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Wyden

## MOSIER Act would strengthen oil train derailment investigations

Sens. Wyden, Merkley propose legislation after Gorge wreck

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
*East Oregonian*

Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley have introduced legislation that would require independent federal investigations into all major oil train derailments across the country — something that

was missing after last month's derailment in the Columbia River Gorge near Mosier.

The Mandate Oil Spill Investigations and Emergency Rules (MOSIER) Act of 2016 calls on the National Transportation Safety Board to investigate oil train derailments and gives the Federal Rail

Administration the authority to put a moratorium on oil trains until the investigations are complete.

Wyden and Merkley, both Democrats, announced the bill during a conference call Wednesday. Merkley said the derailment June 3 near Mosier further emphasized the danger

of oil trains, and independent investigations are needed to have any credibility with the public.

"As Oregon has seen firsthand, these oil trains are rolling explosion hazards," Merkley said. "Every accident needs to be fully and independently investigated."

The NTSB opted not to investigate the Mosier incident,

explaining that even though four cars caught fire and oil spilled into the Columbia River, there were no injuries or fatalities. The board also felt that, based on information gathered by the FRA and Union Pacific Railroad, the circumstances did not pose any new significant safety issues.

See **TRAINS/8A**



Merkley

## One shop pushes for legal pot as neighbor down interstate thrives

By **JOSH BENHAM**  
*The (La Grande) Observer*

LA GRANDE — Rona Lindsey said turning away customers deeply troubles her. Of course, part of that is the business owner in her. But as a former administrator at the Union County Chamber of Commerce, viewing tail lights as car after car heads right back to Interstate 84 is tough to watch.

"It tears me in two," the Hwy 30 Cannabis owner said.

And it's a scene she said unfolds daily, with increasing regularity since January, when the recreational sale of marijuana became legal in Oregon — but not in La Grande.

Visitors from around the region enter the store, inquiring about what to do in the area. Before the conversation gets too deep, however, Lindsey has to ask one pressing question: "Are you a medical patient?"

Some are, but plenty are not. Depending on where they are from in Oregon or Washington, for some customers buying marijuana is like buying a six-pack.

"So you have to educate them on what the city did with the opt-out," Lindsey said.

Patrons' reactions are similar, Lindsey said: a mix of shock and incredulity that recreational marijuana sales are banned in La Grande.

All she can do is nod her head and tell the visitors about activities to do in Union County, hoping they'll stick around and spend some money. But she said she's aware they probably won't.

"Now they have to stop in Huntington, or Hood River. Those are the closest (recreational dispensaries)," she said. "Or they go to Walla Walla, (Washington) and take chances on driving

See **MARIJUANA/8A**

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**Grant Co. approves medical marijuana dispensaries**  
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**"They go to Walla Walla, (Washington) and take chances on driving back across the state line. Why are we making people criminals when it's legal?"**

— **Rona Lindsey**, Hwy 30 Cannabis owner



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

## Boating under the Blues

Boaters make use of the near-perfect weather Wednesday at McKay Reservoir south of Pendleton. Temperatures will remain in the 80s throughout the weekend, according to the National Weather Service.

### PENDLETON

## Utility hike may help upgrade industrial park

Some city pipes more than 100 years old

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
*East Oregonian*

The city of Pendleton could soon see tangible benefits from the utility increases the city council passed in December.

Public Works Director Bob Patterson told the council at a workshop Tuesday that city staff were preparing applications for state loans that would leverage the additional revenue collected through

hikes to the water and sewer rates.

If approved by the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority, the money would go toward replacing some of the city's water and sewer pipes, some of which are more than 100 years old, and expanding the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport industrial park's utility infrastructure.

City Manager Robb Corbett referenced the recent Hill Meat

Co. expansion as a reason the city needed to expand the industrial park's water and sewer capacity. An undersized water line prevented the expansion until the city helped Hill Meat obtain a state grant to widen the line.

Additionally, Corbett said the city still needed to extend utilities to the vacant industrial park, including a property reserved for a possible data center.

Expanding utilities at the airport doesn't come without

risks. "The (risk) to me is that you're making an investment in your industrial park and, just like Barnhart Road, it sits idle," Corbett said.

Councilor Paul Chalmers said the city would never attract businesses without basic amenities like utility connections, especially when compared to the Port of Morrow.

"If it's not shovel-ready,

See **PENDLETON/8A**

### UMATILLA

## Nursing shortage contributes to six open positions at TRCI



The Two Rivers Correctional Institution is currently in a nursing shortage with six open positions in the prison infirmary.

More than one third of inmates older than 46

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
and **PHIL WRIGHT**  
*East Oregonian*

Facing both a nationwide nursing shortage and an aging inmate population, Two Rivers Correctional Institution has six open nursing positions.

The prison in Umatilla is looking for one part-time and five full-time nurses to work with the 17 full-time and five part-time nurses currently on staff.

"In this economy, pay is a big factor, and being that there is a shortage of nurses, offers come up and people take

them," TRCI spokeswoman Sherry Iles said. "This is not a stress-free environment either."

The need for nurses in the corrections system is significant. TRCI housed 1,765 inmates as of July 1, according to the state's latest profile of inmate demographics. More than 400 of those are 46-60 years old, and 167 are older than 61 — that's more than a third of the prison's population. Meanwhile, 30 percent of inmates at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, Pendleton, and 37 percent at the Oregon State Penitentiary, Salem, are older than 45.

The trend, Iles said, is a combination of America's aging population and Measure 11 sentencing that keeps

See **TRCI/8A**



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