

EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

A WEEK AT THE FAIR



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Kenzie Gonzalez, 17, of Stanfield washes her black angus Simmental cross steer on Tuesday at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds in Hermiston.

OINK, MOO AND COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO

Umatilla County Fair animals as varied as the kids who raise them

By **ALEXA LOUGEE**
East Oregonian

There are hundreds of animals on exhibit and up for auction at this year's Umatilla County Fair — and almost as many kids to show them off.

All residents can enter an animal to exhibit. There are 22 cows, 35 goats, three sheep and 166 small animals — like rabbits — for a total of 230 animals on open exhibition.

Children involved in FFA and 4-H must meet requirements to sell their animals at Saturday's auction. Most animals must "make weight," meaning they must weigh within a certain range to be eligible for market. Animals that qualify are called "market" animals. Between the FFA and 4-H there are 170 market hogs, 43 steers, 61 lambs,

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More online

For video of some of the animals visit eastoregonian.com



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Ally McClure, 11, of Hermiston lulls her serama roster to sleep in the small animal barn Tuesday at the Umatilla County Fair.

Oregon Election director resigned over allegations of inappropriate comments

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The state elections director resigned last month while under investigation for allegations he made inappropriate comments to a female temporary employee, records reveal.

Jim Williams, who had served as head of the Secretary of State's Elections Division since 2013, was accused of making inappropriate comments and giving favorable treatment to the woman, according to the documents released Monday to the Pamplin Media Group/EO Media Group Capital Bureau. The allegations came shortly after Williams was investigated for telling another female subordinate that her problems getting along with others were related to her being "younger" and "prettier," according to an investigation report. The report by the Oregon Department of Justice was completed eight days after Williams resigned July 19.

The temporary employee, related to the most recent investigation, was hired in December 2015 as an office assistant in the automatic voter registration program at the Secretary of State's Elections Division.

During her six-month stint at the agency, Williams gave her two raises, despite accusing her of frequent absences and falsifying timesheets, the report states. He fired her on July 17.

Williams would sometimes look the office assistant "up and down in a way that made her think he was attracted to her ... and comment on her appearance." In February, he became "irritated" when she didn't meet him after work at a beer garden set up on the State Capitol grounds, according to the report. Williams denied that he invited her for the drinks. Williams also called other



Williams

female employees "bitches" in front of her, the report stated.

He was placed on paid administrative leave June 30. He would have faced termination if he hadn't resigned July 19, according to text messages between Williams and his supervisor, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Taylor.

Taylor wrote July 18 that he and Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins "no longer have confidence in your ability to manage personell (sic) issues effectively."

"As the records demonstrate, the resignation of Mr. Williams did not arise out of actions or omissions that had any impact on the elections process or other program responsibilities of the Elections Division," Atkins said Monday. "The issues investigated arose from concerns related to poor judgment in personnel issues."

ODOE supports proposed wind farm

Transmission between two sites likely to be contested

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

The Oregon Department of Energy is backing a proposed 500-megawatt wind farm in Umatilla and Morrow counties, though the project will likely be contested because of its connection to the electrical grid.

ODOE staff have recommended approving the site certificate for the Wheatridge Wind Energy Facility in a proposed order Aug. 5. If permitted, Wheatridge would add up to 292 turbines between two main areas — Wheatridge West, located entirely within Morrow County about seven miles northwest of Heppner, and Wheatridge East, extending into Umatilla County southwest of Echo.

The two areas would be roughly 25 miles apart, linked together by a pair of overhead 230-kilovolt power lines. Developer Jerry Rietmann, of Ione, previously said they are working out long-term leases with more than 20 landowners to build on private property.

Questions, however, still linger over a transmission line that would run electricity from the turbines to the power grid. Wheatridge intends to have the local Umatilla Electric Cooperative develop that line separate from the wind farm. As such, it was not included or considered in the project's site certificate application.

Rietmann has said the reason for this is to create a single transmission corridor for the region that can support multiple energy projects, as opposed to each developer building their own lines criss-crossing the landscape. UEC says it is looking at a route that would run along Bombing Range Road

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Fair pays cash but not booze for headliners

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

The Umatilla County Fair paid \$30,000 for A Thousand Horses to perform Tuesday night. Saturday night's finale band, Creedence Clearwater Revival offshoot Creedence Clearwater Revisited, will get more than twice that.

The fair is paying \$9,000 for Montez de Durango, while fellow Friday performer Tormenta de Durango will receive \$500.

Overall, musical entertainment at this year's Umatilla County Fair will cost more than \$134,000, and that does not include the few amenities the county agrees to provide, such as warm and well-balanced meals.

The *East Oregonian* asked the county for copies of the contracts, called riders, for this and recent year's entertainers. The county fair paid \$40,000 for the Oak Ridge Boys in 2014 and \$10,000 last year to Hinder and to John Michael Montgomery. Most of the contracts run beyond 10 pages and specify stage equipment, power supply needs, and include a host of demands, from transportation to booze.

If A Thousand Horses had its druthers, the county would provide a 15-passenger Ford or Chevrolet van and a driver that speaks English, along with two bottles of Jack Daniels or Bulleit Bourbon and two bottles of Tito's Vodka.

The Bellamy Brothers, who perform Wednesday night, would like a dressing room replete with two six-packs of Classic

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What does it pay to play at the county fair? See page 7A

