

Fictional character appears to donate to Grant County sheriff's legal expense fund

Receives more than \$20,000 in donations in three months

By SEAN HART
Blue Mountain Eagle

The legal expense trust fund for Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer, who is being investigated by the Oregon Department of Justice, received more than \$20,000 in donations between April and June, including one that appears to be from a fictional character with a false California address.

Trustee Jodie Fleck filed the required quarterly statement for the Glenn E. Palmer Legal Expense Trust Fund

with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission July 14, reporting \$20,450 in donations and \$5,268 in expenses from April 12, when the fund was created, to June 30.

Someone who donated \$100 June 7 is listed in the report as John Galt, 138 Got Ur Six Way, Galts Gulch, CA 97632. The ZIP code actually corresponds to Malin, Oregon, near Klamath Falls. "Galts Gulch" does not appear on a California Department of Transportation list of cities in the state.

Galt's Gulch is, however,

mentioned in Ayn Rand's 1957 novel "Atlas Shrugged" as the location where character John Galt leads a campaign against the government.

Fleck could not be reached for comment. Fleck, Palmer and his attorney Benjamin Boyd from Hostetter Law Group in Enterprise did not immediately respond to emailed questions about the donation.

Oregon law requires the names and addresses



Palmer

of people who donate more than \$75 to be reported. Donations more than \$75 accounted for \$14,720, with \$3,654 coming from donations less than \$75 and \$2,076 coming from pro bono and in-kind donations.

Of the listed donors, seven were from Grant County, and the largest county donation was \$500.

The Oregon Firearms Federation Political Action Committee donated \$5,000, the largest in the report.

Marijuana ballot issue could get new wrinkle

Council seeks public input on proposed fire hall

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Pendleton voters will get a chance to legalize marijuana sales Nov. 8, but not before the city council is done with it.

Since 2014, the council has debated a medical marijuana moratorium, dispensary land use regulations, marijuana business licenses, an update to the city's nuisance ordinance that includes marijuana fumes as an offensive odor, bans on marijuana sales, both temporary and permanent, referring the marijuana sales to the ballot and whether the ballot should ask two questions or three.

The council settled on three and was set to refer the issue to the ballot June 21 before Mayor Phillip Houk postponed the vote over a lack of advertisement.

When it comes again before the council, the debate will have a new wrinkle courtesy of Councilor Chuck Wood.

The policy package now includes alternative explanatory statements to be included on the ballot.

Besides simplifying some of the language, the new statements each include a sentence in bold font that tells voters that the city cannot collect a local tax or its share of the state tax if either medical or recreational marijuana is banned.

At a council workshop July 12, Wood said he worked with City Attorney Nancy Kerns to offer a "Plan B" that clarified the language and discussed the taxing implications.

Wood has argued that the local tax is an important part of marijuana sales because the state tax wouldn't generate much revenue.

Wood did not return a request for comment as of press time.

Fire hall update

With the former Pendleton Cinema property added to the mix and several other possibilities eliminated, Fire Chief Mike

Ciraulo will present his updated findings.

At a July 12 workshop, the council identified the vacated movie theater and the old St. Anthony Hospital site as the best locations for a new fire station, which would be the focus of a bond campaign.

In addition to Ciraulo's presentation, the council showed interest in collecting public input from the audience.

Because the Pendleton Cinema is relatively new to the process and hasn't been professionally analyzed, city staff is also requesting \$24,000 for a needs assessment from Mackenzie, a Portland design firm.

According to a letter to Ciraulo from Mackenzie engineer Scott Moore, the assessment would cover site analysis, design work and a cost estimate. Moore estimated the assessment would take 5-6 weeks.

Housing study results

Following six months of work, the Pendleton housing committee is ready to present their findings to the city council.

John Turner, the committee chairman and the mayor-elect, will ask the council to consider the report's recommendations and conduct semi-annual reviews to ensure they're being met.

The report found that the success of some recent housing development showed the market could support 125 more rental units and 90 for-sale units.

To achieve those goals, the report recommended recruiting entry-level housing developers, establishing a revolving loan fund with the Round-Up Development Corp. and creating incentives for home developers and buyers, among other suggestions.

The committee also recommended the city create a 10-year housing plan.

The council meeting will be held Tuesday at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Wheat harvest underway

A combine harvests wheat in a field off of Fanshier Road west of Pendleton. After getting heavy precipitation in June and July, the wheat harvest is underway.

BRIEFLY

Meeting scheduled to discuss Birch Creek plan

PILOT ROCK — The Birch Creek Assessment and Action Plan is nearly finished, and residents of the watershed are invited to a meeting Wednesday, July 27 to discuss the next steps.

The plan, which kicked off in January 2015, identifies and prioritizes restoration work on Birch Creek, which is home to one-third of wild steelhead in the Umatilla Basin.

The Umatilla Basin Watershed Council has developed the plan, in collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service and GeoEngineers. The meeting will run from 6-8 p.m. at Pilot Rock City Hall, 144 N. Alder Place.

BMCC to host meetings to discuss swimming pool

PENDLETON — Blue Mountain Community College is offering two chances for the community to learn about the issues facing its pool and provide feedback regarding the pool's future.

The meetings are Thursday, July 28 and Wednesday, Aug. 3 at the McCrae Activity Center. They both begin at 5:30 p.m.

The meetings will provide a tour of the pool area and include information about the pool's current usage, expenses, and repair needs. Those who attend will be asked how they think the pool should be maintained and how to fund the \$2.3 million in required maintenance and upgrades.

An \$850,000 upgrade to the pool was part of a failed 2013 BMCC bond measure and was not included in the successful 2015 bond. Additional safety and maintenance issues were identified since 2013, and a professional inspection revealed the pool would need a complete renovation, according to a BMCC press release.

John Day wins wood grants

The U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region, along with the State of Oregon, recently received 10 Wood Innovation grants funded by the Department of Agriculture.

The grants, totaling over \$1.9 million, will help accelerate wood energy development, expand wood product markets and support forest management needs, including reducing wildfire risk.

One of the recipients, the Oregon Torrefaction Project, will design a commercial torrefaction plant to

manufacture a wood-based renewable coal replacement using small diameter trees from forest restoration activities with emphasis on Oregon national forests. Project partners include Ochoco Management, Inc., Bonneville Environmental Foundation and the Forest Service.

The project provides biomass processing support to ongoing forest restoration efforts in Eastern Oregon, including a large-scale collaborative restoration project based out of John Day that implements fuels reduction activities on the Malheur National Forest.

The torrefaction facility will be capable of producing

50,000 tons of renewable biomass fuel annually that will be used to produce electricity to heat and power homes and businesses. Grant funds will be used for the engineering and design of the facility.

If successfully implemented, the project will provide a unique opportunity to diversify the utilities' fuel portfolio and support compliance with state renewable energy standards and the federal Clean Power Plan.

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