

Lightning sparks small fires on national forests

East Oregonian

Significant lightning activity over the weekend has sparked a number of small wildfires on forestland across northeast Oregon, including one blaze that has spread over 50 acres east of Pendleton.

The Gibbon Fire is burning in steep terrain near Meacham Creek and Stumbough Ridge on land managed by both the Umatilla National Forest and Oregon Department of Forestry. Two engines, one helicopter, one fire crew and four rappellers are working to contain the fire and additional resources are on the way. No structures are threatened.

Six other fires were reported on the Umatilla National Forest, all of which were less than an acre in size and quickly contained. Fires were also spotted on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest as far south as Frenchglen in Harney County, and as far north as the Wallowa Mountains.

The largest is the Phillips Fire, 13 miles southwest of Baker City, which firefighters contained at one and a quarter acres.

ODF is responding to

several additional fires, including a cluster of blazes near Pedro Mountain in Baker County. A Type 3 incident management team has responded and so far held that complex to 11.5 acres.

Another fire is burning about 15 miles east of Juntura near the Idaho border, and is nearly 8 square miles, according to the Bureau of Land Management's Vale District.

Additional holdover fires are expected throughout the day. To report a fire, call Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch at 541-963-7171 or dial 9-1-1.

In other fire updates:

- Weigh Station Fire — Started July 30 on Emigrant Hill east of Pendleton, grew to 688 acres and is now 95 percent contained. It was human-caused, and remains under investigation.

- Rail Fire — Started July 31 west of Unity in Baker County, and has grown to 10,482 acres. It is just 10 percent contained. A total of 740 people, 24 crews, 10 dozers, 29 engines, 19 water tenders and 6 helicopters are assigned to fight the fire. The cause is unknown.

Umatilla County deputy arrests suspected burglar

East Oregonian

A Hermiston man said he felt guilty after committing a burglary in Adams, according to the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office.

The suspect, Julio Cesar Guardado-Garcia, 29, Hermiston, is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, due to the swift work of a sheriff's deputy and Pendleton police.

An Adams resident on Thursday reported a burglary at his neighbor's home, 56812 Bingham Road, according to a written statement from the sheriff's office. Deputy John Reitz responded to investigate and spotted a silver van parked at the far west end of the property.

Reitz took down the license plate number from the van and observed the driver, a female, before following the neighbor to the property. There, the deputy noticed signs of a fresh break-in at a shop.

Reitz did not find suspects at the site, according to the sheriff's statement, but he saw a foot trail through the grass from the broken shop door where the van had been, along with a pair of black gloves on the road. Reitz talked to neighbors who claimed they saw a Hispanic man with an injured eye at the victim's property on two occasions during the previous two days.

Reitz broadcast an "attempt to locate" for the van and driver. Officers from the Pendleton Police

Department found the vehicle at a residence in Pendleton and identified the driver as a 17-year-old female. She was in the company of Guardado-Garcia.

Reitz talked to Guardado-Garcia, and he matched the witness descriptions, according to the sheriff's office, and his shoes matched the footprints at the crime scene. Guardado-Garcia also admitted to being on the victim's property but claimed he did not take anything. He said he went there with a second male suspect who said the property belonged to him.

"After further questioning," the sheriff's office reported, "Guardado-Garcia admitted that he broke in to the shop and claimed he put back everything he took because he felt guilty."

The sheriff's office also reported Reitz recognized the 17-year-old girl as the driver he saw at the scene, and she admitted she was driving the van. She also admitted she transported property from the victim's residence and gave consent to search her room. The officers recovered several items of the victim's property, including rifles, shotguns and hunting gear.

Construction projects start Wednesday

PENDLETON — The Oregon Department of Transportation will restrict lane sizes and intermittently close on- and off-ramps to Interstate 84 near Pendleton until mid-September for paving and striping work.

Starting Wednesday from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m., the state agency will reduce east and westbound lanes of I-84 to a width of 13 feet from mile point 203.65 to 217.75. The road work also will lead to periodic closures of the ramps at exits 207, 209, 210 and 216.

No more than two interchange ramps will be closed at any given time, noted ODOT. The department estimates it will complete the project on Sept. 16, when the Pendleton Round-Up is in full swing.

Drivers can also expect delays up to 20 minutes on Highway 11 between Pendleton and the Washington border this month, while state road crews perform shoulder work.

"We'll try to keep delays and traffic impacts to a minimum and ask for everyone's patience," ODOT District 12 manager Marilyn Holt said in a written statement. "Our maintenance workers will reshape deteriorating shoulder areas and widen locations where there isn't room to pull off,

which should improve safety." Most delays will be 10-15 minutes, though some will be longer. The transportation department also advised drivers to watch for orange cones, signs and crews and be prepared to stop.

HERMISTON

Parade kicks off county fair

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The best of Umatilla County was on display Saturday in a miles-long parade to officially kick off the 101st Umatilla County Fair.

The Kick-Off Parade drew thousands to line the streets of Hermiston for more than two hours of floats, horses, free candy and more.

Rose Jurcich, a Hermiston High School sophomore, said her favorite part of the parade was spotting her friends waving from various floats, representing FFA and marching with the high school's band.

She came along to watch the parade with Arely Amaya, who said her favorite part of the parade was the horses.

"I liked it when the Hispanic people came and the horses were dancing to the music," she said. "I thought it was pretty great overall."

Both girls said the parade put them in the mood to go to the fair, which they were looking forward to next week.

Pat Brown of Hermiston also said the horses were her favorite part of watching the fair parade each year.

"There were awfully pretty cowgirl outfits and horses," she said.

