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WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2015

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County still swatting bugs at dispatch

Network failures, software issues frustrating county, law enforcement

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Umatilla County got some answers Tuesday to the problems plaguing operations in the sheriff's office 9-1-1 and communications center.

Time and again the dispatch system has failed. Information from Sun Ridge Systems Inc., the company providing the center's software, shows while their product has bugs, the county's computer network also has been wobbly.



Lieuallen

she explained in an email. "It has to be quick, efficient and easy to use, but when we freeze up during emergencies that is not acceptable."

Dispatchers have to reboot their computers, and other computers are not able to take over. She said the situation puts people's lives at stake and adds unnecessary stress to already stressful situations.

New software

Tony Richards is the president of Sun Ridge Systems, and he said he understands Lieuallen's frustration. After all, the county paid more than \$700,000 in 2014 to use his company's software for dispatching services and records management, and during the past couple of months the county has experienced a flurry of glitches. But he said many of those are related to the county's own network.

According to Sun Ridge's tracking, the county's network failed 150 times this year, including 100 times Feb. 19-21. Hermiston police

See DISPATCH/2A

PENDLETON PGG marketing deal intends to increase co-op's income

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

When it comes to marketing and selling wheat, Pendleton Grain Growers is banking on greater strength in numbers.

PGG recently announced it will join a growing alliance of Northwest grain cooperatives to improve their overall market access and fetch more competitive bids for members across Eastern Oregon and Washington.

The agreement with McCoy Grain Terminal LLC, a trading company based in Colfax, Washington, lumps PGG's 10-17 million bushel grain handle under one partnership that will market 50-60 million bushels.

At that volume, wheat can be blended and offered to exporters in larger packages for potentially more money, said Jason Middleton, director of grain operations for PGG.

"By that, we're able to go out for a better bid," Middleton said.

A better bid means a better bottom line for the co-op, which gets passed down to members, Middleton said.

McCoy Grain Terminal started as a joint venture in 2012 between Cooperative Agricultural Producers of Rosalia, Washington, and Pacific Northwest Farmers Cooperative of Genesee, Idaho. Together, they built and co-own a \$17 million grain handling facility just outside of Rosalia, a small farm town in the Palouse region of Washington.

Last year, McCoy Grain Terminal added Mid-Columbia Producers of Moro as a partner to boost marketing capabilities. Now with PGG in the fold, the company can market grain from more than 70 countryside elevators and eight river terminals — three

See PGG/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Oregon is now one of just four states that has legalized marijuana for recreational use.

Local police wait on rules to enforce

East Oregonian

Although July 1 marks a sea change in the way the law deals with marijuana, the Pendleton and Hermiston police chiefs agree that the implications of legalization will depend heavily on rules the Legislature is still working on.

The rules laid out in the ballot measure include age restrictions, volume of possession and use restrictions. It is illegal to possess or use marijuana for anyone under 21, and a felony to provide any form of the drug to a minor. A legal user can have eight ounces and four plants in their home, or one ounce away from home, and all use must be on private property and out of "public view."

Also, all commercial sales are temporarily prohibited, though Senate Bill 460 passed the legislature today and would allow recreational users to buy up to a



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See POLICE/8A

Cities, counties prepare for marijuana sales

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

What's legal?

Private recreational and medical marijuana use is legal for everyone 21 and older. Possession of up to 8 ounces is also allowed, as are up to four plants per household, regardless of number or age of residents. People 21 and older can also deliver 1 ounce of homegrown marijuana and 1 pound of cannabinoid products.

What's illegal?

Selling recreational marijuana is still illegal in Oregon, and use in public is outlawed. The Oregon Liquor Control Commission is writing rules for growing and selling legal pot and plans to accept applications from prospective farmers on Jan. 1. It says retail sales could start about harvest time next fall. Last week, the Legislature's joint marijuana committee voted to start retail sales sooner, by Oct. 1 by going through the existing medical marijuana dispensaries, now more than 300 strong.

How did Oregon get here?

In 1973, Oregon was the first state to lower penalties for small amounts of pot, "decriminalizing" it. Medical marijuana followed in 1998. In 2012, voters rejected a first attempt to legalize recreational marijuana, but in 2013 the state approved dispensaries to sell medical pot, replacing a system that allowed patients to grow their own or, more commonly, designate someone to grow it for them. In November, voters approved Measure 91 by 12 percentage points, 56-44.

Lighting up a joint after work may be legal in Oregon, but buying the marijuana to roll that joint still isn't.

The state won't be ready to approve the first marijuana dispensary and commercial grower licenses until 2016. Meanwhile the list of rules designed to keep those businesses out of Eastern Oregon is growing despite the fact that cities don't yet know which of those laws will end up being approved.

"There will be a lot of growing pains, and that's not a pun," Weston mayor Duane Thul said.

Voters in Thul's city actually passed Measure 91 by a handful of votes — the only city in Umatilla County to do so. But Thul said he believes that can be attributed to low voter turnout, and at its last meeting the Weston City Council amended its business license rules to exclude businesses in violation of federal law.

A bill is in the works that would allow cities to ban dispensaries but would require the ones where voters approved Measure 91 to put it to another citizen vote. Thul said it's too bad the state legislature didn't get the bill passed before July 1 so cities could know ahead of legalization what ordinances were legal for them to pass.

"I hope it doesn't come back to haunt us later, but there isn't a whole lot you can do at this point," he said. "We're just going to have to see what happens."

Where will marijuana dispensaries and commercial grow sites be allowed when the dust settles? Inside today's paper is a look at the rules passed by Umatilla County, Morrow County and their respective cities that suggests there won't be many options.

See MARIJUANA/8A



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