

For first time in 40 years, WWII-era plane is in the sky

By KAILEY FISICARO The Bulletin

SUNRIVER — On the edge of the tarmac at Sunriver Airport on Friday morning, Colin Powers' wife, June, anxiously awaited her husband's first flight in his rebuilt World War II airplane.

As a group of about two dozen people gathered to see him fly the Piper L-4J, she made sure everyone knew they were welcome to the coffee and doughnuts she had brought.

Powers bought the plane in 2012, and since then has worked to restore it in his home garage in La Pine. Many pieces he replaced on the plane are new, but they're all authentic to when the plane was originally built in 1945.

Friday, his take-off point was out of sight, so as the time came near, the antsy crowd began slowly spreading across the tarmac to get what they thought might be a better look.



Joe Kline / The Bulletin via AP

Colin Powers lands his restored 1945 Piper L-4J on the runway at the Sunriver Airport June 19. Powers, of La Pine, flew the plane for the first time after spending approximately three years restoring it.

Nervous, Powers' wife asked the airport staff if that was all right.

"I won't go out there," she said, laughing. "I can't run fast enough!"

Just a few minutes later, Powers appeared above in the L-4J, taking everyone back to a different time.

"Oh my goodness!" June Powers said as he flew overhead.

"There he is," said a man standing next to her, in awe.

"Gives me goose pimples," said another woman in the crowd.

It was clear June Powers

felt a sense of relief as her husband buzzed by safely.

On his second fly-through though, Powers decided to have a little fun. He tipped the wings back and forth, letting the plane lean left, then right.

"Oh don't do that!" Powers' wife said as he pulled the simple trick, scolding him good-naturedly far from where he could hear. "Well, that tells me everything is OK."

When Powers landed, there was applause and whoops of excitement.

"Way to go, Ace!" someone said from the group gathered

around the little plane.

"It's alive!" Powers said in response, emerging from the aircraft, where he had been steering from the backseat in the tandem plane.

Powers quickly called over Geoff Carson to share in the moment of success. Carson was the certified inspector who checked Powers' plane at each new step along the way.

Carson came out early Friday morning before the scheduled 9 a.m. flight. He checked over the plane more than once and found that there was nothing mechanically wrong with the airplane.

After the flight, Powers said Carson had given him a hard time about making an event out of the plane's first run since 1968 — he thought that was slightly ambitious.

"Geoff said to me, 'You're nuts for doing your first flight with people around,'" Powers said. But Powers had faith in the aircraft he built, and in having Carson's approval.

Powers plans for the plane are to sell it to a historical museum so more people can enjoy it.

"Right now it's pristine," Powers said. "It's in as good of condition as it will ever be."

That's the way he'd like to keep it.

BRIEFLY

Plane crash in La Grande sends student pilot to hospital

LA GRANDE (AP) — A single-engine airplane crash at the La Grande/Union County Airport is currently under investigation.

The La Grande Observer reports Captain Craig Ward with the Union County Sheriff's Office says the plane crashed Saturday after a pilot instructor and their student had trouble landing. Ward declined to name the pilot and the student, but said they were both from the area.

Ward said the student had been practicing landing when the engine stopped and the pilot had to take over.

The pilot didn't want to land on the runway, so he ended up landing upright at the south end of the runway.

The student was transported to the Grande Ronde Hospital with minor injuries. The pilot was uninjured.

Wildfire spotted south of state park in Eastern Oregon

VALE (AP) — Crews are trying to contain a wildfire burning south of the Succor Creek State Natural Area in Eastern Oregon.

The Bureau of Land Management said Monday the 175-acre blaze was spotted the night before by an aircraft returning from a wildfire in Idaho.

The cause of the wildfire has yet to be determined and there's no estimate for when it might be contained.

Elsewhere, crews in southwest Oregon used a controlled burning operation to make progress on the nearly 5,000-acre Buckskin fire.

The fire was 30 percent contained Monday. Officials say burnout operations will continue for the next several days, and people in the Illinois and Rogue valleys who are sensitive to smoke should take appropriate caution.

Feds paying for sewer analysis of pot usage in Washington

SEATTLE (AP) — The federal government has agreed to pay for an analysis of sewer samples to determine levels of marijuana use in Washington state.

The University of Puget Sound said Monday the National Institutes of Health is chipping in \$120,000 so Dan Burgard, an associate chemistry professor, can conduct a three-year study that will look at how per-capita pot use changed after legalization.

The university says Burgard has adapted a method developed in Italy for retrieving and analyzing wastewater. He and his students plan to test 110 random, one-liter samples taken from two wastewater treatment plants in Western Washington each year.

The research is being done in collaboration with Caleb Banta-Green, a senior scientist at the University of Washington's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute.

Sales tax could yield more revenue, cheaper pot

By HILLARY BORRUD Capital Bureau

SALEM — An economist for the Oregon Legislature offered two tempting reasons on Thursday for lawmakers to pick a sales tax on marijuana instead of a harvest tax: cheaper pot, and more tax revenue.

Mazen Malik, a senior economist in the Legislative Revenue Office, said the 17 percent sales tax in legislation that lawmakers are considering would still result in lower prices for recreational marijuana in Oregon as compared to Washington

and Colorado, which impose higher taxes at multiple points in the production process.

Oregon lawmakers want to replace the weight-based excise tax the state would charge growers under Measure 91, the initiative voters passed in November to legalize marijuana, with a sales tax that would raise the same amount of revenue.

Malik said that retail recreational marijuana prices would be lower with a sales tax when compared with a harvest tax, because a harvest tax would increase the markup cost of cannabis before it reaches consumers. Malik

estimated the change would lower the cost of retail recreational marijuana in Oregon from approximately \$300 per ounce, to \$277 per ounce.

As for the amount of revenue the proposed sales tax would raise, Malik estimated it would eventually be more than the state would receive if it maintains the harvest tax. However, Malik told lawmakers that anticipated delays in licensing pot retailers would also mean less tax revenue for the state in the early years.

For the budget year starting in July 2016, the Legislative Revenue Office estimated the

17 percent sales tax would generate a net total of \$4.6 million, after start-up and administrative costs for the legal pot system. That is based on retailers opening in January 2017. Oregon might not fully launch its retail pot system until late 2016, although adults age 21 and older can legally possess the drug starting July 1. Pot sales tax revenue could increase to a net total of \$61.4 million for the two-year budget starting July 2017.

This story first appeared in the Oregon Capital Insider newsletter. To subscribe, go to oregoncapitalinsider.com

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

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Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

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East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday, Monday
and Dec. 25, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.
Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to
East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.
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