

**PENDLETON**

# City council still deciding where marijuana should go

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

Marijuana is on the mind of the Pendleton City Council.

The council will discuss a glut of weed-related issues at its meeting Tuesday. Chief among those issues is an amendment to the city's development codes that would allow medical marijuana dispensaries in the city's commercial zones.

Additional regulations include the prohibition of dispensaries within 1,000 feet of schools, parks and other dispensaries.

After making some key changes to a draft approved by the city's planning commission at its last meeting, like prohibiting recreational marijuana stores, the council decided to let the city's year-long moratorium expire May 1 and table discussions until the next meeting.

Because Pendleton's current business license rules prohibit any business in violation of federal law, city officials said the ban could stay in place while the council found a solution to that conflict.

The solution could come in the form of a special business license for dispensaries.

City planner Evan MacKenzie wrote that the draft ordinance was based on a model created by the League of Oregon Cities.

"The material presented herein should be considered as the beginning of a discussion, not an adoption-ready document," he wrote. "Once the council is comfortable with a draft, staff will prepare a form ordinance for consideration and adoption subject to a proper public hearing schedule."

While the sale of medical marijuana is still technically illegal in Pendleton, the possession of medical marijuana is legal and the possession of recreational marijuana will be legal July 1.

In anticipation of legal marijuana use, staff will do a first reading of an amendment to the nuisance ordinance that would ban marijuana odor from others, personal property and the possession,

**If you go:**

**WHAT: Pendleton City Council meeting**  
**WHEN: Tuesday, May 5, 7 p.m.**  
**WHERE: City Hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.**

cultivation or production of marijuana from public sight.

Although marijuana will be a thoroughly discussed topic Tuesday night, that doesn't mean other topics won't be considered.

A continuation from the last meeting, the council will take a second look at the Bedford Bridge ordinance.

Originated from a perceived problem Pendleton High School has with teenagers gathering on Bedford Bridge, the first draft ordinance banned obstructions or public annoyance on any public walkway in the city.

After councilwoman Jane Hill expressed concern over the ordinance's implication, Police Chief Stuart Roberts agreed to meet with her and high school officials to potentially revise the draft.

The result is a significantly pared down ordinance that would only ban obstruction and annoyance on the Pendleton River Parkway and any adjoining bridges, which would include the Bedford Bridge.

One of the few agenda items unrelated to an ongoing issue is consideration of a lease of city-owned property at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport to Community Bank.

The 20-year lease rents 84,963 square feet of land at 1901 N.W. 56th Drive to Community Bank, with a base rent of \$4,843 per year.

The bank's rent will also be subject to an annual consumer price index increase. The bank also has two five-year options to extend the lease beyond 20 years.

The Pendleton City Council will meet at 7 p.m. at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

Contact Antonio Sierra at [asierra@eastoregonian.com](mailto:asierra@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0836.

# Williams Northwest returns to Plymouth

Gas, air combo led to blast last year

By **GEORGE PAVLEN**  
East Oregonian

An explosive mixture of air and natural gas likely led to last year's ground-shaking blast that injured five workers at the Williams Northwest Pipeline facility in Plymouth, Washington, and forced hundreds of residents to evacuate their homes.

About 80 people attended a barbecue Friday hosted by the company, where plant operations manager Von Studor provided an update on the federal investigation into the accident and ongoing repairs to bring the operation back to full service.

While a final report is yet to be released by the Department of Transportation's Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Studor said employees have already been trained on procedures to prevent another dangerous event in the future.

"We're part of this community, and we want nothing more than to keep you safe," Studor told the crowd gathered outside the plant.

The Williams facility in Plymouth is used to store liquefied natural gas near the Northwest pipeline,



Staff photo by George Plaven

**Von Studor, operations manager of Williams Northwest Pipeline's Plymouth facility, said the plant should be back in full service by next year.**

which stretches 3,900 miles through six western states. Gas is cooled into a liquid state at minus 260 degrees Fahrenheit and held into one of two large storage tanks capable of storing 14 million gallons. It can then be turned back into gas and injected back into the pipeline during times of peak demand.

While crews performed maintenance in November 2013, it left a portion of piping open to the atmosphere which introduced the air into the system. Gas was then purged into the pipes, but failed to adequately

control the amount of air still present.

