

TECH CAMP: 'Pong' programmed

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had experience tinkering with technology, having taken repairs of his remote controlled airplanes into his own hands.

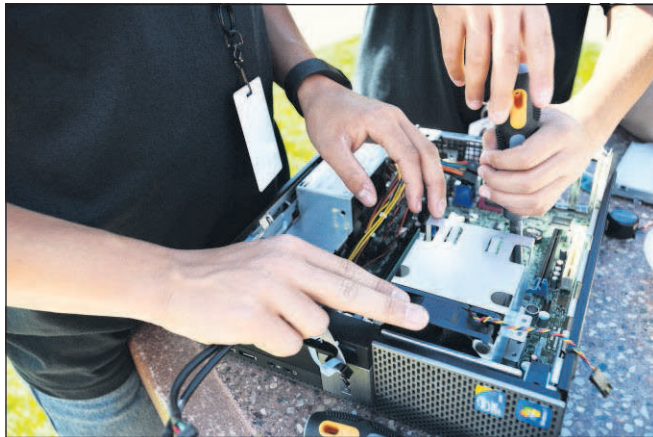
"I solder things together, throw them at my brother and see what happens," he said of his process.

The camp was built to take this more informal experience and mold it into a deeper understanding of technology through activities on programming, robotics and computer hardware.

High school students did many of the same activities in a separate camp the week before and some of them returned as counselors for the middle school week.

Carson McClelland of La Grande raved about some of the software and hardware campers have been able to use the past few weeks, including Arduino, a prototyping software that creates interactive electronic objects and Google Cardboard, a virtual reality software.

Ethan Jack of Helix used a video game programming course to create a game similar to "Pong." He continued to modify the game over the past week to the point where the artificial



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Gavin Young, 16, of La Grande and Emilio Jaimez, 11, of Umatilla reinstall a heat sink in a computer tower Wednesday at the InterMountain Education Service District's STEP Summer Tech Camp at Sunridge Middle School in Pendleton.

intelligence that controls the other panel isn't completely unbeatable.

Melinda Miller, IMESD information technology office operations manager, said the high school students would be given an opportunity to assist the district beyond the confines of the camp.

After the middle school camp wraps at the end of the week, many high school campers will transition to paid summer internships with IMESD.

The interns will continue to live in their home communities and help IMESD staff set up technology for the

upcoming school year at their local districts.

Additionally, students can continue to work part time during the school year after their internships end.

Some of the middle school campers had career ambitions as well.

Ashley Halsey of Elgin, Emily George of Union and McKenzie Brogiotti of La Grande grew interested in technology through their schools' robotics programs.

Although all three wanted to work with technology when they got older, Halsey's career goal is clear — biomedical engineer.

AGRITOURISM: Visitors can help boost revenue for farmers in rural areas

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said the industry as a whole has been developing for decades.

"It's a chance to experience the Old West," Carey said. "These are opportunities people want to have."

About 20 people attended Tuesday's workshop at the Port of Morrow in Boardman, which provided an overview of where agritourism has been in Eastern Oregon and where it's going. Data compiled by Travel Oregon offers a glimpse into what agritourists look like and what they're looking for.

According to the agency, agritourists tend to be families with a moderate income, highly educated and mostly day-trippers. They are searching for authenticity and are more interested in having a story to tell than a T-shirt to buy.

"We want that explorer. We want that person who's passionate about getting outside and trying new things," Carey said.

One thing agritourists will spend money on, however, is food.

According to Travel Oregon, 55 percent of visitors between 2008 and 2010

participated in at least one culinary experience, whether it was at a restaurant, winery or craft brewery.

Elena Vizzini, also from Travel Oregon, said food and drink is part of the tourist's immersion into the local culture. Those seeking agritourism came primarily from urban centers like Portland, Spokane and Eugene, based on information gleaned from the Travel Oregon website.

But farming is not always lucrative business and it can be a struggle to find the skill and capital needed to start something like a farm tour or tasting room. While Oregon tourism is a \$10 billion business, Travel Oregon is still working on an economic analysis specifically pertaining to agritourism. That study is expected to be available by next year.

Carey and Vizzini did point to several other Eastern Oregon success stories, such as a promotional campaign for Wallowa County and the John Day River Territory brand. As a subregion, Umatilla and Morrow counties — dubbed "Oregon's Rugged Country" — has the potential, but participants said they will need to do a

better job collaborating to make it happen.

