

ECHO

Hundreds of cyclists to ride Red 2 Red

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Echo Red 2 Red cross country mountain bike race is expected to more than double Echo's population this weekend as bikers from all over the country arrive for the annual race.

Organizers are expecting 400 to 450 participants for Saturday's race, many bringing family or friends along for the weekend.

Organizer Stephanie Myers said the race, which is in its eighth year, has grown in popularity because of the unique terrain, and the fact that it's the first OBRA-sanctioned race of the season in Oregon and most of the Pacific Northwest due to the mild, dry terrain.

"You just can't ride anywhere else this time of year," Myers said.

She said usually about 40 percent of riders come from out of state.

Myers said participants in the race, which offers a

13-mile beginner's course, a 25-mile course and a 32-mile course, get a good workout.

"People think it's flat because we live in a relatively flat area, but the course is definitely not flat," she said.

The trails for the race — including a new one this year — are on private property belonging to Sno Road Winery owners Lloyd and Lois Piercy.

Lloyd said hosting the race over the years has been "a lot of fun." They allow people to use the trails if they ask permission, and he said they have seen a lot of local children out there each weekend and gotten to know people from all over the country that way. Many of those people heard about the trails and about Echo from seeing videos and pictures posted by Red 2 Red participants.

He said described the terrain as left "in its native clothes."

"It's a true desert steppe, the way it's supposed to be," he said. "Even though it's

desert, it's truly beautiful."

So far the cycling community has been considerate of the land, he said. Piercy and Myers both said they hope to see more trails in the area in the future.

"I think this is the first of several trails that could be built around here," Piercy said. "We could become a bicycle area. I think we already are."

He said few mountain bike races start and end in towns, leaving family and friends with little to entertain themselves for a couple hours. But Red 2 Red begins and ends in downtown Echo, offering a boost for local businesses. Piercy said over the weekend, some of those economic benefits also trickle to Hermiston and Pendleton as people look for hotels or additional shopping.

"Even if you don't ride, come out and enjoy the day," he said. "It should be fun to watch."

Participants can register and pick up packets Friday,

March 4 from 4-7 p.m. at Echo Bike and Board, 253 S Main St. in Pendleton or Saturday from 8:30-10:30 a.m. at Sno Road Winery, 111 W Main St. in Echo. Registration is \$50 for adults or \$20 for junior riders.

The race kicks off at 11 a.m. at the corner of Main Street and Dupont Street in Echo on Saturday. Awards and a raffle will be held after the race at approximately 3:30 p.m.

On Sunday, a separate 7.5 kilometer poker run will start at 8 a.m. for runners and 10:30 a.m. for riders at the Echo West Vineyard trailhead. Registration is \$20 and cash prizes are handed out for the top five poker hands dealt at checkpoints along the trail.

For more information about either event visit www.echored2red.com or call Myers at 541-289-2444.

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



Photo contributed by Oregon State Police
Oregon State Police seized approximately 25 pounds of cocaine and 44 pounds of methamphetamine during a traffic stop Feb. 23 in Sherman County.

Cops seize \$2.3M worth of drugs during traffic stop

East Oregonian

Oregon State Police arrested two men and seized more than \$2.3 million worth of cocaine and methamphetamine during a traffic stop Feb. 23 in Sherman County.

Alberto Alejandro Martinez, 32, of Moses Lake, Washington, and Jose Joel Helguera Del Rio, 31, of Royal City, Washington, were booked into Multnomah County jail on multiple federal drug and firearm charges.

The men were pulled over at about 1:30 p.m. on Highway 97 south of Biggs Junction for a traffic violation. Less than a minute into the stop, an OSP trooper observed a handgun in the vehicle's glove box. Neither Martinez nor Del Rio had a concealed weapons permit, and they were detained.

A search of their Dodge Caravan later revealed approximately 25 pounds of cocaine and 44 pounds of meth. OSP patrols were assisted on scene by detectives from OSP and the Portland Police Bureau, the Sherman County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Marshals Service and U.S. Attorney's Office. An investigation is ongoing with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.



