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EAST OREGONIAN

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PENDLETON City goes all in on UAVs



This file photo from November 2008 shows the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport in Pendleton. Pendleton City Council approved \$1.7 million from the state for the construction of hangars and storage units for manned and unmanned vehicles.

Ahead of governor’s visit, city accepts \$1.7 million to build hangars

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

As a part of her first trip to Pendleton since becoming governor, Kate Brown will discuss the city’s Unmanned Aerial Systems Range on Friday.

Brown’s visit comes on the heels of the Pendleton City Council unanimously approving a \$1.7 million financial package from the state that would fund the construction of hangars and storage units for manned and unmanned vehicles at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport.

The vote at Tuesday’s meeting came as a surprise given that it wasn’t scheduled on the meeting agenda.

City Manager Robb Corbett initially suggested the council call a special meeting for Thursday and vote on the issue then, but councilwoman Jane Hill was vocal about the council rendering a decision Tuesday.

“I don’t really think it’s outside the bounds of public notice,” she said in an interview after the meeting.

Since the beginning of the year, Hill has promoted transparency and increased communication with the public.

Although Hill was critical of staff for not including the financial package with the rest of the scheduled agenda items, she said her intention was to complete the deal between the city and the state prior to Brown’s arrival in Pend-



Brown



An Aeryon Scout unmanned aerial vehicle flies over a field off McCormach Road north of Pendleton during a test flight in September 2014.

leton Thursday.

In an interview following the meeting, Corbett said circumstances didn’t allow the city to advertise the financial package earlier.

The package is comprised of loans and grants from two different sources — the infrastructure finance authority and the strategic reserve fund.

The money from the infrastructure authority was considered by the Airport Commission

several weeks ago. Corbett said the city wasn’t made aware of the exact details of the strategic reserve fund money, which requires approval from the governor, until Tuesday before the meeting.

Regardless of the timing, the \$1.7 million package represents the largest financial commitment to the range since it was approved

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HERMISTON

More eyes on city’s toughest streets

Police department uses proactive policing with patrols

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The residents of any city can usually point out the “good neighborhoods” and “bad neighborhoods” in their town.

The police can, too, which is why Hermiston Police Department keeps an eye on crime trends and puts extra patrols in the neighborhoods that need it.

“It’s a matter of, ‘We know we have limited resources, so let’s focus our attention on the areas we have issues with,’” Chief Jason Edmiston said.



Edmiston

When trends start manifesting on certain streets, or when citizens call to complain about bad behavior in their neighborhood, the department does a “directed patrol,” meaning the area gets extra attention and police presence for two weeks.

Last year the department instituted 58 directed patrols in various areas of Hermiston. It also kept

See POLICE/8A

House votes to outlaw hunting with drones

SALEM (AP) — Lawmakers in the state House voted unanimously Wednesday to outlaw the use of drones for hunting or fishing in Oregon.

While there’s no evidence that Oregon hunters or anglers have been using drones, the bill’s proponents said it’s happened elsewhere.

“Drones have no place in sport hunting, fishing or trapping,” said Rep. Brad Witt, a Democrat from Clatskanie who sponsored the bill. “They are simply antithetical to the principle of fair chase and fair catch.”

The bill orders the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to adopt a rule banning the use of unmanned vehicles to track, harass or scout fish and wildlife. It passed in a 59-0 vote, sending it to the Senate.

The Humane Society of the United States says Oregon would join Colorado, Montana and Alaska in prohibiting drones for hunting. Similar prohibitions have also been proposed in Vermont, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York and Illinois, according to the organization.

Drones would give hunters an unfair advantage over the animals they target, said Scott Beckstead, the Humane Society’s Oregon director. The bill’s supporters say wildlife populations might dwindle if drones are widely used to scout or kill game.

“You’re using technology to locate game rather than engaging in sort of the fair chase and the traditional stalking methods that most responsible hunters adhere to,” Beckstead said of the prospect of hunting with drones.

Weak public records law hurts Oregon

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The fall of John Kitzhaber from Oregon’s highest elected office resulted from reporters seeking public records — and what those records revealed. But the weakness of the state’s sunshine law kept valuable information from the public eye until after Kitzhaber won an unprecedented fourth term in November.

Judson Randall is president of Open Oregon, a 20-year-old charitable organization dedicated to helping Oregonians exercise their right to public information. “Oregon has a major flaw in its public records law,” he said. “It does not put a timeline on a response from a public agencies to a request for records.”

For the record

Here are some websites to find out more about Oregon’s public records laws, including how to request records:

- www.open-oregon.com
- www.invw.org/redacted/
- www.doj.state.or.us/public_records/pages/index.aspx

Willamette Week’s Nigel Jaquiss requested documents about Kitzhaber and Sylvia Hayes in July 2014. The paper received them months later. That delayed the newspaper’s publishing of damaging stories that showed what looked like Hayes peddling influence in the governor’s office, and how much Kitzhaber may have been involved.

The law — Oregon Revised

Statutes 192.410 to 192.505 — requires agencies to provide records in a “reasonable amount of time.” Randall said the Oregon Court of Appeals has found seven to 14 days is reasonable, but requests sometimes take months, and there are no penalties for dragging feet.

Independent journalist Lee van der Voo reports on the status of Oregon public records access on her blog Redacted. She also said the law needs timelines, and 72 hours should be enough time to respond to most requests.

How long an agency takes to respond can depend on the number and kinds of records someone seeks, as well as the government body that has the information. The East Oregonian on Dec. 10, 2014,

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