nonprofit organizations. Specifically, it identifies which nonprofit organizations are exempt from paying federal income tax.

"These accusations have no foundation," Wenholz said.

Tallman also accuses Umatilla Electric Cooperative of working with Amazon to take his family's land. He and his parents own a coffee shop in Boardman in which they sell their fruits and vegetables.

"Amazon Web Services has moved in right next door and has teamed up with UEC, by using the law of eminent domain, to take my parents' land away from them. They intend to use the land to put in a 230 kilovolt power line to deliver electricity to their business," he said.

According to Tallman, his family offered to work with UEC and Amazon to find a way to compromise and benefit both of them.

"They would rather just take the land for their own personal use," he complained.

Tallman said he remembers that around 1994 he met Wenholz and they used to play basketball together.

"I still consider Jeff a friend of mine, but he thinks he is above all of us," he said.

Wenholz, who lives in Irrigon, has served on the Morrow County Solid Waste Advisory Committee and Morrow County Planning Commission. Additionally, he served on the Morrow County Umatilla Chemical Depot Citizens Advisory Commission for 11 years.

He has also served for the past five years on the Morrow County Budget Committee, and since 2019, on the Good Shepherd Medical Center Board of Trustees.

He narrowly defeated Melissa Lindsay of Heppner for Position 2 on the Morrow County Board of Commissioners in the May 17 primary election.

Lindsay received 1,287 votes to Wenholz 1,313, with six write-ins, for a total cast of 2,606. Wenholz received 50.4% to Lindsay's 49.4% in the final tally. He received a majority of votes, plus one; the number required to win was 1,304.

The race did not qualify for an automatic recount, despite Wenholz's thin margin of victory, county Clerk Bobbi Childers reported at the time. To qualify requires a difference of just a fifth of 1% of all votes, or about 5.2 in this case, well below Wenholz's 26-vote advantage. That's just under a 1% difference. Childers certified the results on June 8.



Wenholz

EPA fines Smith Frozen Foods \$100,000 for violating Clean Air Act

By DAKOTA CASTETS-DIDIER
East Oregonian

WESTON — The Environmental Protection Agency has announced that Smith Frozen Foods Inc., Weston, has agreed to pay a \$100,000 fine for the violation of seven separate provisions of the Clean Air Act in 2016.

"Our EPA enforcement officer did an inspection in 2016 and they were able to see some of the violations on site," said Meshach Padilla, public affairs specialist with the EPA.

The violations were in regards to Smith Frozen Foods' procedures on the storage and use of anhydrous ammonia, a refrigerant often employed for use in closed systems.

"It is a dangerous chemical, and an inhalation hazard," said Javier Morales, EPA Region 10 Risk Management Program coordinator. "It is hygroscopic, meaning it's attracted to water. When people inhale it, it's very harmful to the respiratory system and to the eyes."

EPA cited Smith Frozen Foods on seven violations of provisions within the

Clean Air Act for operators of gasses such as anhydrous ammonia, being safety information, hazard analysis, operating procedure, training, mechanical integrity, employee participation, and contractor requirements. The penalty for these violations totaled \$100,000.

"Facilities that use hazardous materials like anhydrous ammonia have an obligation to follow regulations designed to protect our communities and environment from potentially catastrophic consequences of accidents," Ed Kowalski, director of EPA region enforcement and compliance assurance Division, said in an EPA press release on Monday announcing the penalties. "Failure to

comply with the law puts first responders and members of the surrounding community in harm's way."

The Clean Air Act is a federal air quality law, intended to reduce pollution and increase nationwide air quality, originally enacted in 1963, but frequently revised. It provides the EPA with regulatory authority to monitor, inspect, and penalize operations with potentially harmful gasses and pollutants.

"The EPA has their own enforcement response policy that we follow, we use them to assess the penalties based on the violations that were found," Morales explained, detailing the procedure for how the EPA tabulates and levels penalties.

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