Alice Trindle, a rancher from Haines and executive director of the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association, said they are working on a marketing plan with four core initiatives — agritourism, cycling, arts and heritage.

"Somehow, we have to share those stories about our wonderful producers," she said. "It really is about building relationships."

Working together in groups, participants identified gaps they need to cover in the plan, including better communication, forging partnerships and finding new funding sources. Carey said regional collaboration is a key to marketing to tourists.

"We care about consumers that really want to participate in the products we're producing," she said.

Wednesday's session, in Hermiston, focused more on specific business models for making agritourism profitable. That workshop was held at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

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HOMICIDE: Freel to be tried as adult

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to consider further court proceedings before the trial. He remains in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

•Thadd Nelson, 44, died from gunshot wounds the morning of Jan. 27 at his property in Meacham.

Joseph Aaron McIver of Umatilla and Hermiston residents Edward Duarte Ayala and Armando Ruben Vargas have pleaded not guilty to federal weapons charges in a case stemming from Nelson's homicide. Vargas also faces federal assault charges.

Federal court documents revealed two shooters killed Nelson and the federal case is relying on evidence from the local homicide investigation. Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus has not ruled out bringing murder charges after the federal case concludes.

The three defendants are in a Portland jail.

•Tony Jimenez, 27, died early March 19 at a friend's house on the Umatilla Indian Reservation when possible gang members opened fire during a confrontation.

Julian Darryl Simpson, 23, faces federal murder charges for shooting and killing Jimenez. Simpson is currently serving a six-year sentence in Idaho State

Correctional Institution, Kuna, Idaho, for violating his parole on a drug charge, according to online offender information from the Idaho Department of Corrections. He is up for parole in February 2018.

But the United States Attorney's Office in Portland filed a motion June 7 to have U.S. marshals bring him to court by Thursday, July 7, at 1:30 p.m. Court records also show federal Judge Anna J. Brown also set Simpson's five-day trial to start Oct. 11 in Portland.

•Maria Villegas, 24, died May 26 from knife wounds police and prosecutors believe were inflicted by her husband inflicted.

The district attorney's office charged Oscar Pastor Garcia Villegas, 26, of Milton-Freewater, with Villegas's murder. The state accused him of slaying her with a knife and stabbing and cutting their two young children. He also faces four counts of attempted murder, two counts of first-degree assault, three counts of unlawful use of a weapon against another, and two counts of first-degree criminal mistreatment.

He is in the Umatilla County Jail and has a bail hearing July 5.

•Dominic Freel, 5

months, died June 8 from blunt force trauma. His father, Evan Freel, 16, faces charges of murder by abuse and first-degree criminal mistreatment for the infant's death.

Evan Freel, 16, of Milton-Freewater, has a bail hearing July 8. The district attorney charged the teen with murder by abuse and first-degree criminal mistreatment in the death of his infant son. Murder falls under Measure 11, Oregon's mandatory minimum sentencing law, thus the state is trying Freel as an adult and not a juvenile. He remains in a juvenile jail, though, in The Dalles.

There is one case involving a Umatilla County victim in which a suspect has not been identified.

•And Gabriel Ledezma Rodriguez, 34, of Milton-Freewater, is the focus of another murder investigation. He went missing in April. The Walla Walla Police Department reported finding his body May 28 by Walla Walla River Road near Harris Park in Umatilla County. The *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin* reported police said there was no definitive cause or manner of death and the investigation was waiting the results of toxicology tests.

OVERTIME: 17,000 nonprofits in state

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proposed rules, including from pro-business groups such as Associated Oregon Industries.

"The proposed overtime wage threshold increase unevenly affects Oregon businesses due to Oregon's lower wages while failing to address the varying characteristics of local and regional economies," Associated Oregon Industries and other business groups wrote in a letter to the labor department. "Instituting such an increase endangers both job security and advancement opportunity for far too many Oregonians."

While for-profit employers have been vocal about how the changes will impact their bottom lines, nonprofit organizations also anticipate a boost in costs or a reduction in services due to the new rules.

There are more than 17,000 nonprofit organizations in Oregon. A vast majority of those have no paid staff. But between

those that do, there are about 172,000 employees, said Jim White, executive director of the Nonprofit Association of Oregon.

It's unclear how many of those are exempt from overtime and how many are hourly.

