

## ECONOMY: Tribes employ 1,652 people

Continued from 1A

leton and Hermiston.

The average house costs \$138,000 in Pendleton as opposed to \$180,000 in Hermiston.

Perhaps the biggest economic boon to the region is the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Between the Wildhorse Casino & Resort, Arrowhead Travel Plaza, Cayuse Technologies and the tribal government, economic consultant Robert Whelan said the tribes employ 1,652 people.

Whelan said the success and growth of the tribes

creates a chain effect that boosts other calculations.

According to Whelan's calculations, the tribes were directly or indirectly responsible for 11 percent of the jobs in Umatilla County.

Whelan also downplayed the negative economic effects of gambling addiction, saying only 0.5 percent of gamblers are considered problem gamblers, 59 percent of whom do their gambling outside casinos.

During the question and answer session, many attendees asked the economists about the effect of a potential minimum wage hike.

Whelan was the most

vocal about a minimum wage increase, saying it would hurt impoverished Oregonians by forcing them to pay more taxes and reducing their earned income tax credit.

Whelan scoffed at the notion that a higher minimum wage would stimulate local economies, saying people spent only 17 percent of their money locally.

Whelan said a better way to improve the working poor's economic prospects is to cut income taxes for those who earn under \$30,000.

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## FIRE: Tax would generate about \$900,000 a year

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In 2014 the fire districts merged administrations and Stanton became chief of both.

The next step was asking the voters to approve a new district. Stanton said that failure led to getting additional input and dropping the amount of the tax to \$1.75 per \$1,000.

That would be a 31 cent decrease in Stanfield's rate, but a rate increase of 55 cents for rural areas around Hermiston, which works out to paying about an extra \$9.17 a month on a \$200,000 home. Property owners inside the Hermiston city limits may not see an actual increase because of compression,

the Oregon law that limits property tax rates.

The tax would generate about \$900,000 a year, most of which would go toward additional staffing and the rest toward capital improvements. Stanton said the new district would provide 24/7 staffing at Hermiston's main station and at station No. 2, as well as day shifts at station No. 3 and in Stanfield.

And the new district would have enough money to cover equipment costs, he said, and not have to ask voters to pass future bonds.

Without the new fire district, Stanton told commissioners back at the first public hearing in January, Hermiston and Stanfield may have to put

off equipment upgrades and cut staff. He also said at that time the new district would tie Redmond as the cheapest in the state for its size. Most districts of this size, he said, have a rate exceeding \$2.

Stanton was the only person to speak for the proposal, and no one spoke against it, just like at the January hearing.

County board chairman George Murdock of Pendleton said Wednesday while the board does not take positions on elections, he supported the district and would promote it. Commissioners Larry Givens of Umapine and Bill Elfering of Hermiston said they would give their individual support as well.

## LOVE'S: Will hire about 50 employees in Boardman

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— once in 2010, and again in 2015. Both times, Devin Oil raised objections to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals and the state Court of Appeals.

A representative for Devin Oil did not return calls for comment on Wednesday.

In one appeal, Devin Oil argued it would be adversely affected by Love's due to "aggressive marketing and pricing practices." The company also argued whether a travel center should be allowed at the I-84 and Tower Road interchange based on the county's own zoning rules.

Each time, the courts

ruled in favor of the county. LUBA issued its most recent decision in April, which was affirmed by the Court of Appeals in December. The Oregon Supreme Court declined to hear the case in 2012.

Morrow County Planning Director Carla McLane said the deadline for further appeals passed earlier this month, and she is happy to see the process finished.

"It's nice to be done," McLane said. "It's been a real large time-consumer."

Dorian said it generally costs about \$10 million to build a new travel center. They will hire about 50 employees in Boardman, and start accepting applications

next month.

"Most of those will be from the area," Dorian said.

As part of its grand opening, Dorian said Love's will donate \$2,000 to a local school or nonprofit organization. The business sets aside \$450 every year to invest in the community.

"We really try to do a good job of coming in and being good stewards to the community," Dorian said.

For more information about Love's donations, contact Dorian at 405-302-6730 or [kealey.dorian@loves.com](mailto:kealey.dorian@loves.com).

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## ENERGY: Brown still considering whether to support the bill

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The governor did not respond on Wednesday morning to questions about whether the cost of the bill mattered, and if she would sign the bill without cost vetting by state regulators.

