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One dollar

PILOT ROCK

Caldera poised to become chief

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pilot Rock residents will have to wait a couple more weeks before their new police chief is official.

The city council Tuesday night held off approving a contract with Bill Caldera, pending the outcome of a background check. Boardman police is handling that job and should deliver the report next week. Caldera should become the first full-time chief since 2014 for the town of 1,505 south of Pendleton.

The Pilot Rock City Council plans to vote on the contract at its next meeting, March 15. Caldera is retiring from the Pendleton Police Department in April after 29 years of service, where he has been the lieutenant and second-in-command for the last six years.

Caldera already has taken on some duties, including assessing needs and upgrades for the police department. Pilot Rock is the smallest in Umatilla and Morrow counties with a police force, consisting of the chief and two officers. While the council has not released details of the contract, Caldera's move will come with a pay cut.

Caldera made \$91,093 in 2015, according to the city of Pendleton. That made him one of the top paid local police administrators in Umatilla and Morrow counties. He also worked for the area's top paid police administrator in 2015 — Pendleton police Chief Stuart Roberts, who made \$112,812.

See POLICE/8A

Police pay in Eastern Oregon

Pilot Rock hired Bill Caldera as its new police chief Tuesday. The Pilot Rock Police Department has a budget of \$360,635, about 48.7 percent of the general fund, but had no chief in 2015 and no officer on staff for the full calendar year. Here's a look at other local police departments, how much their chiefs and officers made in 2015, and how much of the city budget they make up:

Pendleton



Chief: Stuart Roberts
Pay: \$112,812

Population: 16,845
Sworn Officers: 24

Top paid officer: Sgt. Roger Yoncs
Pay: \$86,693

Budget: \$4.3M, 28% of general fund

Hermiston



Chief: Jason Edmiston
Pay: \$107,927

Population: 17,520
Sworn Officers: 26

Top paid officer: Jeremy Clark
Pay: \$90,561*

Budget: \$4.2M, 33% of general fund

Milton-Freewater



Chief: Doug Boedigheimer
Pay: \$107,430

Population: 7,070
Sworn Officers: 11

Top paid officer: Cpl. Joseph Shurtz
Pay: \$70,460*

Budget: \$1.23M, 22% of general fund

Boardman



Chief: Rick Stokoe
Pay: \$85,660

Population: 3,505
Sworn Officers: 10

Top paid officer: Jeremy Fye
Pay: \$75,850

Budget: \$1.56M, 35% of general fund

Umatilla



Chief: Darla Huxel
Pay: \$83,818

Population: 7,060
Sworn Officers: 11

Top paid officer: Bill Wright
Pay: \$70,898

Budget: \$1.37M, 34% of general fund

Stanfield**



Chief: Bryon Zumwalt
Pay: \$57,696

Population: 2,830
Sworn Officers: 4

Top paid officer: Daniel Poffenberger
Pay: \$41,410

Budget: \$500K, 52% of general fund

*Income includes payouts for vacation time, other days and/or overtime time (police chiefs do not receive overtime)
**Stanfield's police budget includes \$64,010 from the city's public safety fee and \$56,710 from the contract Echo has for police services.

Pendleton puts more cops on streets than ever before

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Pendleton Police Department has more officers than ever before in the city's history.

Pendleton added its 24th officer in November, and the new cop has been at Oregon's Public Safety Academy in Salem undergoing police training.

Police Chief Stuart Roberts said the Pendleton City Police Association negotiated the position in lieu of pay raises for two years.

"Before the addition of the 24th position, the staffing level had not changed since the late 1960s," Roberts said in an email. "We have discussed many scenarios involving the new position, but have not decided exactly how it will be used."

Pendleton has never deployed 24 officers, he said, but the department has needs in patrol, investigations and other areas. And the upcoming retirements of school resource officer Glen Hamby and Lt. Bill Caldera, who is taking a job as the police chief of nearby Pilot Rock, will have implications that may affect the decision.

See PENDLETON/8A

Two new wolf poaching cases in OSP's scope

New pack found near Battle Mountain

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

Poachers shot and killed three wolves last year in Eastern Oregon. In one of those cases, a Baker City man turned himself in and pleaded guilty.

The other two incidents, however, remain unsolved. What's more, they weren't mentioned by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife or Oregon State Police until after ODFW published its 2015 wolf report on Monday.

