

Umatilla Co. commissioners join call to end Malheur refuge occupation

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

The Umatilla County Commission added its voice Tuesday to a growing list of Oregonians asking the armed occupiers of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge to leave the state.

Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution in support of the Association of Oregon Counties' request for a peaceful dissolution of the occupation so that the association can continue to work with Oregon's congressional delegation on resolving land use issues in the state.

"Local control is a long-held tenet of Oregon counties, and as such, the board would like to see these out-of-state and out-of-county militants go home to their families, and respectfully ask them to do so," the resolution stated.

Commissioner Larry Givens recently returned from a trip to Washington, D.C., as the new president of the Association of Oregon Counties. Givens said he met with Representative Greg Walden, who said that the takeover of the refuge, led by the family of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy, had put a stop to "all kinds of good talk" Oregon's legislators had been having with the Bureau of Land Management.

"Things are heating up and it's not a real good situation."

— **Larry Givens,**
Umatilla County Commissioner

"The Bundy standoff brought everything to a standstill," Givens said.

He said Harney County leaders have asked the association of counties and other logistics to keep order as militants, government officials, law enforcement and the media have descended on the area.

"Things are heating up and it's not a real good situation," he said.

On Tuesday the commission also held a public hearing on the proposed May ballot measure to combine the Hermiston and Stanfield fire districts.

No members of the public were present for comment, but Hermiston Fire Chief Scott Stanton laid out the case for the new district.

He said as calls for service in the Hermiston/Stanfield area increased but staffing levels stayed the same, the district had more instances where someone called for an ambulance and one wasn't available. On Monday, for example, he said there were 25 calls for service and two "outright delays."

"Eventually someone is going to lose their life," he said.

Combining the fire districts at a new, higher tax rate would allow the combined district to hire more staff, provide coverage to territory that was previously outside of any fire district, fully staff Fire Station 2 on Diagonal Road to decrease response time and put aside money for replacing fire trucks so that the department does not have to ask voters for a bond or levy.

The new district would be tied with Redmond for the cheapest fire district of its size in the state, he said. Property taxes for residents outside of the Hermiston and Stanfield city limits would go up, but Stanfield residents would actually see a decrease in their taxes, while Hermiston tax bills would stay exactly the same.

At the end of the presentation, commissioner George Murdock said the commission had an interest in supporting the ballot measure.

"The more of Umatilla County we can bring under fire protection, the better," he said.

On Tuesday the commission also approved a draft of a joint recommendation to the Bureau of Land

Management from Umatilla County and Morrow County in support of an alternative route for the proposed Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line project. The route would run through the southern part of the counties instead of near Interstate 84.

"I support this because it reduces the impact on our citizens in Umatilla County," Commissioner Bill Elfering said.

The commission approved an expansion of a contract with Susan Bowers of Eastern Oregon Business Source for human resource and professional development, and created a new \$2,050 per month contract with Bowers for economic development in the county.

The commission also increased the county's emergency manager position from part time to roughly 24 hours per week. In December, commissioners listened to a recommendation to increase the position to full time after current emergency manager Jack Remillard retires later this year. But county council Doug Olsen told commissioners Tuesday that staff had concluded there was not enough money available to make the position full time.

Contact *Jade McDowell* at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.



Jane Hill

Hill named CTUIR legislative affairs manager

East Oregonian

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation announced the hiring of former Pendleton City Councilor Jane Hill as its new legislative affairs manager in a press release Tuesday.

"We are very pleased to have Jane's experience and political acumen," CTUIR spokesman Chuck Sams said in a statement. "She will be a great addition to our policy team."

Hill will work under Sams in the tribes' communications department and will be responsible for coordinating state and federal legislative affairs.

Hill has extensive experience in lobbying and state politics, having worked for the Oregon Trial Lawyers Association, Oregon Student Association and the staff of Sen. Ron Wyden.

Although Hill announced she was going to resign her seat on the city council to take a job with the CTUIR in late December, Sams did not specify her role until the tribes' press release.

With the council having received Hill's letter of resignation Tuesday afternoon, the council still has to vacate her seat and appoint a replacement.

That replacement councilor will have to file for election by March 8 if they wish to hold the seat beyond the length of Hill's term, which expires at the end of 2016.

CONDON

Robert Burns Supper celebrates Scottish traditions

East Oregonian

Merriment will be abundant as the Scottish heritage of the greater Condon area is celebrated during the annual Robert Burns Supper.

The event, in its 19th year, honors the past generations and traditions of the old country, including the poetry and memory of Scotland's beloved poet, Robert Burns. The celebration, which is Saturday beginning at 2 p.m. at the Condon Elks Lodge, 117 S. Main St., is planned on the Saturday nearest the poet's Jan. 25 birth date. Tickets are \$17 per person or \$30 for a couple.

