

**ECHO**

# Wind farm says transmission route would be permitted locally

Refutes county's claim of trying to 'game the system'

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
East Oregonian

The developer of a proposed 500-megawatt wind farm in Umatilla and Morrow counties has asked Umatilla Electric Cooperative to own the project's transmission lines and determine the best route to avoid impacting local landowners, especially farmers.

Wheatridge Wind energy LLC wants to build up to 292 turbines on 50,000 acres of private land, though its preliminary application to the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council does not address where transmission lines would be located to connect onto the power grid.

On Wednesday, Umatilla County Planning Director Tamra Mabbott said the wind farm and transmission system should be considered together under the same proposal and not treated as separate developments. She accused the lone-based company of trying to "game the system" and leaving potentially affected landowners in the dark.

But Jerry Rietmann, who owns Wheatridge Wind Energy with his business partner, Andrew O'Connell, said they reached out to UEC because the cooperative would be more sensitive and understanding of landowner concerns, as opposed to establishing a transmission route in their site application with an unknown third party.

"I don't think that's gaming the system. I think that's being transparent," Rietmann said.

According to the wind farm's preliminary site certificate application, Wheatridge plans to use 230-kilovolt lines connecting to one of two proposed substations

in the region: one near Stanfield, or another near the Port of Morrow. The lines would be owned by UEC, possibly in partnership with the Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative based in Heppner.

UEC spokesman Steve Meyers said they are still having conversations about owning the lines. No decisions have been made about possible routes.

Wheatridge does not intend to start building turbines without the transmission plan in place, Rietmann said. In fact, he anticipates they are still another year away from obtaining state approval for the wind farm. Construction wouldn't begin until late 2016 or early 2017.

"I don't think anyone is asking we put a project in the ground without the transmission resolved," Rietmann said.

Rietmann is himself a farmer in Morrow and Gilliam counties and said he understands the impacts transmission lines can have on farms. Locally owned electric cooperatives have been responsive to his concerns in the past, he said, and he is confident the Wheatridge project will be no different.

"I would like to think we are being smart developing this, and making sure we have a credible partner," Rietmann said.

Mabbott said the county would never permit an energy facility without considering transmission. She is in the process of drafting comments to the state Department of Energy, and hopes they will defer to the county's interpretation.

"We don't want to support the project at the expense of landowners that will have a transmission line running over their property," Mabbott said.

Contact **George Plaven** at [gplaven@eastoregonian.com](mailto:gplaven@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4547.

# Man arrested for murder of Boardman man

Yakima Valley Herald

YAKIMA, Wash. — Yakima County sheriff's detectives say a Washington man arrested on suspicion of murder lured a Boardman man to the Lower Valley with an offer to buy his car then shot him.

The body of Antonio Hernandez-Ledezma, 24, has not yet been found, according to investigators.

The victim was facing rape charges in Yakima County Superior Court after allegedly impregnating a 13-year-old relative of the suspect, according to court records.

Investigators say Yoset Dominguez-Serrano offered to buy Hernandez-Ledezma's car as a pretext to lure him from Oregon.



Photo contributed by Yakima County Sheriff's Office

**This 2009 Ford Mustang belonging to Antonio Hernandez-Ledezma, of Boardman, was found abandoned with blood and a fired bullet inside near Zillah, Washington. Hernandez-Ledezma is presumed dead.**

Hernandez-Ledezma was last seen Tuesday getting into the passenger seat to allow a potential buyer to test drive the car, sheriff's Detective Sgt. Mike Russell said

in a news release.

A witness later identified the would-be buyer as Dominguez-Serrano, according to an affidavit.

Later Tuesday, deputies were asked to check on an abandoned vehicle near a Zillah-area orchard. The green Ford Mustang had a broken window and a significant amount of blood on the passenger seat, detectives said. A fired bullet was also found inside during a later search.

Officials say they are still searching for Hernandez-Ledezma's body.

Dominguez-Serrano appeared in Yakima County Superior Court Thursday where bail was set at \$1 million. He is being held on suspicion of first-degree murder and first-degree assault.

**PENDLETON**

# Community theater stages courtroom drama

'Twelve Angry Jurors' opens with pay-what-you-can preview

East Oregonian

Tempers are short and arguments are heated as College Community Theatre presents "Twelve Angry Jurors."

