

Testing, testing, 1, 2, 3

Area students begin taking Smarter Balanced test

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

After years of debate, the Smarter Balanced test has touched down in Pendleton.

The new assessment is administered to students from third to eighth grade and high school juniors. Laura Miltenberger, the Pendleton School District's curriculum, instruction and assessment coordinator, said high school students

started testing earlier this week while some students at lower grade levels began testing as early as late March.

The subject has been a source of hand-wringing for many in the state — former state superintendent Rob Saxton said as many as 65 percent of students could fail the test in its first year.

While initially nervous, the five students made available by the district were universally positive about their Smarter Balanced experience so far.

At the high school, junior Brittney Breneman said she's usually discouraged by the testing experience but has found Smarter Balanced easy to adapt to.

"I hate testing, I hate school, but I like (Smarter Balanced)," she said.

She and the rest of the PHS junior class had spent the previous week working on the English test, with the math test set for next week.

The main selling point for Smarter Balanced has been that the tests not only ask for answers, but also for supporting

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Fifth-graders file into a computer lab to take the Smarter Balanced test on Thursday at McKay Elementary School in Pendleton.

Jail nearly full, fulfilling sheriff's promise

Umatilla County Jail inmate population hits all-time high

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Two years ago, Umatilla County Jail commander Stewart Harp asked his staff to aim for what looked impossible: increase the jail's daily population from 135 to nearly 200. And they had to do it, he said, without any additional resources.

"And they did it," Harp said.

The jail in Pendleton now holds an average of 187 inmates each day, 46 more than in 2012, according to the latest figures from Harp. In March, the jail held an average of 199 inmates each day, the highest average ever recorded. Harp attributed much of the change to Sheriff Terry Rowan, who in 2012 campaigned on the promise of keeping more offenders behind bars.

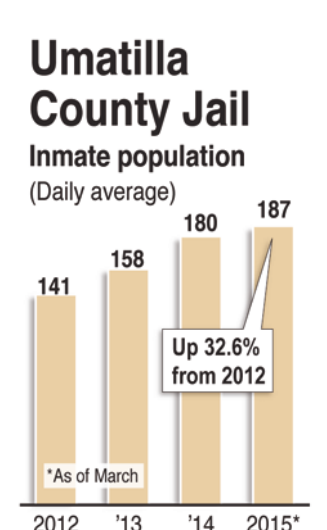
Achieving that promise, Harp said, meant eliminating the "catch-and-release" matrix, a formula jail staff used to determine which inmates to keep and which to kick free, and holding new inmates for 36 hours as federal law allows while charges are pending. Harp said the matrix releases decreased by 641 in 2013 and an additional 471 in 2014.

Hermiston Chief of Police Jason Edmiston said the change at the jail has made his job easier.

"I've said it in a couple different public settings ... Sheriff Rowan's campaign promise of at least keeping



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Umatilla County Sheriff's deputy Lu Morse operates the closed circuit video camera system from the control room at the Umatilla County Jail on Friday in Pendleton.



Jail employment and operating budget

Year	FTEs	Budget (\$ Millions)
2012	31.7	\$4.46
2013	31.7	\$4.65
2014	33.7	\$5.06
2015	33.7	\$5.81 [†]

(FTE = Full-time equivalent employees)
[†]Preliminary, approved budget
Source: Umatilla County

East Oregonian graphic

offenders there for 36 hours has been significant for us," he said.

A day-and-a-half may not seem like much, Edmiston said, but that time allows district attorneys to file charges and police to gather more evidence. And he said the 36-hour hold means

police are arresting chronic offenders less often.

That syncs with data sheriff's deputy Mike Fox tracks.

He is the jail's transportation coordinator and keeps tabs on inmates coming and going. The increase in jail popu-

lation, he said, corresponds with a decrease in intakes. He said the most obvious reason is fewer releases of regular

offenders means they are staying in jail longer.

Edmiston said the change also is good for police morale. "From what we've seen," he said, "it's nice to know when we make the decision to drive someone to Pendleton ...

— Jason Edmiston, Hermiston Chief of Police

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Hermiston Chief of Police Jason Edmiston said the change at the jail has made his job easier.

"I've said it in a couple different public settings ... Sheriff Rowan's campaign promise of at least keeping

PENDLETON

Nurse Gloria lays down her white hat

Larson was at Mayo Clinic during computer revolution

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

The more things change, the more they stay the same — at least in the heart of a nurse.

After 48 years in health care, nurse-turned-administrator Gloria Larson can look back and make such a pronouncement. Larson retired Friday as Vice President of Patient Care Services at St. Anthony Hospital.

"You go into nursing because you care about people," she said. "So many things have changed — technology, charting, insurance, dress code," Larson said. "What remains the same is the relationship with the patient, that personal caring, that personal touch."

Larson cements her point by mentioning an



Larson

annual Gallup survey that asks people to rank professions by level of honesty and ethics. In 1999, nursing was added and has topped the list every year except 2001, when firefighters ranked first.

"People connect with nurses," she said. "They trust them to do the right thing."

But, oh, the changes nurses have seen in the last 50 years.

As she thought back, Larson fingered the stiff white cap she wore as a rookie nurse

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Gloria Larson, vice president of patient care services at St. Anthony Hospital, retired Friday after a 48-year career in the healthcare industry that included a stint as the head nurse of the cardiac ICU at the Mayo Clinic.

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