Del Rio

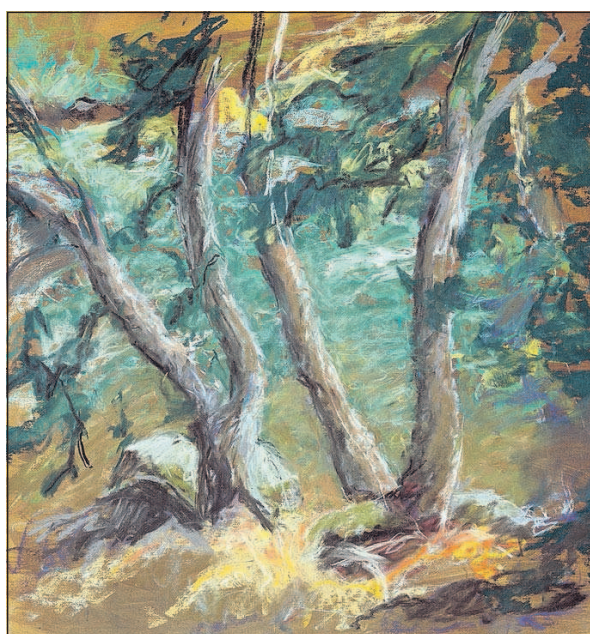


Martinez

PENDLETON

Artist shares love of native plants in new exhibit

East Oregonian



Contributed
"Alders Along the Rogue" is among the artwork by Frances Stilwell that will be on display at Pendleton Center for the Arts. The exhibit opens with an artist's reception Thursday from 5:30-7 p.m.

Combining science and art, a new exhibition at Pendleton Center for the Arts features the pen and pastel works of Frances Stilwell, a retired biophysicist and ethologist.

Frances Stilwell is passionate about sharing her knowledge of native plants, and her artwork provides the perfect vehicle for viewers to broaden their understanding of the habitats in which they grow. Her exhibit, "Oregon's Botanical Landscape: An Opportunity to Imagine Oregon Before 1800," is based on her book of the same name.

The exhibit will open Thursday with an artist's reception from 5:30-7 p.m. at the arts center, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. It's free and open to the public.

Created during a span of 25 years, Stilwell painted while she stood or sat in the habitat of each native plant. Each painting is

presented along with printed text and maps that educate the viewer about the regions in which the plants live.

A member of both the Northwest Pastel Society and the Native Plant Society of Oregon, Stilwell hopes the exhibit will inspire others to explore the natural world more fully, and use their artistic side to speak about their experiences.

The arts center is open Tuesdays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m. The exhibit remains on view through Saturday, March 26. Admission is free.

In addition, area teachers are invited to schedule ArtZOOM sessions during the exhibit. ArtZOOM provides free Skype-based virtual gallery tours, including a guided art project, to class-bound groups.

For more information, call 541-278-9201 or visit www.pendletonarts.org.

BRIEFLY

Athena man dies in trailer fire

ATHENA — An Athena man died Saturday night in a trailer fire.

Jerry Lee Lambert Sr., 64, was the only victim in the fifth-wheel trailer at 446 N. Third St.

The call-out to respond to the fire was at 10:44 p.m. Saturday, according to Athena Volunteer Fire Department, which extinguished the blaze a short time later.

Athena fire Chief John Reitz identified Lambert as the victim. State fire marshal Scott Goff said he investigated the scene and it looks like "discarded smoking material," such as a cigarette, was the cause of the fire.

Egg producer hatches grant for solar panels

The Oregon Department of Energy has awarded more than \$70,000 to install solar panels at a commercial egg production facility in Milton-Freewater.

The Farm on Edwards Road was one of 13 recipients of Renewable Energy Development grants from the state, totaling \$1.5 million. Renewable Energy Development grants help local businesses and nonprofits invest in biomass, solar, geothermal, hydroelectric, wind, landfill gas or other types of green energy.

"Solar installations are booming across the country right now," said state energy analyst Rob Del Mar. "The overall cost of installing panels has dropped, and with the renewal of the federal tax credit, the time is right for businesses and organizations to invest in this renewable energy resource."

Mahlon Zehr contracts with Wilcox Family Farms

of Roy, Washington, to raise 30,000 cage-free chickens at The Farm on Edwards Road. The facility is expected to produce 8.5 million eggs per year, which will be sold at Oregon Costco stores. Most of Zehr's equipment is fully automated.

Grant funds will be awarded after the solar project is completed and operational.

"ODOE is proud to support these diverse projects that will generate renewable electricity for Oregon farms, small businesses, our military and more," said department Director Michael Kaplan.

Schools hire superintendent from Walla Walla

ATHENA — The Athena-Weston School District has hired Laure Quaresma as its new superintendent.

Quaresma, the assistant superintendent of Walla Walla Public Schools, will start July 1, replacing former superintendent Jerry Copeland.

"I think Laure will make an outstanding contribution to the district," interim superintendent Jim Reger said in a press release. "Her experience as a teacher, a building administrator and



an assistant superintendent will all serve as assets in her new position in our district."

Reger, who was also an interim superintendent for the Milton-Freewater Unified School District, agreed to fill the post temporarily after Copeland resigned to become the human resources director at the InterMountain Education Service District.

Quaresma won the job over Tom Yahraes, the CEO of Big Sky Discovery Academy in Big Sky, Mont., and Roger Trail, the executive director of human resources for the Clarkston (Wash.) School District.

According to the press release, Quaresma has been Walla Walla's assistant superintendent since 2010 and previously worked as an elementary principal, middle school assistant principal, university adjunct professor and teacher in Washington and Oregon.

She earned a bachelor's degree in education from Western Washington University and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Eastern Washington University.

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