The volatile combination ignited on March 31, 2014, resulting in the explosion that sent shrapnel flying into one of the tanks and prompting an evacuation of all homes within a two-mile radius of the plant. Fortunately, only vapor and insulation leaked from the tank and residents were allowed to return the following day.

No evacuations were ordered on the Oregon side of the Columbia River.

Fourteen employees were on site at the time

of the explosion, and one longtime operator, Michael Yunker, was hospitalized in Portland for burns. Four others were evaluated and treated for minor injuries at local hospitals.

Williams initially estimated the damage at \$69 million, though that figure could be subject to change. Since the incident, Studor said they have repaired piping and combustion facilities, as well as fixed the damaged tank which remains empty. Studor figures they will begin to re-fill the tank with liquefied natural gas within the next few months.

Officials say they anticipate the plant will be fully operational by April 2016, as they await final word from the investigating agencies and the building of specialized equipment for the facility.

"It's gone well, but it's gone slow," Studor said. "You don't just speed up government. But it was done right, and it was done thoroughly."

Studor said the Plymouth team has bounced back extremely well from the incident, and been very receptive to new procedures and safety recommendations — especially when it comes to gas purging.

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

# Umatilla's Flores wins posthumous Crystal Apple award

PENDLETON — The InterMountain Education Service District announced Friday the winners of the 16th annual Crystal Apple "Excellence in Education" Awards, including a Umatilla teacher who died in an April car crash.

Elisabet Flores is one of 30 teachers from Umatilla and Morrow counties picked for the award. Flores, a first grade teacher at McNary Heights, died after an April 11 single-vehicle crash outside Hermiston.

Each year, the IMESD collects nominations over a two-month period from administrators, coworkers, parents, students and community members. Winners are selected from these nominations by school district administration.

The Department of Human



**Elisabet Flores**

Services, District 12 was named the winner of the 2015 Community Partner Award. According to a press release from the IMESD, the district has been an important part of the Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub and the Wraparound Program.

"They have helped us identify goals that have led to the direct reduction of incidents of neglect and trauma for families in our communities," IMESD superintendent Mark Mulvihill said in the release. "Director Ivonne Lopez has been a key leader in this effort."

Mid Columbia Bus Company also

will reveal the winner of the Doug Flatt Memorial Leadership Award. The IMESD will honor the Umatilla and Morrow county winners at a ceremony at the Red Lion Hotel Ballroom on Wednesday, May 20 at 4:30 p.m.

- 2015 winners:**  
Athena-Weston School District: Elizabeth McIntyre; Paula Reich.  
Echo School District: Mike Heriza; Pam Reese.  
Helix School District: Monica Curtiss; Patti Sederberg.  
Hermiston School District: Michele Bergstrom; Debara Cleaver; Lisa McElroy; Kristi Smalley.  
Ione School District: John Bristow; Brandi Orem.  
Milton-Freewater Unified School District: Ralph Brown; Kori Frick-Harvey; Michael Shelton.  
Morrow County School District: Claude Birt; Rhonda Boor; Becky Evans; Nancy McElhany.  
Pendleton School District: Mark Christensen; Kayla Frazier; Beth Hepler.  
Pilot Rock School District: Brenda Benseil; Lori Roach.  
Stanfield School District: Heather Monkus; Don Walker.  
Ukiah School District: Annie Reid.  
Umatilla School District: Elisabet Flores; Lisa Keller; Jerry McMichael.  
InterMountain ESD: Mandi Parsons; Wendy Simer; Lon Thornburg; Jenny Zitterkopf.

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**BIG TOBACCO NO LONGER MARKETS ON TELEVISION**

THEY'VE MOVED TO THE CANDY AISLE

This photo was taken in Roseburg, Oregon. It's not unique. In fact, more than 1 in 3 retailers that sell tobacco have tobacco products and advertising at a child's eye level or next to items kids find appealing, like candy and toys. And when you think about how many convenience stores are in Oregon, that's a lot of opportunity to expose our kids to tobacco.

**SMOKEFREE oregon**

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Smokefree Oregon is an Oregon Health Authority initiative.