

Wyden, Merkley, Walden send letter on behalf of CDA

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Oregon's Congressional delegation sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel Wednesday expressing "strong concerns" over reports that the Army is considering reversing course on returning the Umatilla Chemical Depot land to local control at no cost.

"Our constituents have prided themselves on being patriots and good neighbors to the Army and now that the depot's mission is complete, the Army needs to clean up any pollution they have caused and turn the land back over to the community at no cost, to be used for economic development," reads the letter signed by Sen. Ron Wyden, Sen. Jeff Merkley and Rep. Greg Walden.

The officials noted that it had been everyone's understanding for about 20 years that the land would be turned over to a local reuse authority, made up of representatives from Umatilla County, Morrow County, Port of Morrow, Port of Umatilla and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, at no cost.

The Columbia Development Authority has already been in discussions with developers interested in purchasing depot land, but last week project manager Don

Chance told the board he had gotten a call from the Pentagon saying the Army might not be willing to part with the land for free after all. The authority doesn't have money to purchase thousands of acres, he said.

As a compromise, Chance said some of the partners in the CDA would be willing to purchase a 640-acre parcel if the Army would turn over the rest for free.

According to the letter from Wyden, Merkley and Walden a 2005 Base Realignment and Closure report estimated the military would save more than \$80 million by closing the base. They also noted that area residents had endured more than 50 years of living with "some of the most dangerous chemical weapons on Earth in their back yard."

"In light of the substantial accommodations Oregonians living in and around Umatilla have already made in the name of national security and the substantial sum that closing these facilities will save the Department of Defense, we urge you to accept the CDA's more-than-reasonable offer and to move forward quickly on a no-cost transfer — ideally by this summer," they said.

Contact *Jade McDowell* at *jmcowell@eastoregonian.com* or 541-564-4536.

BRIEFLY

OLCC kicks off marijuana listening sessions

PENDLETON — The Oregon Liquor Control Commission is kicking off a series of community meetings on the new recreational marijuana law with a pair of sessions scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 22 in Pendleton and Baker City.

The Pendleton meeting will start at 7 p.m. at the convention center, 1601 Westgate.

OLCC Chairman Rob Patridge said the "OLCC is committed to a transparent and inclusive public process to help us implement the law in a way that protects children, keeps our communities safe and brings the recreational marijuana industry into the regulated marketplace."

Under the new law, possession of recreational marijuana becomes legal July 1. The OLCC must begin accepting applications for commercial licenses by January 2016.

More information is available online at www.marijuana.oregon.gov.

Fair board reschedules January meeting

PENDLETON — A notification received after deadline Tuesday evening indicates that due to unforeseen circumstances the Umatilla County Fair Board meeting scheduled for Wednesday was rescheduled.

The group will meet Wednesday Jan. 21 at 6:30 p.m. in Room 114 at the Umatilla County Courthouse, 216 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton. The meeting is open to the public.

For more information, contact Fairgrounds Manager Peggy Anderson at 541-567-6121 or peggy.anderson@umatillacounty.net.

ODOT officer to address economic luncheon

BOARDMAN — A representative from the Oregon Department of Transportation's Office of Innovative Partnerships and Alternative Funding will speak at the January Chamber Economic Outlook Luncheon.

Michelle D. Godfrey will make a presentation at the no-host event Wednesday at noon at the SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman.

The cost for lunch is \$12 per person.

Reservations for lunch are requested by Monday by contacting the Boardman Chamber of Commerce at 541-481-3014 or info@boardmanchamber.org.

Chamber lunch features Lifeways update

PENDLETON — Information about programs offered through Lifeways will be highlighted during a presentation at the upcoming Pendleton Chamber of Commerce meeting.

The no-host luncheon is Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 11:45 a.m. at the First Assembly of God Church, 1911 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton. Giorgio's Cucina Italiana is catering the meal, which is \$16 per person.

Rick George, director of behavioral health for Lifeways, will discuss the organization's current programs.

For more information or to RSVP, call 541-276-7411.

Drama class to stage 'Beauty and the Beast'

HERMISTON — Youths from third through 12th grade are invited to join the fun in a community drama class.

Participants will audition for parts in "Beauty and the Beast." The classes begin Monday, Feb. 9 from 4-6:30 p.m. The sessions are each Monday and Wednesday through April. Monday sessions are at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395, and Wednesdays are held at The Arc Building, 215 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. The cost is \$50 for Hermiston residents and \$63 for non-residents.

The class crescendos with a pair of performances — Tuesday, April 28 and Wednesday, April 29, both at 6:30 p.m. at the conference center.

The registration fee is due by Friday, Feb. 6. For more information, visit www.hermistonrecreation.com. To register, call 541-667-5018 or stop by the recreation office, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

Hawaiian's search for soldier photos winds through Eastern Oregon

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

While some people struggle to put a name to a face, Janna Hoehn has made a second career out of putting faces to names.

For the past six years the Maui, Hawaii, resident has been tracking down photographs of soldiers who were killed or missing in action during the Vietnam War.

From the shores of Hawaii, Hoehn is looking for pictures three Eastern Oregon soldiers — Leslie A. Ball of Pendleton, Stanley J. Benson of Kinzua and William W. Stephenson of Mitchell. Since beginning her quest in May 2013, Hoehn has collected 1,100 photographs and submitted them to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund for display on their online "Wall of Faces." The photos will be displayed at an education center to be built adjacent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall in Washington, D.C.

