

DRONE: Laboratory gathers atmospheric measurements

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obtained the administration's commercial exemption, as long as the drone weighed less than 55 pounds and flew under 200 feet.

Although that means that many UAS companies don't have to go through ranges to test their vehicles, Chrisman said the Pendleton UAS Range is targeting a niche outside the parameters of the blanket exemption: Drones that can go higher, faster and carry heavier loads than the average quadcopter.

One reason Chrisman is optimistic about growth is that the range recently signed the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory as its first customer.

The Richland-based labo-

ratory is backed by the U.S. Department of Energy and is interested in taking advantage of Pendleton's niche.

"That (commercial) exemption is great for 99 percent of the population, but that's not going to work for me," said Mike Hubbell, the laboratory's director of flight operations.

Hubbell said the laboratory has been gathering atmospheric measurements with manned aircraft for 30 years, but has taken an interest in using drones for that purposes. It makes the task more efficient and decreases its carbon footprint.

The laboratory has a stable of four small UAVs and is in the process of acquiring a larger vehicle capable of

carrying a larger load.

Hubbell said the relationship between the test range and the laboratory will be "longterm," with a crew of 8-10 pilots and scientists for the first round of training and testing and smaller groups of 2-4 people for subsequent trainings.

Hubbell said those trainings are important for the laboratory's research, which can taken employees as far away as the North Slope of Alaska to study the effects of climate change.

Hubbell said he expects to start flying the laboratory's drones in Pendleton soon.

While the laboratory needs more space and higher altitudes for its ambitions, others see opportunity with the current rules.

OmniFox Aerial, a UAS company specializing in precision agriculture based out of Milton-Freewater, received its commercial exemption late last month.

Owner Derrick Westoby said there is a business opportunity available to companies that can provide services such as crop imaging to local farmers. He said he will soon hire a full-time drone pilot.

For the purposes of OmniFox, Westoby said he doesn't intend to test his drones at the Pendleton UAS Range, although he still plans to use it for its drone registration services to keep abreast of FAA regulations.

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TREE: Sold one-third of farm to Willow Creek Dairy

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"It has become a community feature," Rice said. "We have a lot of photographers who come out, especially in the fall, to take pictures."

The Boardman Tree Farm spans six miles along Interstate 84, and another 13 miles south of the highway. It includes roughly 6 million hybrid poplar trees that can grow to more than 100 feet tall. The trees are harvested in 12-year cycles.

It could take years to finish milling all the remaining trees, Rice said, depending on the market conditions. He is hopeful Greenwood Resources can continue to provide trees from its other locations to keep the local sawmill and veneer mill operating. Together, those businesses employ about 100 people.

The tree farm itself has 20 employees, along with another 50-60 contractors. Rice said they were not actively marketing the property, but AgriNorthwest approached them about acquiring the land.

"We believe they made a

fair offer," he said.

Prior to becoming a tree farm, the area was used for agriculture. The trees came in 1990, and Greenwood Resources bought the property in 2007. But Rice said they won't be planting again in spring.

Todd Jones, president of AgriNorthwest, said the company has been farming in the Columbia Basin for more than 50 years and is looking forward to adding the Boardman property to its operations.

In December, Greenwood announced it sold roughly one-third of the tree farm — 7,288 acres — to Willow Creek Dairy, which was established in 2002 on land leased by Threemile Canyon Farms located on the other side of the Boardman Bombing Range. That sale closed for \$65 million.

The dairy will now be located along the southern boundary of the tree farm, near the Finley Buttes Landfill. AgriNorthwest's fields will be located more closely to the highway, which marks the property's northern boundary.

SAFETY: Preus helped out in aftermath of Roseburg shooting

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Elementary School.

As Newtown residents struggled with grief, Schoenfeldt said, they had to contend with swarms of journalists, President Obama, Anderson Cooper, Dr. Phil and even "trauma tourists" who descended on the community.

"You couldn't move in that town for a long time," she said.

The city of 27,000 faced the obvious challenges of communications, traffic control, feeding and housing out-of-towners and meeting the psychological needs of a grieving community. Other challenges came as a surprise. One was the sheer volume of donations, \$2.5 million in monetary contributions and thousands of gifts such as teddy bears that went into temporary storage.

"Sixty thousand teddy bears came flooding into Newtown, Connecticut," Schoenfeldt said.

Four months after the shooting, the town's Parks & Recreation director told Schoenfeldt that his crew hadn't mowed a blade of grass, refinished a floor or done anything else on their list since the shooting. They had been busy with crowd control and other tasks.

The town also struggled to know what to do with the memorials that sprang up, some of which impeded traffic. They wondered what was a proper length of time to leave a memorial and how should the objects be handled?

Schoenfeldt urges communities to face these and other questions before a disaster happens.

"It's easier to do now than when you are in the midst of it," she said.

In the audience, BMCC President Camille Preus listened carefully. Preus had

helped out in the aftermath of the shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg when a gunman fatally shot a professor and eight students last October. Lessons learned in Roseburg led in part to this week's safety summit.

