

Irrigon man still missing
REGION/3A



PENDLETON PAIR GOES DIVISION 1
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EAST OREGONIAN

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PENDLETON

Pot sales ban hits second stalemate

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

A lot can change in a month. Pendleton City Councilor Chuck Wood, who voted to draft a marijuana sales ban Oct. 20, changed his position and voted Tuesday not to support a ban without letting voters have the final say in November 2016, creating a 4-4 stalemate.

Without the requisite five votes,



More online

For video of the city council meeting visit eastoregonian.com

the Pendleton City Council was forced to extend consideration of the ban to the Dec. 1 meeting.

Mayor Phillip Houk opened the public hearing by saying he would only allow members of the public who had not already spoken at the

last meeting to voice their support or opposition to the ban.

Two people spoke against the ban, bringing the running total of opponents and supporters to 12-4 — in favor of ban opposers.

Pendleton resident Vaughn Hamby said he went door-to-door to collect opinions on the proposed marijuana bans, with many people he talked with critical of the city's campaign to pass a 5-cent gas tax while potentially denying tax

revenue from marijuana sales.

Hamby said Pendleton could put regulations in place that ensured marijuana businesses did not overtake the city, like the caps some Colorado cities put on the number of marijuana retailers that could be located in their towns.

If the council wasn't in favor of full-on marijuana sales legalization, Hamby said a referring the

See MARIJUANA/8A

Irrigon institutes ban

Irrigon City Council voted Tuesday to ban the sale and production of marijuana in the city, including medical marijuana dispensaries and recreational marijuana shops.

The vote was 4-2, with councilors Margaret Anderson and Michelle Hagen opposing the ordinance.

Brown: State will continue taking Syrian refugees

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown announced on Twitter Tuesday that Oregon will continue to accept refugees after a suspect in the Paris attacks was found to possess a Syrian passport.

The governor had declined to comment Monday on her position on accepting refugees from the war-torn Middle Eastern country, where ISIS has taken a foothold.

"Clearly, Oregon will continue to accept refugees," Brown tweeted. "They seek safe haven, and we will continue to open the doors of opportunity to them. The words of the Statue of Liberty apply in Oregon just as they do in every other state."

Brown's position contrasts with that of at least 27 governors, mostly Republicans, who say they want to block more Syrian refugees from entering their states, according to several media reports.

Governors have no authority to reject Syrian refugees but could seek to reduce state services provided to the newcomers. The federal government decides immigration policy. President Obama recently announced that the United States would accept 10,000 Syrian refugees in the next year.

Only one Syrian refugee to date has settled in Oregon, to according to the state Department of Human Services.



LAB CAN'T TEST DRUGS

Pendleton crime lab voluntarily stops testing while former employee is investigated for theft

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

The Oregon State Police crime lab stopped processing drug evidence after a forensic analyst came under suspicion for stealing pills.

Labs in Pendleton, Bend also forfeit accreditation

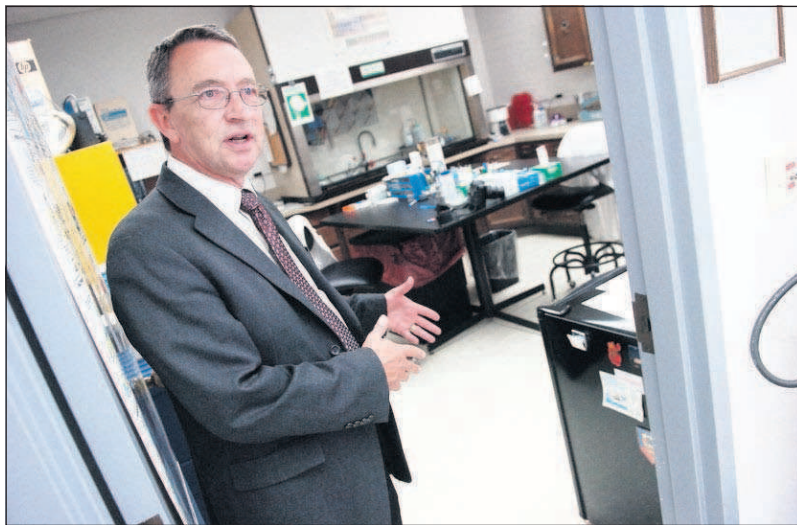
By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Oregon State Police crime labs in Pendleton and Bend lost their accreditation to analyze drug evidence. The Pendleton lab has not been able to do such work since July.

Forensic analyst Nika Larsen, who worked at both locations, remains under criminal investigation for stealing pills.

Larsen worked on 1,354 cases for Umatilla County, according to a Sept. 28 letter from District Attorney Dan Primus, hundreds more than he initially estimated. Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson now pegs the number Larsen worked on for his office at 130, 50 more than his previous assessment.

The *East Oregonian* obtained copies of letters the two district attorneys sent to local defense lawyers in early October revealing the state police Forensic Services Division opted to suspend drug testing in Pendleton on July 28 and in Bend on Sept. 3. Larsen trans-



EO file photo

Oregon State Police crime lab director out of Pendleton, Keith Kerr, gestures while talking about the chemistry testing area at the Pendleton crime lab in 2011.

ferred between the two labs from 2012 until state police placed her on administrative leave on Aug. 27.

Primus and Oregon State Police did not return phone calls seeking comment.

State police Capt. Theodore

a copy of a Sept. 9 sworn statement he made. The Pendleton lab stopped taking drug evidence July 30, Phillips reported, and transported it all to the Portland crime lab or sent it back to police agencies.

Phillips "established there was probable cause to believe a crime had been committed on Aug. 26" after an examination of drug evidence in Klamath County. He questioned Larsen on Aug. 27, and that led to her paid suspension pending the outcome of the investigation.

Phillips also reported changes to some lab policies.

The lab used a key lock system to track state police employees, including forensic analysts, who accessed the main evidence locker. But now, "[u]nder normal operations" only the lab support specialist and supervisor have direct access to that room. In addition, at least two staff members must be involved whenever anyone accesses drugs. Other changes require more information about who uses drug

See LAB/8A

HERMISTON

Lack of public transportation hinders some residents



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Dale Orem, of Hermiston, climbs inside a Umatilla Cab Company taxi for a ride to Loneys Martial Arts Center on Main Street. Taxi driver Mickey Trujillo stands by to close the door.

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Every time Dale Orem leaves his house, it costs him.

Orem is one of many Hermiston residents who deals with the daily challenges of not owning a car in a city with no public transportation system. If he walks, he might use an hour of his day to make the round trip. If he uses a taxi, the fare chips away at his limited fixed income.

"This town is not big, but it's huge when you think of it in terms of walking," he said.

Orem has a driver's license, but looking at his budget he said if he got together the money to buy a car he wouldn't be able to pay for insurance, gas, maintenance, DMV fees, tires and other costs.

"It's doable to live with just the taxi system in town, but it's just not cutting the mustard. It's an existence but it's not a happiness."

— Dale Orem, Hermiston resident

Instead, he buys \$32 worth of tickets — 16 one-way trips — a month from the city's senior and disabled taxi program.

"Thankfully I've got friends who will take me if I need to go to the Tri-Cities or Walla Walla, but when I moved here I didn't know a soul,"

See TRANSPORTATION/8A

