BY ZACK DEMARS

CO Media Group

Shannon Johnson focuses on getting through each day with a place to sleep, not what might happen to her during a life-threatening medical situ-

Homeless for the past two years, Johnson, 47, finds a new place every three days to park the van she's lived in for the last eight months.

She's had a kidney condition for the past year and has surgeries on the horizon that put her at higher risk of a medical emergency, but until recently hadn't made plans for possible emergency medical decisions.

Nevertheless, those are important decisions that can be challenging for providers to make in the absence of a relative or other advocate. What's more, those experiencing homelessness have shorter life spans than housed people, therefore many face emergencies before the age people talk about their medical preferences. Without knowing what a person wants, hospitals default to providing care the person might not want to re-

Johnson's priorities changed earlier this month when she ran into staff from the Peaceful Presence Project at Bend's Lighthouse Navigation Center. After a short conversation, Johnson walked away with an advance directive, a document that assigns someone to make medical decisions on her behalf if she's incapacitated and describes how she would want to be cared for if she became permanently unconscious or required life support, for example. The form will be connected to her online medical records.

"It's a good thing to do, I think," Johnson said. "You never know what will happen."

Since May, volunteers from the Peaceful Presence Proj-



Elizabeth Johnson, left, executive director of the Peaceful Presence Project, helps Sarah Maley establish an advance directive during a homeless outreach event in Redmond on Aug. 26.

ect have been attending local homeless outreach events, writing advance directives with others like Johnson.

Johnson, who grew up in Bend and moved back to the area around 2014, had an advance directive written through her health insurance years ago. But her life was different then than it is now: She was employed at a software company, and lived with her two kids. Now, she's stopped looking for a home to rent, because she thinks it would be impossible for her to qualify for one.

Elizabeth Johnson (no relation to Shannon) runs the Peace Presence Project and said about

From left, Elizabeth Johnson, executive director of the Peaceful Presence Project, helps Kayla Wright establish an advance peaceful presenc

40 people experiencing homelessness have written advance directives with the nonprofit's help. The nonprofit provides end-of-life planning and counseling services for anyone, but has focused specifically on the unhoused population this year directive during a homeless outreach event in Redmond on Aug. 26.

Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

"This is a demographic here locally that's oftentimes really left out of the picture," Elizabeth Johnson said.

with the help of a grant.

The social status of those experiencing homelessness can also make those kinds of health care decisions more fraught: Family members might be hard for health care providers to reach, or might be long estranged from the person whose

care is in question. "I think the biggest implication is you have people making decisions for you that don't know what your current definition of 'quality of life' is, or the onus is on providers who don't have that relational kind of context to move forward with that kind of care," Johnson said. "For a lot of this demographic, there's estrangement. There are very specific reasons why they may not be in contact with a person who would be able to make

these decisions if they were unable to do it for themselves."

Beyond the practical considerations of finding someone to make decisions on an incapacitated person's behalf, Johnson said the focus on the homeless population specifically is important because that demographic tends to have shorter life expectancies — decades shorter, according to some analyses — and higher rates of fatal health conditions than the population as a whole. This year, 207 people in Oregon have died unhoused, and most were between the ages of 45 and 64, according to preliminary state

The nonprofit provides an important level of dignity for those experiencing homelessness and dying unhoused, said Donna Burklo, Family Kitchen program director.

'That's just a part of what we would all love to know is happening, that people are being treated like the individual people that they are," Burklo said.

Johnson said it's been easier than she originally expected it would be to get people interested in sitting down to have a difficult conversation about hypothetical near-death situations. It's helped that she's become a trusted face at shelters and outreach events — and that many people experiencing homelessness have first-hand experiences with medical emer-

"I think for the most part people really get it because they have had so many experiences in the health system where they're receiving care, but it's not necessarily defined by what they think is best for themselves," Johnson said. "What we lead with is, this is an empowered way for you to have more of a say over your health care."

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Flying car

Continued from A1

The engineering trick here is those wings, which can fold out from the passenger compartment with the click of the button. The wings operate on a hinge, sort of like a switchblade knife, hence the name.

And although the Switchblade is driven like a car, the three-wheeled vehicle is technically a motorcycle, allowing the company to bypass some of the safety features required of cars, such as airbags.