In discussions with the association, nonprofit leaders have generally been supportive of the new overtime rules but have felt burdened by the fact that the new rules will take effect shortly after Oregon's new higher minimum wage rate takes effect July 1.

"We have heard concerns that it wasn't one or the other but the back-to-back succession," White said. "Nonprofits have expressed concerns: How are we going to do this? How are we going to make these changes simultaneously? They are concerned with being able to absorb changes without cuts in program services or cuts in staff."

Oregon SMART (Start Making a Reader Today),

a nonprofit organization that provides one-on-one reading support in schools, has five to 10 employees out of 36 who could be eligible for overtime under the new rules, said Nell Whitman, director of finance and administration.

"We are, like many organizations, trying to ride the right line between fair compensation and making sure we keep the business side within budget and provide all the services to the community," Whitman said. "I think we can make the rules work. I think they provide a pretty reasonable balance between those things."

SMART will review its positions and determine whether to make some of them hourly or raise salaries to make employees exempt from overtime, she said.

"Organizations with a lot of government contracts and a set amount to spend will have more difficulty with the new rules," she said. "We are not in that situation."

PROTEST: Dems want to force a vote

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break!" and waved pieces of paper with the names of gun victims, continuing their protest in the well of the House even as lawmakers voted on a previously scheduled and unrelated measure to overturn a veto by President Barack Obama.

Ryan attempted to ignore the outbursts and announce the business of the day, pounding down his gavel over shouting. "Shame! Shame! Shame!" Democrats yelled, but Ryan left the lectern and the voting continued. Then Democrats began singing "We Shall Overcome," still holding up the names of gun victims.

The scene presented a radical, almost shocking departure from the normal orderly conduct of the House. It was uncertain what would happen as the night stretched on. Republicans planned to attempt to adjourn the House, and hoped to present themselves as soberly attending to business and Democrats as disruptive. Democrats said they would stay until Republicans yielded to their demands to hold votes on bills to strengthen background checks and prevent people on the no fly list from getting guns in the wake of last week's massacre in Orlando, Florida.

"Are they more afraid than the children at Sandy Hook?" asked Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., referring to the 2012 shooting that killed 26 people, including 20

elementary school children, in Newtown, Connecticut. "What is so scary about having a vote?"

Rep. John Lewis, a veteran civil rights leader, asked what Congress has done, then answered his own question: "Nothing. We have turned a deaf ear to the blood of innocents. We are blind to a crisis. Where is our courage?"

Ryan dismissed the protest as "nothing more than a publicity stunt," and in an interview with CNN, made clear there would be no vote.

"We're not going to take away a citizen's constitutional rights without due process," he said.

The protest began around 11:30 a.m., interrupted briefly when Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, tried to start the House's work at noon. The customary prayer and Pledge of Allegiance went ahead, but Poe was forced to recess the House when dozens of Democrats refused to leave the well.

By evening, 168 House Democrats — out of 188 — and 34 Senate Democrats joined the protest, according to the House minority leader's office. One after another, they spoke of the need for gun control and talked of constituents who had been killed.

Scattered around the House floor were signs reading "Disarm Hate." Visitors watched from the galleries. A crowd of several hundred gun control advocates gathered outside the Capitol and cheered as

Democrats addressed them.

Congress remains gridlocked over gun control, a divide even more pronounced in a presidential election year. The sit-in had the feel of a 1960s-style protest, as some lawmakers sat on the floor, others in their seats.

Republicans had staged a similar protest in 2008. Democrats controlling the House at the time turned off the cameras amid a GOP push for a vote to expand oil and gas drilling. Republicans occupied the floor, delivering speeches after then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi sent the House on its August recess. Pelosi ordered the cameras turned off.

Republicans ultimately forced the drilling provision to be attached to a stopgap spending bill.

C-SPAN, a cable and satellite network that provides continual coverage of House and Senate floor proceedings, does not control the cameras. They're run on authorization by legislative leaders.

Although the cameras were turned off Wednesday, lawmakers relied on social media to transmit video, using Facebook, Twitter and Periscope. C-SPAN broadcast live video streamed on Periscope and Facebook from lawmakers' accounts. Democrats posted the Capitol's main telephone number, which was overwhelmed, and urged constituents to call and request a vote. They also encouraged tweeting under the hashtag #NoBillNo-Break.

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