

FIRE: Blast, fire would have damaged water pipes, sprinklers

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His daughters, Rosemary Garcia and Diana Quezada, own the popular downtown eatery. He said there was the possibility the power company would install new transformers and have power flowing sometime Thursday.

Arson investigators with Oregon fire marshals, state police and Pendleton fire were on the scene early Wednesday. Firefighters used chainsaws to cut away debris from the collapsed roof and ruined walls. Roberts explained they would need to clear away those chunks to

find the origin of the blast and fire. Investigators finished their work Wednesday afternoon.

There was no official word on what caused the destruction. Roberts in a statement Tuesday said nothing indicated the fire was "the result of an active methamphetamine lab as has been speculated."

Eduardo Quezada was in the building when the explosion occurred. Casey Severe and Christian Garcia of Pendleton rushed in and helped bring Quezada out. They suffered smoke inhalation and required medical

help at St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton.

Jared Pennington and Alfredo Lopez also helped bring Quezada out of the black smoke and raging fire; they did not report injuries.

Pendleton building official John Lindstrom said he provided state fire marshals with the old city hall's blueprints to help with the investigation, but what he saw in the remains of the burned out second floor did not seem to match with the paperwork.

The most recent building inspection was in 1997, according to city documents, after former Pendleton

restaurateur Jim Sewell bought the building and renovated the second floor for a residence. Inspections take place when someone files building permits with the city. Lindstrom said building inspectors lack the authority to simply check someone's property whenever they want.

He also said any fire suppression system in the old city hall would have failed in the inferno. The intense blast and fire would have damaged water pipes and sprinklers, he said, and at best water would have poured out of them but probably not where it mattered.

WAGE: Oregon's current minimum at \$9.25 is nation's second highest statewide rate

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requirement for paid sick leave, a state-sponsored plan for retirement savings, a ban on criminal-history inquiries on initial job applications — Chamberlain described inaction on the minimum wage "the one glaring exception."

Lawmakers will meet for a 35-day session starting in February.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, has laid out a plan to raise the minimum to \$13 in stages by 2018 and to allow cities and counties to raise it more. Although it did not advance past the House Rules Committee, Kotek said she plans to press ahead in 2016.

Unlike the pending ballot measure for a \$15 minimum, the proposal advocated by the Raise the Wage coalition also would allow cities and counties to set higher levels beyond \$13.50.

The coalition released a report, prepared by the union-funded Our Oregon, that said a \$13.50 minimum wage would be adequate in most rural counties to support a single adult with a preschool-age child. But in the three metropolitan Portland counties, the report said that level would have to be around \$22 per hour.

To Cynthia Munoz of Portland, who earns less than \$13 per hour as an elementary school aide in Woodburn, a raise would allow her to better support herself and her 10-year-old son.

"It's not about a vacation, and it's not about a night on the town," Munoz said. "I am talking about earning enough money at one job to pay my bills and make sure my son has the things he needs."

Opposition is expected from business groups, which note that Oregon's current minimum at \$9.25 is the nation's second highest statewide rate behind Washington's \$9.47.

They also oppose lifting the ban on independent

action by local governments. D.J. Vogt, speaking for the Oregon Business Association, said that proposal is a "nonstarter."

But Deborah Field, who sits on the board of the Main Street Alliance of Oregon, said an increase in the minimum wage is good for business.

"My employees are my most important asset, and it makes good business sense to take care of them," said Field, co-owner of Paperjam Press in Northeast Portland. "Raising the minimum wage is a smart business decision."

Although the 15 Now Oregon group and the Raise the Wage coalition differ in their priorities, there is crossover support. Two of the chief petitioners for the \$15 minimum wage are from the Oregon farmworkers union known as PCUN and Jobs with Justice — both organizations represented in the Raise the Wage coalition.

The 15 Now Oregon group has filed 1,808 validated signatures, more than the 1,000 required to obtain an official summary from the attorney general known as a ballot title. Once a ballot title is certified — it can be challenged in the Supreme Court — sponsors can collect the rest of the 88,184 signatures required to qualify the measure for the November 2016 ballot.

Andrea Miller, executive director of Causa, Oregon's immigrant-rights group, said the Raise the Wage coalition will have to set in motion the process for its own ballot measure this fall, ahead of the 2016 session.

Unlike the 2015 session, when individual organizations had multiple priorities, Miller said raising the minimum wage will be a focal point in 2016.

"Our job as a coalition is to mobilize constituents and community members across the state to tell their legislators this needs to be at the top of their ticket in 2016," she said.

BIKERS: Event may attract around 1,500 over five days

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Taylor's story from a spot at the base of the statue. Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts, who had led the procession in the city's vintage Ford police car, stood tall a bit outside the circle, wearing dress blues.