"The Governor's Office has encouraged the (Public Utility Commission) to evaluate the bill and actively engage in the public process, which the (Public Utility Commission) pursued by providing testimony, crafting amendments, and holding its own public hearing," Brown's press secretary Chris Pair wrote in an email Wednesday morning. "We generally do not comment publicly on the Governor's position on a bill in advance of its passing both houses or her legal counsel's review for legal sufficiency and constitutionality that every bill receives. That said, the Governor is committed to policies that increase the availability of renewable energy and address issues around Oregonians' investment in electricity produced by coal and believes HB 4036 may be one way to make a meaningful impact."

Michael Dougherty, chief operating officer of the Public Utility Commission of Oregon, said earlier this week the Public Utility Commission had not received enough information from PacifiCorp and Portland General Electric, the two investor owned utilities that helped craft the bill, to vet the utilities' cost projections. Dougherty wrote in an email that Portland General Electric had provided only "piecemeal" information and PacifiCorp had not provided any of the information the Public Utility Commission requested.

"Unfortunately, we

have not received (what we consider) adequate data from the utilities to substantiate or refute the projections (annual 1 percent to 1.5 percent increase in rates) provided to the committee by the utilities," Dougherty wrote in an email Tuesday morning. By Wednesday morning, Dougherty said the commission had received more information from Portland General Electric but he had not yet ascertained what it was or how useful it might be.

Ry Schwark, a spokesman for PacifiCorp, disagreed and said much of the information the Public Utility Commission requested was available in public reports. "My understanding is we've given them everything they've asked for," Schwark said.

Steve Corson, a spokesman for Portland General Electric, said the utility's first priority was to prepare for a presentation to the Public Utility Commission on the bill in late January. "And then turned to the data request," Corson said. "The other thing I would observe just in general is data requests are not simple things." Public utility commissioners raised concerns privately and at the meeting in late January, in particular that the bill would be expensive for consumers but do little to reduce carbon emissions.

The Oregon House already voted 39-20 on Monday to pass House Bill 4036, and it is currently scheduled for a public hearing Wednesday afternoon at the Senate Committee on Business and Transportation. The committee could vote as soon as Monday on whether to send the bill to the full Senate for a floor vote. Gov. Kate Brown has said publicly that she is

still considering whether to support the bill, but emails released by the state showed her administration worked behind the scenes to help the bill pass in the Legislature. *The Oregonian* reported on Wednesday.

House Bill 4036 would require PacifiCorp and Portland General Electric to use renewable power sources such as wind and solar to serve at least 50 percent of their customers' energy demand in Oregon by 2040. The current state mandate is for 25 percent renewable energy by 2025.

The bill would also require the investor-owned utilities to stop using coal to serve Oregon customers, but there are questions about how much the bill would actually do to impact the phase-out of coal power in Oregon.

State Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Springfield, originally requested the Public Utility Commission review House Bill 4036. Beyer did not respond to a question this week about whether he expects the commission to finish vetting the legislation before it receives a vote in the Senate. It also remains to be seen whether the Senate will ask the Public Utility Commission to provide its perspective on the bill, something lawmakers in the House did not do.

"At the House Energy and Environment Committee, we were not requested to provide testimony," Dougherty wrote in an email. A representative was on hand, however, to answer questions

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## SPEED: 400 speed limit signs must be replaced at cost of \$1,700 each

Continued from 1A

Safety Council indicated that Oregon's traffic fatalities increased dramatically in 2015, with 27 percent more fatal crashes than the year before. Nationally, fatalities increased by 8 percent.

According to the report, Oregon had 446 traffic fatalities in 2015, compared to 350 in 2014 and 314 in 2013. The 27 percent increase from 2014 to 2015 was the biggest percentage change of any state in the nation.

Strandberg said one possible explanation for the nationwide increase is a combination of lower gas prices and lower unemployment means more people are driving more miles every day. He said ODOT has not had time to dig into the data, however, so he couldn't say definitively why Oregon's crashes increased more than other states.

"We're not sure why it's as high as it is," he said.

There are some conflicting studies on whether increased speed limits lead to more crashes and more fatalities, but a majority have found a link. One of the most expansive studies, published in 2001, showed that roughly half the time speed limits were increased on highways between 1986 and 1998, it was followed by a significant increase in fatalities the following year.

