

RIETH



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Mill workers watch as flames engulf a log loader at Blue Mountain Lumber Products on Wednesday in Rieth.

Fire destroys lumber yard's second loader in a month

East Oregonian

Fire destroyed a lumber loader Wednesday at Blue Mountain Lumber Products near Pendleton.

Chad Dodge, who helps run the lumber operation at 44112 Rieth Road, said this was the second loader the business lost to fire in a month. He described the event as "horrible" for his family's business and said he could not talk further.

Pendleton Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo said no one was harmed in the fire, but the large piece of equipment was a total loss.

Pendleton fire received the call-out at 2:21 p.m. for a fire in the lumber yard. Ciraulo said flames totally engulfed the loader, which was leaking large quantities of fuel that also caught fire. Containing the blaze took some effort, he said, and required the use of the department's foam-spraying truck.

Once the fire was out, he said, crews continued to make sure spilled fuel did not re-ignite. He also said the department



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A Pendleton firefighter attempts to put out a fire on a burning log loader at Blue Mountain Lumber Products on Wednesday in Rieth.

notified the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality because of the fuel, and the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Crews making progress on Gibbon Fire

Juntura Complex Fire reaches 24,301 acres

East Oregonian

The Gibbon Fire, burning in the Blue Mountains east of Pendleton, is now 20 percent contained as crews worked Tuesday to strengthen fire lines.

Lightning touched off the blaze earlier this week, and it has since increased to 194 acres near Meacham Creek and Stumbough Ridge. It is spread out between the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Umatilla National Forest in steep, rugged terrain. Approximately 60 people are battling the fire.

Light rain fell over the area Tuesday, but warmer, drier weather is expected to set in for the rest of the week. Crews will attempt to conduct a burn back on the fire's north side to draw the flames onto safer ground for firefighters. Mop-up will also continue along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

In other Eastern Oregon fires (information from InciWeb):

- Juntura Complex — The region's largest fire complex has reached 24,301 acres as of Wednesday morning. It is made up of three fires burning near the Malheur River between Vale and Burns, all of which were started Aug. 7 by lightning. The Simmons Gulch Fire,

located approximately 30 miles west of Vale, is now 60 percent contained; the Sheep Rock Fire, six miles south of Juntura, is 50 percent contained; and the Rooster Comb Fire, near Easterday Reservoir, is 95 percent contained. There are 431 personnel on the complex, though crews are expected to be scaled back as containment increases. The fire is burning in rangeland and sage grouse habitat.

- Rail Fire — Located five miles west of Unity in Baker County, the blaze has grown to 11,405 acres and remains 10 percent contained. Fire lines have been completed along roadsides and in strategic areas where containment can be safely achieved. There are 768 people, 25 crews, 10 dozers, 30 engines, 19 water tenders and 7 helicopters are assigned to the fire. The cause has not been determined.

- Durkee Complex — Made up of multiple lightning-sparked fires in Baker County, near Interstate 84 west of Durkee. Together, they total 850 acres and are 75 percent contained.

The Umatilla National Forest advises there is a chance for more thunderstorms, including dry storms, in the forecast for this weekend. To report additional fires, call Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch at 541-963-7171 or dial 9-1-1.

HERMISTON

Police arrest three burglary suspects

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Hermiston police tracked down three suspects Tuesday who are connected to two recent burglaries.

Jose Antonio Rosales, 20, of Umatilla, Whitney Shay Sickler, 25, of Hermiston, and Hector Alejandro Ortiz-Guizar, 28, of Hermiston, are all in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

Rosales faces initial charges of two counts of identity theft, two counts of credit card fraud, one count of first-degree burglary, one count of third-degree theft, and possession of methamphetamine.

A Hermiston woman on July 31 told police she was asleep in her residence at 1280 W. Ridgeway Ave., Apt. B when someone entered and took her purse containing credit cards and bank cards. Police did not find latent fingerprints, according to Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston, but photographed shoe prints outside the window.