The play begins after closing arguments have been presented in the murder case of a 19-year-old man accused of stabbing his father. The jury begins deliberations where a guilty verdict means an automatic death sentence. It looks like an open and shut case, until one of the jurors begins to sow a seed of reasonable doubt.

The story quickly becomes a study of the jurors' complex personalities and prejudices as they are forced to re-examine the murder, separating fact from conjecture.

A special "Pay-What-You-Can Preview Night" is Thursday, Feb. 12 at 7:30 p.m. in Bob Clapp Theatre in Pioneer Hall at Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Subsequent performances are Feb. 13-14, 19-21 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees Feb. 15 and 22 at 2 p.m. Tickets



Photo contributed by Debbie McIntosh

**John Scanlan, Gary Ferguson, J.J. Hill and Murray Dunlap rehearse a scene from "Twelve Angry Jurors." The production opens with a pay-what-you-can preview night Thursday, Feb. 12 at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton.**

are \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and children 3 and older.

Adapted by Sherman L. Sergel and based on an Emmy Award-winning TV movie by Reginald Rose, director Vanessa Hawkins is a fan of the original teleplay for "Twelve Angry Men" and is excited to bring the production to the stage in Pendleton.

"I am thrilled with my cast, comprised of men and women of all ages, as they each bring a unique dynamic personality to their character."

— **Venessa Hawkins**, director

guson, Gary Ferguson, Rebecca Foster, Matt Henry, J.J. Hill, Joshua King, Austin Larsen, Marge Normington-Jones and John Scanlan. The guard is played by Aaron Bennett and the part of the judge is spoken by Steve Bowen.

Backstage, Bowen serves as stage manager and prop master; King is production manager, technical director and set designer; Gary Ferguson designed the lighting; and Sharon Hill supervised the costumes.

Tickets are available in the Pioneer Hall box office Monday through Friday from noon to 2 p.m. beginning Feb. 9, by calling 541-278-5953 or at the door prior to performances. For more information, contact Craig McIntosh, CCT artistic director, at 541-278-5928 or [cct@bluecc.edu](mailto:cct@bluecc.edu).

**PENDLETON**

# White-Zollman hired at BMCC as Vice President of Public Relations

East Oregonian

Blue Mountain Community College has hired Casey White-Zollman as Vice President of Public Relations.

The position was recently created to help BMCC better promote its programs and events and provide internal and external communication. White-Zollman will oversee communications related to BMCC's capital construction bond, which will appear on the May 19 ballot. She will also provide strategic direction for the BMCC Foundation.

White-Zollman, currently the Director of Communications at the InterMountain Education Service District, starts her new position on Feb. 19.

"We are very excited to have Casey join the BMCC team," said BMCC Presi-

dent Camille Preus. "Her communications and marketing experience, as well as her knowledge of educational partnerships within our district and across the state, are important attributes for the public relations position."



White-Zollman

White-Zollman earned a bachelor's of science degree in journalism from the University of Portland. She has served on the board of directors

for the Oregon School Public Relations Association since 2011, including serving as president in 2013-2014, and is a member of the National School Public Relations Association. She co-chairs the Pendleton Round-Up's Tough Enough To Wear Pink breast cancer campaign and serves on the boards of directors for Tonya's House and the Education Foundation of Pendleton.

# Universal health care coalition planing rally at Capitol building

East Oregonian

Health Care for All Oregonians, a coalition that advocates for universal healthcare, will be coordinating a rally on the steps of Oregon capitol building Wednesday.

While praising the increased insurance coverage created under the Affordable Care Act, a press release promoting the rally states 5 percent of Oregonians are still uninsured and many more have insurance that isn't sufficient to their needs.

The rally will feature live music, personal testimonials and a speech from Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland.

Dembrow introduced a bill in 2013 that mandated a study of the best way to fund insurance for state citizens. Although it won passage, the study went unfunded.

After private funding was raised to partially fund the study, Dembrow plans to submit a bill to secure the rest of the funding.

The release states that Dembrow also plans to introduce an universal healthcare bill.

The coalition anticipates 2,500 people at the rally, with buses and carpools expected to come from Portland, Eugene, Corvallis, La Grande, Ashland and the Oregon coast.

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