Her favorite float was the one celebrating Filipino heritage, which featured traditional Filipino clothing and music.

Alan and Donna Vore of Portland were in town visiting family, and said they were glad that the visit coincided with the parade.

"I loved the parade,"



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Fair manager Don Slone hands out candy during the Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade on Saturday. BELOW: Teenagers hand out watermelons for Bellinger Farms.



Donna said. "It's small town, and I just loved the feel of it."

She said there's a certain kind of pride that comes from living in a small town that's fun for big-city residents to see — not to mention a taste of farm life.

"I loved the tractors, because you don't get to see those in the city," she said.

Alan said one of his favorite parts was watching his grandchildren run around collecting candy thrown from floats.

"They got a lot of loot," he said. "It's better than Halloween."

There was plenty of candy for the kids, but the adults got excited about a few handouts too.

All ages were scrambling in the streets when the Tillamook Cheese contingent walked by, scattering shrink-wrapped samples of their famous cheddar cheese. And there were plenty of adults who didn't mind jumping up and down to catch the attention of the children and teens handing out free watermelons from Bellinger Farms and Walchli Farms.

The parade was the official kick-off to the Umatilla County Fair, which opens its gates to the public Tuesday morning at 9 a.m.

Minamisoma delegates arrive in Pendleton

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Dignitaries and students from Minamisoma, Japan were welcomed with open arms to their sister city Pendleton on Saturday.

Pendleton Mayor Phillip Houk and Minamisoma Mayor Katsunobu Sakurai gave speeches, exchanged gifts to display at their respective city halls and signed an updated sister city agreement during the event.

"We want to express our deep appreciation for Pendleton," Sakurai said through a translator, adding that he hoped the partnership between the two cities would continue "forever."

Pendleton has had a sister city agreement with Minamisoma since the early 1990s, including an exchange program where high school students from each city spend two weeks visiting the other. In 2011, after Minamisoma was devastated by an earthquake and tsunami that killed hundreds and sparked an equally devastating nuclear disaster, the exchange program was suspended. It resumed last year, and another group of Pendleton students returned from Japan two weeks ago.

This year, in addition to students and teachers, the Japanese delegation



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Pendleton Mayor Phil Houk, left, listens to Minamisoma Mayor Katsunobu Sakurai speak at the Pendleton city hall about the earthquake and tsunami that devastated his city in 2011.

included Sakurai, the Minamisoma chamber of commerce director and several city officials.

"This is my first visit to Pendleton and the United States," Sakurai told the group. "I am very, very impressed. Your country is huge."

He thanked Pendleton not only for hosting students, but also for the aid that was sent during the aftermath of the tsunami and nuclear disaster in nearby Fukushima.

Houk expanded on that theme, also thanking the Pendleton residents in the room for stepping up to help their sister city with everything from monetary donations to a batch of 300

Pendleton Woolen Mills blankets.

He said the city deserved it after the wonderful way it always treats the Pendleton students who come to visit.

"When they go to Japan, the hospitality that they provide is over the top," Houk said. "We just can't compete."

He said the first year the city tried out the exchange program they didn't get many applicants, but since then it has grown into a popular learning experience.

"I can tell you that after the first group of students came back, then we had an enormous amount of applicants after that," he said.

Mihoko Endo, a Minamisoma teacher, presented Houk with a vase from her country. She said she had lost count of how many trips she had made to Pendleton but she believed this was her ninth.

"Every time I have been here, I am so moved by how you have received us," she said.

After the signing ceremony Courtney Canfield, an incoming senior at Pendleton High School, said she had a great time visiting Minamisoma this summer and she hopes the Japanese students enjoy their stay in Pendleton just as much. She said the relationships she formed during her stay were the most memorable parts of her trip, but part of the fun of the exchange program is experiencing cultural differences like new food.

"I hope they like our food, like hamburgers, because I definitely missed those while I was over there," she said.

The Japanese students have traditionally come during the week of the Pendleton Round-Up, but the timing is difficult due to Japan's high school testing schedule so they came early this year and plan to continue to visit in August in the future.

FIRST FOODS

Festival & Race

Saturday, Aug 13th

July Grounds- 73310 July Grounds Lane, Pednleton, Or 97801

RACE AND EVENT TIMES

- 7:10 AM- Kanine Ridge Hike Departs July Grounds
- 9:00 AM- 10k Spawn Run • 9:30 AM- 5k Smolt Run
- 10:30 AM- Family Fun Walk & Cycle (Noncompetitive)

JACKETS AND MEDALS FOR 1ST - 3RD PLACE FOR HIKE, 10K & 5K RACE EVENTS.

2ND ANNUAL CHUMASH LACROSSE TOURNAMENT:

8:00 - 2:30

Event Agenda

- 6:45am ----- RACE REGISTRATION OPENS
- 7:10am ----- HIKERS DEPART FOR KANINE RIDGE HIKE
- 8:00am ----- LACROSSE TOURNAMENT
- 8 - 10 am & 12 - 2:30pm
- 8:15am - 9:40am ----- YOGA STRETCH & BREATH
- 9:00am - 9:30 ----- 10 K & 5K RUN
- 9:00am ----- FIRST FOODS INFO BOOTHS OPEN
- 10:30am ----- FAMILY FUN WALK & CYCLE (Noncompetitive)
- 11:30am ----- BBQ FUNDRAISER LUNCH
- 12:00pm ----- AWARDS CEREMONIES FOR RACE EVENTS
- 2:30pm ----- FESTIVAL ENDS

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Friday Night Dinner

August 12th • 5:30 pm

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- Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
- Vegetables
- All You Can Eat Salad Bar
- Dessert

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