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Farmworker housing proposal nixed

Threemile Canyon Farms withdraws applications after hearing

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

In a surprising turn of events, Threemile Canyon Farms has decided to abandon its farmworker housing proposal on Tower Road near Boardman, saying it will consider other options to fill their labor needs.

The announcement came after

two hours of public testimony at a hearing Wednesday before the Morrow County Court in Heppner, where opponents of the development raised concerns about everything from public safety to transparency in the planning process.

Marty Myers, general manager of Threemile Canyon, said he did not want to jeopardize the farm's stature in the community and withdrew the

application. Had the project gone forward, it would have housed up to 800 seasonal workers from outside of the country.

"Obviously, this site has resistance from the community. I respect their issues," Myers said. "We will come back with a better plan in the future."

Wednesday's public hearing was not about the building itself, but

rather to discuss a zoning change for 66 acres along the east side of Tower Road where the housing would be built. Commissioners also needed to approve a legal exception that would have allowed the Port of Morrow to take wastewater from the site.

However, opponents argued that it was impossible to consider this preliminary groundwork without also reviewing the proposed development. Threemile Canyon

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— **Marty Myers**, general manager of Threemile Canyon

New UmCo detective to focus on absconders

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Offenders absconding from parole and probation in Umatilla County will soon encounter an additional hurdle.

The county's Community Justice Department and the sheriff's office are partnering to hire a new detective dedicated to hauling in offenders who skip out on court dates and other court-ordered requirements.

Community Justice director Dale Primmer said he first approached Sheriff Terry Rowan with the idea during county budget hearings in May.

"What I want to do is embed a detective or deputy in our office to deal with absconders right up front," Primmer said.

His department is using a similar model to provide drug and alcohol treatment to people in the county jail. Primmer said it made sense to apply it to absconders.

From the start of 2006 through the end of 2009, Primmer said the county had 238 "absconds" and 135 of those resulted in a new arrest. That included 82 for failure to appear, 17 for theft and 12 for drug possession.

The 2013 Legislature's passage of House Bill 3194 established the Justice Reinvestment Grant Program, and Umatilla County used the funds it received to "front-load" programs that help offenders get drug and alcohol treatment as soon as they leave jail, for example, and to provide daily monitoring and life skills training to people at high risk for re-offending. But he

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Primmer

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— **Dale Primmer**,
Community Justice director



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Andy Clarys of Riverton, Wyo., rides White Lash in saddle bronc riding Wednesday at the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo in Joseph. Clarys failed to mark up out of the chute and did not receive and points for his ride. For more on the rodeo see Sports 1B.

Chief Joseph Days kicks off



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A flag bearer jockey her horse during the opening ceremony at the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo Wednesday in Joseph.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The setting sun shines through the north grandstands at the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo.

Budgeting for back to school supplies

Community comes together to support students as new school year draws near

By **ALEXA LOUGEE**
East Oregonian

Fourth of July is in the rear-view mirror and August is almost here. That means it's back to school season.

Local stores are already displaying aisles of spiral-bound notebooks, glue sticks and scissors. Some parents have begun buying school supplies for their kids.

Marisela Rubio is one of those parents and has two kids at McNary Heights Elementary School, a third grader and a fifth grader. She plans to spend less than \$100 for supplies for

both. As she perused the suggested supply list she said "it seems pretty reasonable."

According to the National Retail Federation, families can expect to spend an average of \$107.76 on back-to-school supplies, not including clothing or electronics.

The *East Oregonian* looked at supply lists for third graders from area schools and calculated costs of supplies, using prices for products that fell in the middle range for cost — not the cheapest, not the most expensive. Parents of third graders in Pendleton School District can expect

to pay \$29.51 for supplies this school year. Pendleton has one supply list per grade for all classes in the district.

Each elementary school in the Hermiston School District has a different list of supplies. On average, a parent of a third grader in Hermiston can expect to spend \$44.58 on back-to-school supplies, with Highland Hills Elementary having the most expensive supply list and Sunset Elementary the least expensive.

Parents with a third grader at McNary Heights Elementary should plan to spend \$31.56 on supplies, while third graders at Stanfield will need \$51.96 worth of supplies to start the year. None of these averages included the cost of a new backpack, lunch box or gym shoes.

Umatilla County's poverty rate is

above the national average, putting pressure on families each fall. Community partners understand the hardships and work to ease them each year.

Altrusa of Pendleton holds an annual school supply drive, setting up at the entrance of local stores. All collected donations go directly to local schools and are disbursed through school counselors to students in need. This year's drive is Aug. 6. Pendleton businesses like The Dollar Tree and Wal-Mart also fill in the supply gap.

"If a ... staff member finds a student needing supplies we discretely connect those students with an opportunity to obtain them,"

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