

## EXPO: Turning skills, interests into job opportunities a central conceit of CTE

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on servers and another on professional teamwork.

As he watched small groups of students figure out how to put together a computer, IMESD Director of Business Development Rob Naughton said the expo is part of an effort to keep technologically-minded students in Eastern Oregon.

As the expo's sponsor, the IMESD's information technology department also represented a potential career opportunity for the attendees.

Naughton said many of the students already had hands-on experience working with computer hardware in their spare time, a trait the IMESD would value in job candidates.

Transitioning these raw skills and interests into formal education and job opportunities is the central conceit of CTE courses, which some Eastern Oregon districts are heavily investing in.

Pendleton and Morrow County school districts were each awarded \$390,745 grants to bolster their CTE programs.

The Pendleton School District had already committed to hiring a CTE coordinator and turning one of its elementary schools to a tech and trade center when it received the grant, which it will use to stock its planned



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
Instructor Jaco Thompson holds out a cooling fan from a computer tower while talking about computer repairs to high school students during the STEP Tech Expo on Wednesday in Pendleton.

professional quality kitchen and lab space.

The Morrow County school system plans to use its grant to upgrade the equipment in its high school manufacturing and welding labs — careers in high demand at the Port of Morrow.

While some students were just happy to be out of the classroom for the day, others were eager for the expo's opportunity.

While checking out a booth for Dell computers, Cristian Gonzalez of McLoughlin High School

said he was looking forward to the programming session because he was interested in becoming a video game designer.

La Grande High School Eleanor Des Jardin had a very specific ambition — to start an engineering company specializing in green transit and manufacturing.

"I could use all of it," Des Jardin said about the topics covered in the sessions.

Des Jardin was one of just a handful of female students at a conference that sometimes reflected the gender gap that has plagued

industries related to science, technology, engineering and math.

IMESD operations analyst Karen Smelser said the state specifically instructed the IMESD to target a diverse set of students with its grant, which will also cover technology summer camps in the summer.

Smelser said the district will heavily recruit girls for its camps, especially at the middle school level.

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## PENDLETON



EO file photo  
Workers with state contractor Clean Harbors sort hazardous household waste at the collection event April 16 in Pendleton.

## Hazardous waste totals thousands of pounds at local disposal event

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

140 car batteries weighing more than 5,700 pounds;

more than 1,000 pounds of alkaline cleaners;

and 427 pounds of acids. Clean Harbors recycled the motor oil and antifreeze and blended the flammable solvents for fuel.

The largest drop-off was paint.

Latex paint totaled 18,185 pounds, according to Clean Harbors, or more than 1,500 gallons, depending on the quality and color. Oil-based paint and related material hit 22,587 pounds. The company reported that was enough to fill 26 55-gallon drums and 49 cubic-yard boxes.

Taylor Simpson, Clean Harbors hazardous household waste program manager in Clackamas, told Miller the paint was the most he saw at a single event.

"Sounds like Umatilla County made quite a dent into keeping these harmful substances out of our landfills and soil/water," Miller said.

Getting rid of old paint also was popular at Hermiston's second All-City Recycle Event on April 9, which collected 1,350 gallons, according to the city's report. The year before, locals brought in 1,275 gallons.

Miller also plans to present information and photos of the collection event at the May 4 meeting of the county board of commissioners.

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Locals turned in thousands of pounds of pesticides, paint and more at a recent hazardous household waste collection event in Pendleton.

Umatilla County won a grant from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to host the event April 16-17. The first day was for agriculture and small industrial waste and day two was for households.

Coordination fell to Gina Miller, who heads up code enforcement in the county planning department. She promoted the two-day event for months, worked with the city of Pendleton to set up the convention center and recruited volunteers from the community and Pendleton FFA and Boy Scout Troop 700 to help direct a steady stream of traffic.

"Our vehicle count was 581 through the collection event," Miller said.

The last event of this size in Pendleton was back in 2004. The state contracted with Clean Harbors Environmental to handle all the waste. According to an email she received from Clean Harbors, Miller's efforts paid off. The collection brought in the following:

16,837 pounds of flammable toxic pesticides;

3,033 pounds of motor oil;

2,053 pounds of aerosols;

2,083 pounds of flammable solvents;

1,623 pounds of antifreeze for recycling;

87 propane cylinders;

## DOGS: Spectators will get to see 124 different breeds

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Club shows. He and his wife, Linda, have Shiloh shepherds that compete in International All Breed Canine Association shows. He welcomes the influx of dogs and their owners to town.

