



More than 300 girls on 19 teams participated in the Pendleton High School Mud Wars as part of Homecoming Week on Wednesday in Pendleton.

MUD: Team Camo emerged as the champions

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over the rope until pulsing music boiled from the arena speakers to signal the start.

Varsity football coach Erik Davis and Mark Christensen officiated the fracas, stopping the action as soon as Pajama Jam was dragged into the loser zone. The Nerds whooped in triumph.

Ken Lebsock, facilities director for the Pendleton School District, smiled as he watched the mêlée. He and his crew started preparing the pudding-like playing field about a week earlier. The job required about 30 yards of dirt and plenty of water all set into a framework built from a double row of hay bales lined with plastic. They started adding water Tuesday.

"Today we added more water and let it percolate," Lebsock said.

He liked the consistency.

"This should suck some shoes off," he said, grinning. "That's always the goal."

The event started 20 years ago. When school administrators put the kibosh on a powderpuff football game, girls organized a tug-of-war instead. The event turned muddy from approximately a week of rain that turned the Round-Up Grounds track into a sludgy mess.

This year, parents and friends who bought special press passes got close to photograph the mucky mêlée. They dodged chunks of mud as they documented their favorite tug-o-war athlete.



Team Camo slogs through the pit while competing against team Luau during the Mud Wars on Wednesday in Pendleton.

The battles continued with each team tugging until they had lost twice. Finally, Camo, a team of seniors, emerged victorious from the ooze. Afterwards, they exchanged muddy high fives and slippery hugs.

One member of the team, Kaitlyn Jones, said her friend Katlyn Lyon had a dream that their team would be named Camo and they would win mud wars. The team decided to adopt the name.

Jones, Lyon and Kate Allen said they were pumped during each of their battles.

"It was all adrenaline," Lyon said. "We were ready. Our hearts were pumping."

"After a couple of times out there, I thought we could do this," Allen said. "We got this."

When asked how they planned to get their mud-covered selves home, they just laughed. They would pile into the back of a pickup.

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JUDGE: Morrow County is one of four that still elects a local judge

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Juvenile hearings won't shift to circuit court until early 2017, after current county Judge Terry Tallman's term expires. Tallman, who was first elected in 1999, will retire.

With Tallman's departure, commissioner Don Russell said it made sense to review the position and see if there were better ways to structure the county court.

"This wasn't a reflection on whether Judge Tallman is a good or bad judge," Russell said. "It's just how we wanted to move forward with a new person."

Tallman, Russell and commissioner Leann Rea voted unanimously to hire a full-time administrator earlier this year. However, Tallman later voted against allowing the circuit court to take over juvenile hearings. Both Russell and Rea were in favor of the change.

Tallman did not immediately return calls for comment.

Morrow County is part of Oregon's Sixth Judicial District, along with Umatilla County. The district includes five judges who appear in courtrooms in Pendleton, Hermiston and Heppner.

Roy Blaine, trial court administrator, said Morrow County is one of four in Oregon that still elects a local judge for juvenile court — along with Sherman, Gilliam and Wheeler counties. Judge Ron Pahl presides over juvenile court in Umatilla County, and Blaine said he expects Pahl will pick up Morrow County's juvenile cases as well.

Blaine said the court will work with District Attorney Justin Nelson and Juvenile Department Director Tom Meier to make the transition as seamless as possible.

"I have a judge in Morrow County at least one day per week, or as necessary," Blaine said. "We serve the

people of each county, and we will continue to do that."

On average, there are about 10 juvenile delinquency cases in Morrow County per year and 55-60 dependency cases referred by the Department of Human Services, according to Russell. Most times, the youth see Meier and an agreement is worked out before it ever reaches the judge.

In DHS cases, Russell said the county pays for attorneys for both the parent and child. But once those are moved to circuit court, the state will pay for the defense attorney, which Russell said should help save the county somewhere around \$40,000 per year.

If the county were to elect another judge, Russell said that person would likely have no law background and be forced into a steep learning curve.

"They come in, really, with no knowledge," he said. "It's hard to get somebody

with that experience."

As for hiring a county administrator, Russell said the population has grown to the point where there aren't enough hours in the day for a full-time judge to also handle county operations.

"You can only manage so many people and do a good job of it," Russell said. "In the past, (Tallman) has had really good administrative help."

The new administrator will work with department heads, manage day-to-day business and report to three part-time commissioners. The position will pay \$84,696 per year. Currently, part-time commissioners make \$36,000 per year, and \$72,000 per year for the judge.

"I hope things will run more smoothly," Russell said. "This is a model a lot of other counties in the state use. This is not new."

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DRUGS: West Virginia has highest rate of overdose deaths

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simmered at the state level but just recently risen to the national political stage.

Charleston Police Chief Brent Webster said his officers deal with a "community of zombies walking around" in need of treatment. A father of five daughters described what it was like to find one of them had overdosed, a needle hanging from her arm.

Obama said the stories reminded him of his teenage daughters and his own rebellious teen years.

"They're wonderful girls, but they're teenagers. They do some ... things," he said. "And I remember me being a teenager. I've written about this. I did some ... stuff. And I've been very honest about it. And so what I think about is 'there but for the grace of God,' and that's what we all have to remember."