Pipers, drummers and other participants come from near and far to help the Condon community celebrate its Scottish heritage on the 257th anniversary of the birth of "Rabbie" Burns. The celebration features lively music from the Old Country, a traditional Scottish meal of haggis, neeps and tatties, and anecdotes from the annals of Scottish families who settled in the greater Gilliam County area in the mid-to-late 1800s.

The Chase-Couture-Fatland families and representatives of those families will provide brief histories of their lineage. In addition, it's anticipated that Andrew Jamieson

of Condon will serve as spokesman for the popular poet, in reciting Burns' most well-known works at Burns Suppers, "To a Haggis," and one of his most animated poems, "Tam O'Shanter."

Others are welcome to perform readings, recitations and musical renditions of Burns' works. Also, area families of Scottish heritage are encouraged to search their family lore for diaries, notes, photographs and other memorabilia, and to share the information at the gathering.

A shortbread contest has become a popular part of the event. The top three winners will be singled out, but unique prizes are made available for all who enter. For more about the shortbread contest, call Jannie Allen at 541-571-9507.

The regular program ends about 5 p.m., however, the fun and toasting generally continues with more music from the pipers. A limited menu of soup, sandwiches and salad bar will be available into the evening.

For more information, contact 541-384-2421 or times-journal@jncable.com.

Photo contributed by McLaren Stinchfield

Bill Shelton of Carson, Washington, Rick McCaul of Portland and the Condon Highland Guard Pipers participate in the 2015 Robert Burns Supper.



BRIEFLY

Walden to make stops in Eastern Oregon Friday

PENDLETON — Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, will be returning to his congressional district later this week, including several stops in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

After town hall meetings in Arlington and Rufus, Walden will make appearances in Boardman, Hermiston and Pendleton Friday.

According to a press release, Walden will tour the Boardman Tree Farm at 1 p.m. and the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center construction site at 3:15 p.m. before traveling to Pendleton to attend the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce's First Citizens Banquet at the Wildhorse Casino and Resort at 5:30 p.m.

No leads yet in cow slaughter

STANFIELD — Oregon State Police are still looking for information to track down whoever shot and killed a 2-year-old heifer in a winter pasture along Feedville Road.

Trooper Mitchell Goldman said several people

have called with tips since local rancher Terry Anderson found the animal butchered late last week, but no serious leads.

"We're just kind of hoping someone will speak up," Goldman said. "It's a pretty big deal to shoot somebody's cattle like that."

The culprit could face extensive fines or prison time if caught. Theft of livestock is a Class C felony in Oregon, dating back to the old days of cattle rustling.

Anderson reported someone butchered his cow in the field before apparently making a hasty getaway, leaving most of the body to waste. He is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to a conviction. The Oregon Cattlemen's Association has offered an additional \$1,000.

Goldman said there is the possibility more than one person was involved.

Anyone with information should contact OSP at 541-567-3215 or call 1-800-452-7888.

State offers free well testing in Umatilla County

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is offering free well

water testing in Umatilla County as part of the Statewide Groundwater Monitoring Program.

The state environmental agency in a written statement announced it will test groundwater in 60-100 wells in the Walla Walla River Basin for nitrate, arsenic, bacteria and pesticides. The DEQ then will send well owners an individualized report of results.

The sampling will take

place in February 2016 and again in the fall. Visit www.oregon.gov/deq/WQ/Pages/Groundwater/GWProtection.aspx for more information and click on the link for "Free Water Well Testing in Walla Walla Basin" for an informational sheet and a map of the study area.

To be considered for this study, call 503-693-5736 or send an email to groundwater.monitoring@deq.state.or.us.

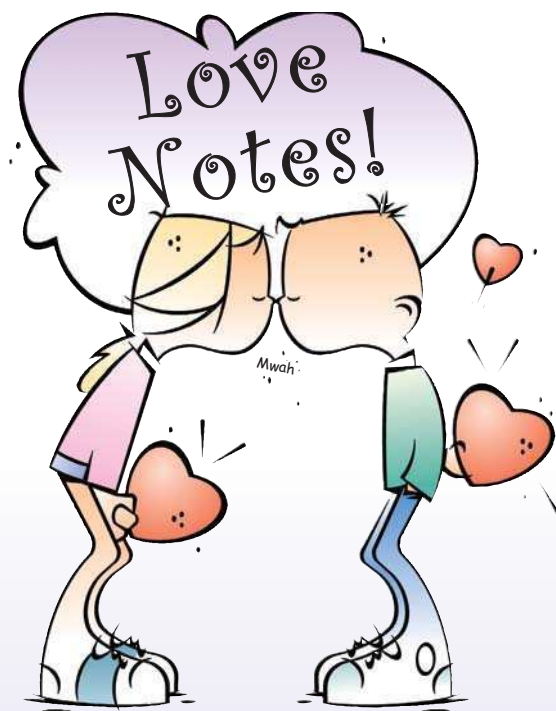
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