"They've had as many as 1,200 dogs at their shows," Kennedy said. "This year, they are expecting about 650."

Kennedy said he's not worried about all those dog owners not being able to find lodging.

"Motels and RV parks have come to realize that people travel with their pets," Kennedy said. "Most have an open dog policy."

Calls to local hotels proved Kennedy right. Oxford Suites, for instance, allows guests to bring dogs for a charge of \$25 each.

For this weekend, however, the hotel negotiated

a contract with the Walla Walla Kennel Club for up to two dogs with no charge. The Red Lion Hotel charges \$15 per stay. A quarter of the hotel's 170 rooms are designated as pet rooms. The pet-friendly motels are another reason the kennel club likes Pendleton.

"To our knowledge, only one motel doesn't allow dogs," Robles said. "In Walla Walla, there aren't nearly as many. Pendleton has been extremely welcoming and encouraging."

Kennedy isn't worried about being able to accommodate the dog show activities at the convention center either. The venue has hosted other highly specialized events in the past, including the Yoga Round-Up, horse auctions, state basketball tournaments and cowboy shooting competitions. Conformation trials for large dogs will take place in the main hall with small

dogs in the facility's smaller meeting rooms. Obedience trials will happen in the nearby Round-Up Pavilion. The convention center will provide a room for grooming.

"In the main hall, they will need to put down some kind of carpet or something because of the slick floors," Kennedy said.

The weekend will include rally and coursing events. Robles said rally is a combination of agility and obedience. Coursing happens outside where dogs chase lures (in this case, plastic bags) that move around a course.

Robles said community dog owners are welcome to bring their dogs and try the course.

"Anyone can come and do this if there are openings," she said. "Pay your fee and run your dog."

Admission to the dog show is free. It runs from 8

a.m. to 4 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday. Show Chairwoman Debbie Milks said spectators will get to eyeball 124 different breeds.

Milks also invited the public to bring their dogs (for a fee) to take the 10-step AKC Canine Good Citizen Test that includes such behaviors as allowing a friendly stranger to approach, sitting politely for petting, walking on a loose lead, moving through a crowd, staying on command and others.

During this weekend's dog show, Kennedy will be right there in the thick of it. Likely, he'll have a smile on his face.

"I'm really excited about this opportunity for our community," Kennedy said. "I'm hoping this will be a long-term relationship."

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## WILDFIRE: Season extended by average of 78 days since 1998

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despite an El Nino weather system that brought near-average snowfall to its northern mountains. Wildfires have already broken out in Alaska after a warm winter with below-average precipitation.

Slightly more than half the land scorched by wildfires last year was in Alaska, according to the National Interagency Fire Center, which coordinates firefighting nationwide. Washington and Oregon accounted for 18 percent.

The Forest Service, the nation's primary firefighting agency, spent a record \$1.72 billion on firefighting last year.

The overall bill for wildfires, including prevention programs and the cost of putting crews, equipment and aircraft on fire lines, is consuming a growing share of the Forest Service budget. That has forced cuts in forestry research, campground and trail maintenance and other areas, Tidwell said.

The Obama administration has been pressing Congress to pay the cost of fighting the worst fires from natural disaster funds, rather than the Forest Service budget. Tidwell said the largest 1 or 2 percent of wildfires account for about 30 percent of the costs.

Congress has not agreed to the change, but it did approve an additional \$520 million for fighting fires this season, Tidwell said.

He said climate change

is making wildfires worse, heating up the air, drying out forests and extending the wildfire season by an average of 78 days since 1998. A growing number of homes at the forest's edge, which firefighters call the wildland-urban interface, also drives up costs by forcing managers to concentrate crews and equipment to protect communities, he said.

Tidwell said state and federal agencies need to thin those forests to a more natural state to prevent fires and make them easier to fight. Researchers say decades of over-aggressive firefighting have left forests dense with living and dead trees and more prone to deadly megafires.

With a chuckle and a smile, Tidwell defended Smokey Bear, his agency's memorable mascot, from allegations of making things worse by portraying fire as evil instead of part of the natural cycle that kept forests healthy. Smokey's original message, "Only you can prevent forest fires," has been updated to "Only you can prevent wildfires."

"Really, Smokey was just talking about those human-caused fires which actually occur at the wrong time of the year, not where the natural fire occurs," Tidwell said. Those are the fires that the Forest Service still wants to stop, he said.

"Smokey Bear gets no blame for the situation we have today," he said.

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