The news riled some conservationists, including Steve Pedery, conservation director with Oregon Wild, who said it appeared ODFW was trying to tamp down the controversy.

"It really adds to the cynicism of a lot of folks in the conservation community who feel ODFW is hell-bent on getting out of their responsibility to protect these animals," Pedery said.

Russ Morgan, ODFW wolf coordinator, said the department is following up on the shot wolves, but state police are in charge of handling those investigations.

"It's just the way they're being investigated," Morgan said. "It's not out of any attempt to not be forthcoming."

The first case of poaching came on Sept. 7, 2015, two months before the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted to remove gray wolves from the state endangered species list. OR-34, a wolf from the Walla Walla pack, was shot on private property within the pack's home range.

One month later, Brennon Witty of Baker City shot OR-22 in Grant County after he said he confused the wolf with a coyote. OR-22 had previously wandered into the area after dispersing from the Umatilla River pack. Witty was fined \$1,000, ordered to pay restitution and forfeited his rifle to the state.

Finally, on Dec. 23, OR-31

See WOLF/2A

PENDLETON



Andy Kovach



Tricia Mooney



Wade Smith

Superintendent candidates make their public pitch

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Having already made it to the final round, the three candidates for the Pendleton superintendent position were given another challenge Tuesday.

The candidates were all summoned to Pendleton High School, where they fielded questions from administrators, teachers, staff and the public before they underwent a second round of interviews with the school board behind closed doors.

The candidates spoke to each group in a round-robin style. The first to speak with the public was Hermiston School District Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith.

If chosen as superin-

tendent, Smith said he would work with staff and administrators to form a vision for the district's future.

"An organization without a vision is just turning its wheels," he said.

Smith, a Hillsboro native and a longtime administrator with the Hermiston and Morrow County school districts, praised the district's work in expanding its career technical education program, a common reference for all the candidates.

Smith said he was familiar with a CTE curriculum, having helped start the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilder Program in Hermiston, which he said has already helped some students find

high-paying jobs.

Also a finalist for the Walla Walla Public School superintendent position, Smith said applying to both jobs was a necessity because of his desire to stay in a region where superintendent positions are scarce.

Next on the docket was Ontario High School Principal Andy Kovach, the only candidate to not spend a significant part of his career in Umatilla County.

Kovach told his life story, rising from poverty in Salem and a failed stint in the Naval Academy to building an education career in the Harney County and Ontario areas.

See SCHOOL/8A

PENDLETON

Council supports Seaport, despite bankruptcy

East Oregonian

Although it didn't take an official action, the Pendleton City Council gave Seaport Airlines a vote of confidence at a meeting Tuesday.

Seaport President Tim Sieber spoke in front of the council, explaining that even though the Portland-based airline declared bankruptcy and dramatically downsized its operation, the moves allow Seaport to focus more on Pendleton.

Sieber said a national pilot shortage hit the company hard, reducing its operations from 20 cities across nine states and Mexico to just five airplanes serving three states.

Sieber said that after it shuts its North Bend route March 21, it will dedicate more planes and resources to the Pendleton-Portland route.

Despite the recent shortage, Sieber said Seaport is actually overstaffed with pilots at the moment, which should keep the route stable.

Additionally, Sieber said he and Seaport Marketing Director Clare James will meet with Pendleton Airport Director Steve Chrisman and Travel Pendleton event coordinator Pat Beard to brainstorm increased marketing opportunities.

"I've always said that we're a marketing business that just happens to fly airplanes," he said. "We have to get back to our roots."

Several Pendleton city councilors expressed empathy with Sieber over his company's plight and supported his efforts to work harder on advertising Pendleton aviation.

"We want you to succeed," Councilor Neil Brown said. "We need you to succeed for the benefit of Pendleton."

Dueling renewable bills go to Senate

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A bill to double Oregon's renewable energy mandate is on track to get a final vote in the state Senate Wednesday, after lawmakers in the House voted 38-20 to pass the legislation on Tuesday. Under the bill,

Senate Bill 1547, the state's two investor-owned utilities would have to use

sources such as solar and wind to serve 50 percent of their customers' energy demand by 2040. It would also require utilities to stop paying for coal power to serve Oregon customers, something at least one of the utilities is already on track to do.

See ENERGY/2A