CENTRAL OREGON CONNECTION

Bousfield began experimenting in aviation design more than 20 years ago and spent years working with Boeing engineers before heading out on his own.

He founded Samson Sky and put down roots in rural Northern California. But the engineering team quickly learned that carbon fiber would be the only way the invention could both fly and pencil out economically. Bousfield decided the company needed to be relocated near a hub of high-quality carbon manufacturing.

"There's really only four or five places across the country that specialize in that and Redmond is one of those," said Bousfield.

Composite Approach in Redmond has been their main supplier, though Samson Sky has relied on numerous other local aerospace manufacturers. They also utilize the variety of small airports in the area.

Most of the building and testing has been done at the

Want to see the Switchblade?

For a video of the Switchblade preparing for takeoff at the Madras Airport, visit redmondspokesman.com.

Prineville Airport, where Samson Sky operates out of three buildings. The runway there, however, is a touch too short for a first flight. They trucked the vehicle over to the airport in Madras for acceleration testing, where Bousfield said the machine clocked in at well over 100 mph — more than 10 mph faster than needed to take flight.

There may be massive economic opportunities for the region, should the Switchblade continue to move forward. If it does, the company will make prototypes and then likely expand to smaller, regional manufacturing places where customers can work with employees to build their own Switchblade.

The "kit aircraft" model is common for many types of new planes, though Bousfield said he is energized by FAA-approval that allows the company and customer to build with a semi-automated process. That process trims build time down from a few months to just a week.

The first major factory would be a 130,000-square-foot "multi-million dollar investment" with at least 200 employees and likely closer to 300. He said they would start out buying parts from suppliers, but would likely bring that in-house to keep prices down and ramp up production schedules.

MAKING IT

Bousfield said that while "flying cars" are a staple of science fiction, there have been many naysayers who think combining the two modes of travel just won't work.

"One of the biggest hurdles we run across is the misconception that a flying car has to be a car that is mediocre, or a plane that is mediocre, or a combination of both," he said. "From the get-go, we decided that it has to be high performance in both modes, or it won't (work)."

Take, for instance, the air conditioning. It's easy for an aircraft to stay cool, but not so much for a car driving around in Central Oregon in the summer. So they are using an automotive-style AC unit that can keep the vehicle cool while on the ground.

"We're packing it around when we fly," he said. "We don't need it."

But that's been their style from the beginning, to design for the worst-case condition so the Switchblade is comfortable both on the ground and in the air.

The quality of that comfort and perhaps the viability of the Switchblade — remains to be seen. They've tested the machine over and over again in computer models, in wind tunnels and in the real world. It will fly. But there's still a lot to learn when it does.

Smart security.

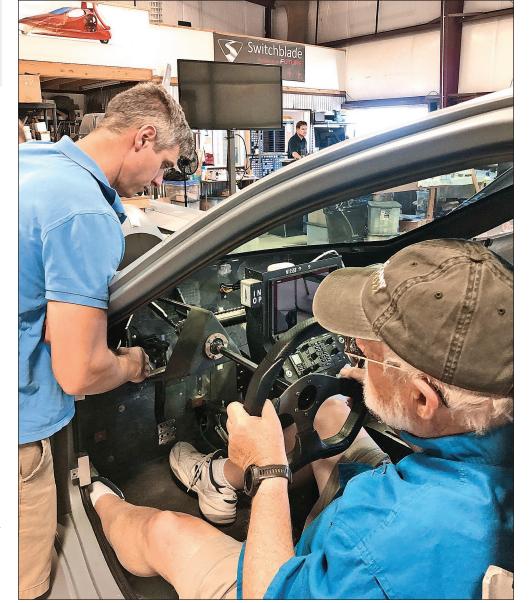


Photo courtesy Samson Sky

Samson Sky employees making final adjustments to the steering of a vehicle that will be both street-legal and air-legal, the Switchblade Flying Car.

"You can't tell in a wind tunnel how fast you can go, you can't tell how high you can go," said Bousfield. "You can't tell

the quality of the flight ... how it feels to the pilot. To do that, you've got to go up."

— Previous CO Media Group

reporting contributed to this story.

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