In Roseburg, Preus had supported Umpqua's interim college president, Rita Calvin.

"I was essentially the chief of staff," she said. "I helped run interference."

During the nerve-racking five days, Preus said she realized "it was a difficult time to make the simplest of decisions." The challenges came in a steady stream. Precious time was lost tracking down phone numbers and organizing partnerships.

"I realized we needed deeper conversations about our own partnerships," she said. "We need stronger partnerships across our community so you can have our back and we can have yours."

BMCC has already made some connections, including becoming a Red Cross sheltering location.

"We're on a hill. We have a gym and restrooms," said BMCC Vice-President of Public Relations Casey White-Zollman, who introduced the speakers. "We have a lot of resources."

During the summit, the attendees learned more about the 2012 bus crash near Deadman Pass that injured 38 and killed nine. Umatilla County Emergency Manager Jack Remillard and Oregon State Police Sgt. Mark Banks shared lessons learned and partnerships that developed out of chaos.

The Mi Joo tour company bus slipped off icy Interstate 84 west of Pendleton, burst through a guardrail and tumbled down a 200-foot

ravine. Passengers and luggage littered the steep hillside. Most of the injured didn't speak English. Emergency workers spent two hours and 38 minutes removing the victims, which eventually were spread among 10 hospitals. The rescue involved eight law enforcement agencies and 17 fire and ambulance departments.

The crash quickly became one of the nation's top news stories.

"We weren't prepared to deal with the national media," Banks said.

OSP Information Officer Lt. Greg Hastings shouldered some of that load, as well as Casey White, who then worked as communications director for the InterMountain Education Service District, and Larry Blanc, of St. Anthony Hospital. Communication, however, wasn't the only challenge.

"The biggest issue was identifying passengers," Banks said. "They didn't have identification — their ID was in the snow. They didn't have their wallets."

Worse yet, the bus manifest was inaccurate; the count was uncertain. Calls from worried family members looking for loved ones came in from different parts of the world.

"The language barrier was a big issue," Remillard said. "It was definitely an eye-opener for Umatilla County."

Mi Joo wouldn't return calls or send a bus to retrieve their stranded passengers. Belongings gathered at the scene were placed in a storage locker at the police station.

People from the community and beyond stepped up, Remillard and Banks said. Individuals showed up with food, clothing and offers to volunteer. People who

knew Korean interpreted. The Korean Consulate sent people to help sort out identities. The Red Lion Hotel offered rooms and a place for St. Anthony Hospital nurses to change bandages and monitor the conditions of passengers with minor injuries. The Pendleton Convention Center served as headquarters for the Red Cross. Motels offered vans to transport the victims to the storage locker to retrieve belongings. A La Grande car dealership offered to chauffeur crash victims to Canada or Seattle in six SUVs.

"It was amazing how many times people saw a need and stepped up," Banks said.

At the Safety Summit, attendees exchanged business cards and talked about what resources they could offer each other if disaster occurs. They plan to keep the conversations going, said White-Zollman at the end of the day, and meet again to formalize partnership agreements.

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WALDEN: Does not think that Congress will act on militia's request

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County and the armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. He said the nation is finally getting educated on a long-standing problem in the West, where "the federal government has been the landlord."

However, Walden said he does not agree with the occupation and said most of the community wants those involved to leave.

"It's unfortunate they resorted to this kind of armed protest. History shows that the longer this goes, there really are no winners," Walden said. "We're all hoping this ends

with no violence."

Walden said he does not see Congress acting on the militia's request to turn the federal wildlife reserve over to the county. Walden said the federal government must improve relationships with local communities, and part of that is increasing active land management to revive the rural economy.

"We need to get back to the point where people feel like the government listens to them, and they're getting a fair shake," he said.

Reporter George Plaven contributed to this story. Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

ASSAULT: Still under investigation by sheriff's office

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and Terpening were living at the site while they worked to clean and clear debris.

Almost two years ago, Newton provided key information that cleared a man of murder in a fatal shooting that also took place north of Hermiston. On Feb. 4, 2014, Newton drove Daniel Dechand to Good Shepherd after he was shot twice in a vehicle on Sunshine Lane. Dechand died from his injuries within an hour of arriving.

Timothy Kelly was arrested and charged with murder. Kelly was later cleared by a Umatilla County grand jury, who decided he acted in self

defense. Newton told police that Dechand was trying to rob Kelly.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's office continues

to investigate the assault. Contact the sheriff's office at 541-966-3601 if you have any information about this case.

CRAB FEED

January 30, 2016

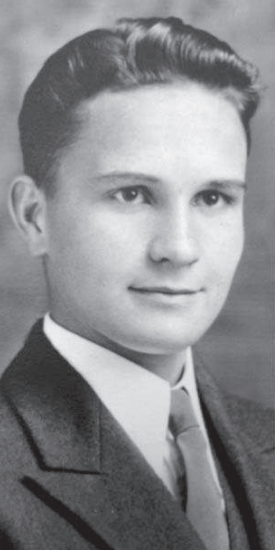

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