The nation's capital is where Hoehn began her journey, during a 2008 vacation.

While not personally knowing anyone killed in Vietnam, Hoehn chose a name at random and landed on Gregory John Crossman, who was listed as missing in action.

When Hoehn returned to Maui, she decided to locate Crossman's family with the hopes that she could send a picture of his etching in exchange for a personal photograph of Crossman. Although she was never able to find his family, Hoehn's cousin was able to hunt down a photo of Crossman.

Crossman's photo stayed with Hoehn until she saw a local news broadcast two years later about the memorial fund's "Faces Never Forgotten" project — an effort to put a face to the 58,300 American soldiers killed in Vietnam.



Photo by Matthew Thayer of the Maui News

Janna Hoehn stands in her home with pictures of men from Maui who died in the Vietnam War. She is on a mission to find a photo of each man who died in the war, and is looking for some from Umatilla County.

"They deserve to be remembered."

— Janna Hoehn

After she sent Crossman's picture, memorial president Jan Scruggs sent a response asking Hoehn to help locate the pictures of Maui County's 42 deceased Vietnam soldiers.

Hoehn employed a number of tactics to collect the photos — checking archived high school yearbooks, reading old newspaper obituaries, even cold calling people listed from the phone book who shared a last name with a soldier she was looking for.

An article about her search in the *Maui News* proved to be a breakthrough, with people sending in photos from across the country after reading the story online.

Six months after her search began, Hoehn found all 42 soldiers' pictures. She then turned her sights to the mainland.

A native of the Hemet-San Jacinto area of Cali-

Never forgotten

Janna Hoehn is looking for photos of these three casualties of the Vietnam War:

- Leslie A. Ball, Pendleton
- Stanley J. Benson, Kinzua
- William W. Stephenson, Mitchell

Submit information to neverforgotten2014@gmail.com

fornia, Hoehn found the six soldiers' photos in her hometowns and expanded her search to the rest of the Golden State.

With family based out of Vancouver, Wash., Hoehn started locating pictures in the Evergreen State. Having to fly into Portland for each trip to Vancouver, Hoehn was encouraged to add Oregon to her list.

Six years into her quest, Hoehn is as busy as ever.

She's a florist by trade, supplying flowers for about 50 marriages a month in a state that hosts destination weddings every day of the year.

Finding soldier photographs has become a second job for her, though she has had plenty of help along the way from volunteers. In addition to finding more

amateur sleuths, Hoehn said people offering information as simple as what high school the deceased soldier attended can be an invaluable tip.

After all these years of constant searching, Hoehn said she's been motivated by some of the Vietnam veterans' harsh treatment when they returned home. While she can't change the past for the living, Hoehn would like to see the deceased get their time in the sun.

"They deserve to be remembered," she said.

Submit any photos or information to Hoehn at neverforgotten2014@gmail.com.

Contact *Antonio Sierra* at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

Voluntary protection of sage-grouse nets federal dollars

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
East Oregonian

The federal government is stepping up with \$9 million to Eastern Oregon landowners who volunteer to protect greater sage-grouse habitat on their property.

Funding comes from the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, or RCPP, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The program, part of the 2014 Farm Bill, paid out \$22.2 million Wednesday for six locally designed conservation projects across Oregon, including a proposal dubbed the Oregon Model to Protect Sage-Grouse.

The basis for that model comes from a 30-year agreement reached last year between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Harney County Soil & Water Conservation District.

Known as a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances, or CCAA, ranchers voluntarily manage their lands to benefit the greater sage-grouse, and in return are given a promise they will not face additional regulations should the birds be listed as endangered species.

A final determination for listing greater sage-grouse will be made in 2016. Until then, the CCAA is meant for ranchers to do conservation work up front and avoid tighter restrictions down the road.

"Really, the sage-grouse across the West is going to be another spotted owl," said Marty Suter-Goold, district manager of the Harney Soil & Water Conservation District. "Our model is to work with those private landowners so they receive protections through their soil and water conservation district."

Districts in seven other counties are working to develop their own CCAAs within the range of sage-grouse, Suter-Goold said. They are: Deschutes, Crook, Lake, Grant, Malheur, Baker and Union.

The project has a goal to reach 40 percent of producers in those areas. Each conservation district will work with landowners to develop site-specific plans for their property, with RCPP dollars available to help pay for work on the ground.

"Anything that's needed for that bird to flourish, we would put together a plan for that landowner," Suter-Goold said. "Landowners will be able to submit proposals to the NRCS in their respective county offices for cost-sharing."

Ranching is a way of life in rural Eastern Oregon, Suter-Goold said, and having these CCAAs in place provides a mechanism to

demonstrate the sage-grouse can be protected without a federal ESA listing.

"Ultimately ... landowners would rather work with their local folks than for the federal government to come in and regulate," she said.

Other conservation projects receiving RCPP dollars include:

- North Slope Ochoco Holistic Restoration, \$5 million
- Klamath-Rogue Oak Woodland Health and Habitat Conservation, \$3 million
- White River Irrigation Efficiency and Stream Flow Restoration, \$2 million
- North Willamette Valley Upland Oak Restoration, \$2.2 million
- Unlocking Carbon Markets for NIPF Landowners in the Pacific Northwest, \$1 million

Contact *George Plagen* at gplagen@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4547.



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