She then found someone used her bank card at three Hermiston locations — the Wal-Mart Supercenter, a Shell station and McDonald's. Edmiston reported an officer viewed security video at one establishment and recognized Rosales from a recent traffic stop.

Police found Rosales at about 5:20 p.m. Tuesday, arrested him on probable cause and took him to

the police department for questioning. During the interview, according to the report, he confessed to the burglary and other charges. He also had a glass pipe in his right front pocket with a "burnt/white powdery residue" that he claimed he was holding for a friend.

Police put Sickler and Guizar at the scene of a July 24 burglary at a vacant rental home at 265 N.W. Fifth St., Hermiston. The report states someone entered through an unlocked front window and stole cleaning supplies, tools and a mirror worth a total of \$475.

Police photographed shoe and tire prints at the scene, and a next-door neighbor told officers she saw two people about 4 a.m. leave the house. She identified one as Sickler.

Hermiston police eventually found and arrested Whitney Sickler, 25, at her home at 253 W. Ridgeway Ave., Hermiston, according to the report, and during questioning she identified Guizar of 260 W. Ridgeway Ave., Apt. B, Hermiston, as the man at the scene with her.

Police contacted Guizar, the report states, and he admitted to being inside the residence with Sickler. They face charges of first-degree burglary and second-degree theft.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

PENDLETON

New councilors consider conflicts between jobs and elected office

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The Pendleton City Council's 2017 freshman class has an unusual quality.

All three men elected to their first term — Scott Fairley, Dale Primmer and Paul Chalmers — hold high-level positions with Umatilla County or state government.

Fairley, Primmer and Chalmers all have dealings with the Pendleton city government in their professional capacities and each of them has considered how they will approach ethical conflicts in the next four years.

Although he was only elected in May and will join the council in January, Fairley might have the most experience dealing with conflicts of interest.

Fairley is the Eastern Oregon coordinator for the governor's office of regional solutions, meaning he helps facilitate economic development projects in the region.

Fairley and his office have helped with Pendleton projects before, including the city's efforts to demolish the defunct Blue Mountain Recovery Center and use the bare land for potential industrial use.

But Fairley also has been long involved in Pendleton politics, serving on the planning and airport



Chalmers



Fairley



Primmer

commissions.

When faced with a potential conflict of interest on one of the commissions, Fairley has typically stated the conflict before proceeding with a vote if he determines that he will make no financial gain from his action.

That process is in accordance with Oregon law.

According to the Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission's guide for public officials, the state has two different definitions of conflict of interest.

A potential conflict of interest could have an impact on the personal finances of an elected official, a relative or an associated business.

The official must announce the conflict prior to taking any action, including voting or abstaining, but otherwise is allowed to participate.

As the regional coordinator, Fairley said he doesn't control a budget, instead connecting cities and

counties with state resources from other departments.

Fairley said he wants to use his economic development experience to aid the city, but not at the expense of muddling the line between his job and his council position.

Councilor Paul Chalmers, the Umatilla County director of assessment and taxation, has also run into conflict issues since being appointed to the council in February. His name will appear on the November ballot, but it's more or less a formality because his opponent Jim Swearingen has said he's no longer interested in the position.

Noting his administrative duties with Pendleton's enterprise zone, Chalmers abstained from voting on a resolution to establish the

city as an "E-Commerce" zone at a July 5 meeting.

While most of Chalmers' other dealings with Pendleton include budget resolutions and inputting tax data, he said he ran on a platform of integrity and transparency and doesn't want to cast any doubt on his motivations.

Chalmers will be joined by another county director when the council holds its first meeting in January.

Primmer leads Umatilla County's community justice program, which oversees post-incarceration supervision.

While Primmer doesn't expect his job to intersect with city business too often — community justice regularly works with the Pendleton Police Department and coordinates work crew opportunities with the city — he wants to draw "a clear, bright line" between his job with the county and his role on the city council.

Primmer plans to consult with the city attorney and other staff when potential conflicts arise.

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

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