West Virginia has the highest rate of overdose deaths in the U.S. — more than twice the national average, according to a report by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

State officials say the

problem is damaging the economy, depressing the workforce and overwhelming social services.

Obama's trip was briefly delayed by Vice President Joe Biden's announcement from the White House Rose Garden that he would not seek the presidency. The news threatened to overshadow Obama's attempt to throw a national spotlight on the drug issue, but his visit was closely watched in West Virginia, where his energy policies have made him deeply unpopular.

Obama stressed that the drug abuse problem is a national one.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report released in July found the number of people who reported using heroin within the past year had nearly doubled from 2002 to 2013. Heroin use was up among nearly all demographic groups, but showed particular spikes among women and non-Latino whites.

Researchers say two factors are driving the trend: the rise in abuse of opioid painkillers — drugs that are often a precursor to heroin — and the increasing availability of cheap heroin.

FUEL: DEQ proposal would attribute greater carbon impact to corn ethanol

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as January, Department of Environmental Quality staff said existing methodologies were inadequate to calculate it. However, Cory-Ann Wind, an air quality manager for the Department of Environmental Quality who works on implementation of the models it uses to calculate the carbon impact of land-use changes, based on extensive peer-reviewed research.

"I feel very comfortable with the work they've done to develop the most recent of their numbers, and that's why we recommended including the California (carbon intensity) values into the Oregon program," Wind said.

The deadline to submit comments on the latest proposed fuel standard rules is 4 p.m. Oct. 21. As of Thursday afternoon, no one had submitted comments on the rules.

California used two models to estimate land-use impacts: one is an economic model that calculates the impact of fuel policy on agricultural and other real estate prices, and the other quantifies the amount of carbon emissions that occurs when land is converted to grow biofuel feedstock. The carbon impact occurs when land where carbon was sequestered, such as a forest, is converted to farmland.

Geoff Cooper is senior vice president at the Renewable Fuels Association, a national ethanol industry

group with offices in Washington, D.C., and St. Louis. Last month, Cooper told *The Oregonian* that if Oregon adopts the indirect land-use change model to calculate carbon emissions, the ethanol group will work with the petroleum industry to repeal the low-carbon fuel standard.

"They're saying, 'Well, land we use for soybeans and pasture here is now being used to grow corn for ethanol so a farmer somewhere else in the world now has to convert some land to make up for that lost soybean pasture here,'" Cooper said on Oct. 14. "The real world data is showing that isn't happening."

Wind disagreed and said "satellite data for land use conversion now is great."

The Department of Environmental Quality proposal would attribute a greater carbon impact to corn ethanol compared with existing rules, and Cooper said corn ethanol refineries such as Pacific Ethanol, Inc. in Boardman would face reduced demand from companies that import gas into the state.

"If you look at the ethanol that's used in the state of Oregon today, it's primarily corn-based ethanol produced at a facility there in Boardman, as well as facilities elsewhere in the United States," Cooper said. Cooper said if Oregon is going to include the indirect land-use impact, it should rely on modeling by researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois, rather than models from California.

TRAVEL: The pair has close to two million online followers

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Steakhouse. After coffee the next morning, they headed to the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute.

Before immersing themselves in native history and culture, Li, 25, and Teng, 33, answered a few questions via their interpreter. Liang prefaced by saying the bloggers share their travel experiences and photographs on Chinese social media sites WeChat and Weibo. Facebook and Twitter are banned in China.

"They have close to two million followers," said Liang, who works for America's Hub World Tours.

The trip to Oregon marked the men's first experience in the United States. Both hail from Qingdao in the Shandong Province. They said the United States attracts numerous Chinese tourists. Favorite destinations include Hawaii, Las Vegas and Seattle. Oregon gets its share, too.

According to Travel



Chinese travel blogger Lintao Li gazes at an exhibit at Tamastlikt Cultural Institute depicting an Indian couple on horseback in regalia.

Oregon statistics, China is the state's number one overseas market. Chinese tourists spent more than \$48 billion in 2014.

"The scenic views are gorgeous," said Li and Teng, according to Liang.

Liang said the men, new to rural life, are amazed by the big sky, clean air and long open views. Finally away from the city lights, they plan

on doing some star photography. As for Pendleton, the culture is fascinating and the people friendly.

"They are sure their fans will love it and want to explore," Liang said.

At Tamastlikt, Randy Melton and Cassandra Franklin guided the group through the museum and fielded questions. The men examined the Alcatraz

exhibit, soaked in a coyote story and stood in a winter lodge made of tule grass. They peered at stone tools, regalia, weapons and other artifacts. They wondered about the role of horses, Indian burial practices and whether Indian tribes experienced conflicts among themselves. They seemed both intrigued and unsettled to learn of the Indian boarding school movement in the 1800s. They studied a map of tribal river improvements.

Teng, padding softly in his Nike Airs, wandered away from the group regularly to take photos.

After the tour, the group headed to Baker.

The bloggers are already blogging and posting photos about their Oregon adventure.

"A lot of fans have started talking about Oregon already," Liang said.

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