One tool for combating traffic deaths, Strandberg said ODOT is working to build a partnership with phone companies, schools and other entities to design and launch a statewide campaign against distracted driving.

He said the department is preparing to replace 400 new speed limit signs on March 1. The signs on I-84 should be up that day, he said, with work on the highway signs

completed another day or two after that.

Each sign costs about \$1,700 to replace.

New poles for some of the signs have already been installed. Strandberg said some of the current poles are not strong enough to support the bigger, heavier new speed limit signs while other poles needed to be moved in order to meet current safety standards about where signs should be in relation to the road. The department is also making some adjustments to other signs, including curve warnings.

The department has also been repainting stripes on the affected highways, creating shorter passing zones to reflect that cars may be approaching from the opposite direction.

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## Study finds testosterone is no fountain of youth

CHICAGO (AP) — A landmark study suggests that testosterone treatment is no fountain of youth, finding mostly modest improvement in the sex lives, walking strength and mood of a select group of older men.

The long-awaited results from a rigorous, government-funded study are the first solid evidence of whether these hugely popular supplements can help treat low sex drive, lack of energy and other symptoms sometimes blamed on aging.

The researchers emphasized that the findings pertain only to use of testosterone gel by men 65 and older with low hormone levels and related symptoms; whether similar benefits would occur in younger men or with testosterone pills, patches or shots is unknown.

Also, the research was not extensive enough to determine whether long-term use raises the risk of heart attacks and prostate cancer, as some studies have suggested.

Lead author Dr. Peter Snyder, a University of Pennsylvania hormone specialist, said it would be premature to recommend the treatment even for men like those studied.

The study involved almost 800 men 65 and older at 12 centers nationwide. All had low blood levels of testosterone, the main male sex hormone. They were randomly assigned to use testosterone gel or fake gel without hormones, rubbed daily on the skin for a year. They had to fill out questionnaires and take a six-minute walking test.

The study design is considered the most rigorous, gold-standard type of research.

Improvement in sex lives was modest among the testosterone group, and the



AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar

Dave Bostick and wife Carol share a laugh in the kitchen of their home in Pittsburgh on Tuesday. Bostick, 71, a retired vocational rehab counselor, said his low mood and energy level improved "a little bit" during a testosterone treatment study but suddenly worsened afterward.

benefits in erectile function were less than what has been seen with Viagra and similar drugs. The men on testosterone had slightly greater improvement in mood and walking strength than the other men, but there was no difference in energy boost between the two groups.

The research is among seven testosterone studies the National Institute on Aging launched in 2009 to examine the risks and benefits of testosterone supplements widely marketed on television to men with "low T."

Testosterone levels typically decline with age. Supplements are approved only for treating testosterone deficiency caused by certain medical conditions, such as problems with the testes, but they have become a multibillion-dollar industry, feeding on aging men's desire to remain youthful. The men in the study did not have any of those specified conditions.

The new research combines results from three of the government-funded studies. Results are expected later from the four other studies, which tested the hormone's effects on mental

function, bone density, heart function and anemia.

The findings "bring some real rigor" to questions surrounding testosterone use and suggest that the treatment is "not a panacea" for age-related ills, said Dr. Eric Orwoll, a physician-researcher at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland.

On average, the testosterone increased men's hormone levels to what would be normal for someone 19 to 40 years old.

About 20 percent of testosterone men reported much improved sexual desire, and 30 percent reported a slight improvement, but almost half reported no change. Less than one-third of the fake-gel men reported any improvement in sexual desire.

On the walking test, testosterone and placebo men showed similar improvements when the comparison was only among men who started out with low scores. When the comparison was expanded to include other study men, about 21 percent of testosterone men achieved the walking goal versus about 13 percent of those on a placebo.

# Friday Meals

# LENT

February 19 from 5 to 7:00 p.m.

@ the St. Anthony Hospital Blue Mountain Cafe

**Cedar Plank Salmon - \$7.50/Adults**  
- \$7.00/Children & Seniors  
with Rice Pilaf & Buttered Green Beans

**Baked Potato Bar - \$4.00/with toppings All you can eat.**

**Salmon/Potato Bar Combo - \$11.50**

**Clam Chowder Bread Bowl - \$4.25**  
Single Cup \$1.25



**CHI St. Anthony Hospital**

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