Taylor didn't die immediately, Houk told the motorcyclists.

"He was taken to St. Anthony Hospital where he continued to direct his deputies in the search," Houk said.

Taylor, known as a lawman who could artfully coax a confession, arrested 2,645 men in his 18 years as sheriff. He never killed anyone with his own gun.

The statue represented the end of a long journey for some of the bikers who started at different law enforcement memorials that morning. One group began the day at the Washington State Law Enforcement Memorial in Olympia. The other started in Salem at the Oregon Fallen Law Enforcement Memorial. They presented patches from police, fire and motorcycle groups.

Watching the ceremony were mother and daughter, Debra and Becky Carter — Taylor's great-granddaughter and great-great-granddaughter. Neither ever met their famous relative, but they said the lawman has permeated family history. Debra has an album of newspaper clippings. Her grandfather, Sheldon D. Taylor, watched the condemned men die.

"I have the postcard sent to my grandfather inviting him to attend the hangings," Debra said.

The Taylor tribute is one of multiple events on tap during the rally. Organizers estimate the event will attract around 1,500 participants over five days. The motorcycle rally, which kicked off



Motorcyclists gather at Til Taylor Park during the opening day of Pendleton Bike Week for a ceremony honoring fallen lawmen Wednesday in Pendleton.



Staff photos by E.J. Harris

Jerry "Chopper" Stock of Newberg, a member of the Willamette Valley chapter of Bikers Against Child Abuse, holds a flag during a ceremony honoring fallen lawmen at Til Taylor Park on Wednesday as part of Pendleton Bike Week.

Wednesday at the Pendleton Convention Center, is in its first year.

The schedule includes organized rides, stunt shows, concert, tattoo competition, Miss Pendleton Bike Week pageant, line dancing, poker run, tech talks, vendor village, bike show and other events.

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SOLAR: Takes about 18 months to build a large solar project start to finish

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Investment Tax Credit and wind Production Tax Credit: wind farms need only break ground to qualify for the PTC, while solar projects must be completed and in service to qualify for the ITC.

Generally speaking, it takes about 18 months to build a large solar project from start to finish, Miller said. That puts developers up against a tight deadline for the end of 2016.

"We're simply trying to get equal treatment with the PTC," Miller said.

As a ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, tried to amend the tax extenders bill to treat solar more like wind under the ITC. His amendment was not included in the bill's mark-up, which passed Tuesday.

Lindsey Held, a chief Wyden advisor, said the senator has consistently supported the solar ITC over the years. It is not certain whether the amendment will be discussed again on the full Senate floor.

"Right now, it's out of committee where the core work is done on the bill," Held said.

Miller, who also works as vice president of public policy and power markets for Sunrun, a solar company based in San Francisco, said advocates remain confident

"We're simply trying to get equal treatment with the PTC."

— Bryan Miller, co-chair of the Alliance for Solar Choice


they can get something done to extend or amend the credits.

The solar ITC was initially passed in 2006 during the George W. Bush administration and enjoys bipartisan support, Miller said. He is optimistic they can get something done, but knows they face tough competition from industry opponents and GOP lawmakers.

"Those are powerful enemies," he said. "It's going to be a tough battle."

There are five solar projects either proposed or in the permitting process in Oregon. One proposed by Columbia Energy Partners and Pacific Corp would generate 2,000 kilowatts in Arlington.


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TUESDAY	1:30pm	Bucking Horse Stampede — Main Street
WEDNESDAY	9:00am	Little Buckaroo Rodeo for special needs children — Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	Family Fun at the Thunder Room
THURSDAY	9:00am	Tough Enough to Wear Pink Walk
	10:00am	Vendors off Main Street
	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
		Tough Enough to Wear Pink — Wear Pink, Support Cancer Screening
		Barrel Racing Slack — After the Rodeo
	9:00pm	Music and Dancing at Thunder Room
FRIDAY	7:00am	Golf Tournament — Alpine Meadows Golf Course
	10:00am	Chief Joseph Junior Parade — Main Street
	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
	9:00pm	Music and Dancing at Thunder Room
SATURDAY	6:00am	Shrine Breakfast begins
	10:00am	Grand Parade — Main Street
	12:00pm	Nez Perce Friendship Feast — Encampment Pavilion
	2:30pm	Slack — Arena
	3:00pm	Traditional Indian Dance Contest — Encampment Pavilion
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
	9:00pm	Music and Dancing at Thunder Room
	11:00pm	Cowboy Breakfast — Rodeo Grounds — Until 3am
SUNDAY	6:00am	Cowboy Breakfast Continues
	9:00am	Cowboy Church Service with Soul Renovation— Harley Tucker Memorial Arena



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