

HELIX: Farmer Matt Wood lost about 163 of 200 acres of wheat

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He estimated the pair of blazes burned between 1,500 and 2,000 acres. The second fire burned through wheat about seven miles southeast of Helix near the junction of Helix Highway and Shafer Road.

“Both were started by lightning strikes and were wind-driven fires,” Bryant said. “Ninety to 99 percent of what burned was standing wheat.”

He said the stand-off at the Brogoitti farmhouse was a team effort by firefighters from multiple agencies and farmers. Traffic control help came from Oregon State Police, Umatilla County sheriff’s officers and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

The fire was short-lived,

but memorable.

“It was pretty intense,” Bryant said.

Shortly after the fires started, wheat farmer Matt Wood drove his tractor to a high point in a field near his Hudeman Road home and eyeballed the two separate fires. He could see one fire to the northeast and another to the southeast. He was about to drive his tractor to the northerly fire to help with firefighting efforts when wind direction changed dramatically.

“The wind shifted and came back at me,” Wood said. “I had half a mile of wheat on either side of me.”

Wood moved to the edge of the field and started disking a line. Within 10 minutes, neighbors with pumpers and tractors arrived to assist Wood.



Photo contributed by Robert McLean
A lightning storm came through the area Saturday evening and touched off a field fire fed by erratic winds.

“That is very typical out here,” Wood said. “There were four tractors with discs besides mine, plus guys in trucks with spraying apparatus. It’s a good neighbor-

hood.”

Wood said he lost about 163 acres of the 200 acres of wheat in the field.

“Thankfully, it’s all insured,” he said. “We’ll be okay.”

The East Umatilla County Fire Protection District provided incident command for the Shafer Road fire. Chief Don Jackson said the emergency call came in 5:46 p.m. and burned mostly standing wheat belonging to multiple farmers.

He said the fire roared through the wheat before firefighters subdued the flames. Units on their way from other jurisdictions were diverted to other area fires.

Power in the area was disrupted to some homes until early morning.

The Brogoitti farmhouse and the farm’s eight outbuildings are now nestled into a huge curved black scar. Bruce said the farm lost about 325 acres of wheat, which was insured, and the buildings remained unscathed. The couple won’t soon forget the sight of that approaching flame and the efforts of their neighbors and emergency workers.

“This is the first time in all my years of farming,” he said, “that fire has come this close.”

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BRONZE: McClintock died at the age of 90 in 1998

Continued from 1A

walk from the statue of George Fletcher, the first black cowboy to compete at the Pendleton Round-Up.

McClintock’s daughter, Susan Stuart, traveled from her home in New Mexico to help unveil the statue. She called her mother a vivacious woman who helped run the family ranch near Stanfield. Stuart described her mother as a diminutive woman (five-feet-two) who “had the queen wave down.” McClintock died at age 90 in 1998.

“She would have been so pleased,” Stuart said of the honor.

Local historian Keith May, who penned the words on the statue’s base and is a member of the Pendleton Arts Commission that sponsored the bronze, smiled as he watched the proceedings.

“She’ll be a perfect bookend for George Fletcher,” May said.

May leads plenty of tours in Pendleton as a step-on tour guide for Empress Cruise Ships, which runs excursion buses to Pendleton. He enjoys watching tourists interact with the statues as they take photographs and read the plaques.

“I’d say 99.9 percent of them love the statues,” May said. “The statues lead them up and down Main Street.”

During the dedication, Houk read words from the plaque saying the bronze is “dedicated to the women who have served as the face of the Pendleton Round-Up.”

He said McClintock returned to Pendleton from

the coast where she was a teacher in order to serve on the Pendleton Round-Up court, first as a princess in 1928 and queen the following year.

Pendleton Arts Commission member Mireya Wolf expressed pleasure with the work of Bunn, who the commission chose unanimously to sculpt McClintock.

“Her statues just seem to come alive,” Wolf said. “You can see movement. You can see the detail in the hat, rope and the dress.”

Houk, who got to see Bunn’s work as it progressed, said, “I love it. It’s one more addition to Pendleton that shows that we recognize our past.”

McClintock ranked fourth in surveys conducted by the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce and the East Oregonian behind Fletcher, Motanic and 1916 all-around Round-Up champion Jackson Sundown. The statue of bordello owner Stella Darby, not an arts commission project, was financed by the Pendleton Underground. A bronze of Pendleton High School football coach Don Requa, given to the city by the Linebackers Club, will be unveiled July 11 at Brownfield Park. A survey will determine the next crop of bronzes to find homes in the downtown core.

The McClintock statue was cast by Valley Bronze in Joseph.

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WORLD BRIEFLY

Supreme Court: Controversial execution drug OK

WASHINGTON (AP) — Trading sharp words, a deeply divided Supreme Court upheld the use of a controversial drug in lethal-injection executions Monday, even as two dissenting justices said for the first time they think it’s “highly likely” the death penalty itself is unconstitutional.

On their last day together until the fall, the justices voted 5-4 in a case from Oklahoma that the sedative midazolam can be used in executions without violating the Eighth Amendment prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment.

The court also divided 5-4 in cases upholding congressional districts drawn by independent commissions and calling into question first-ever limits on mercury emissions from power plants. In addition, the justices also agreed to hear an important affirmative action case in the fall and acted to keep Texas abortion clinics open amid a legal fight that threatens to close most of them.

In the dispute over the lethal-injection drug, midazolam was used in Arizona, Ohio and Oklahoma executions in 2014. The executions took longer than usual and raised concerns that the drug did not perform its intended task of putting inmates into a

coma-like sleep.

Justice Samuel Alito said for a conservative majority that arguments the drug could not be used effectively as a sedative in executions were speculative and he dismissed problems in executions in Arizona and Oklahoma as “having little probative value for present purposes.”

Calif. lawmakers pass contested school vaccine bill,

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California lawmakers on Monday sent the governor a contentious bill that would impose one of the strictest school vaccination laws in the country in reaction to a recent measles outbreak at Disneyland.

The Senate reaffirmed the bill striking California’s personal belief exemption for immunizations on a 24-14 vote. Mississippi and West Virginia are the only two states with such strict requirements in place.

Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown has not said if he would sign it. Although the bill passed the Senate and the Assembly with bipartisan support, it did not pass with a two-thirds threshold that would be needed to override a governor’s veto.

Parents opposed to the bill vowed to take legal action even though the issue has been upheld in court, including by the Supreme Court.

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