

Gibbon Fire grows after burnout

Durkee Complex
Fire 75 percent
contained

East Oregonian

The lightning-sparked Gibbon Fire continues to grow in the Blue Mountains east of Pendleton, though that's due in part to burnout operations meant to give firefighters room to operate.

The blaze is now 266 acres and 30 percent contained. It is burning in steep and rugged terrain near Meacham Creek and Stumbough Ridge, spread between the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Umatilla National Forest. Crews are conducting back burns to draw the fire into areas where crews can remain safe on the ground.

There are now 60 personnel assigned to the fire, including two hand crews, four engines and one helicopter. Warmer, drier weather is in the forecast, which could lend to more active fire behavior through the weekend. Dry thunderstorms are also possible for Sunday.

In other fire updates:

- Juntura Complex — Three fires make up the Juntura Complex between Vale and Burns, all of



Contributed photo

Firefighters work to contain the Gibbon Fire in the Blue Mountains east of Pendleton.

which are showing higher levels of containment. The Simmons Gulch Fire, which has reached 11,362 acres, is 70 percent contained; the Sheep Rock Fire, at 12,783 acres is 60 percent contained; and the Rooster Comb Fire, at 156 acres, is 95 percent contained. Lightning started the complex on Aug. 7. Crews are working to mop up hot spots, and will slowly be peeled off the line as containment is achieved.

- Rail Fire — At last count, the Rail Fire near Unity remains at 11,503 acres and 10 percent containment. More than 700 people are battling the fire, burning in a mix of timber and grasslands. The cause has not been determined.
- Durkee Complex — Several fires were touched off by lighting in Baker County west of Durkee near Interstate 84. The blazes are 75 percent contained after spreading

over 850 acres. A Type 3 firefighting team is expected to transition management back to the Bureau of Land Management's Vale District on Friday, and redeploy to the Juntura Complex by Saturday.

For more information on local fires, visit www.bluemountainfireinfo.blogspot.com. To report a fire, call the Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center at 541-963-7171 or dial 9-1-1.



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Officials cut the ribbon on a new electric vehicle charging station in Condon. From left: Mayor Jim Hassing; CBEC Board Secretary Roy Carlson; CBEC Assistant Operations Manager Josh Coiner; CBEC Staff Accountant Debbie Lankford; Gilliam County Judge Steve Shaffer; and K'Lynn Lane with the Condon Chamber of Commerce.

Electric cars get jolt in rural Oregon

Charging stations built in four cities

By GEORGE PLAVEN
East Oregonian

It takes a lot of miles behind the wheel to reach some of Eastern Oregon's most breathtaking sights, like the John Day Fossil Beds or Journey Through Time Scenic Byway.

That can be a problem for drivers of electric cars, who risk being stranded if there isn't a charging station available for long trips. The phenomenon, known as range anxiety, might discourage some travelers from hitting the road to explore remote destinations across the state.

project came in at \$56,074, though they secured more than \$16,000 in tax credits from the Oregon Department of Energy and another \$10,000 in cash and in-kind contributions from local chambers, city councils and county courts.

That brought the cost down to \$7,410 per unit. Stations will be serviced through a five-year contract with Charge Point, a vendor based in Portland.

"Our motivation was to be kind of a pioneer for this," Lankford said.

Stations are located in Lone near the city park; in Heppner at the library on North Main Street; in Condon outside the co-op offices on South Main Street; and in Fossil near the Wheeler County Fairgrounds. Public charging stations can also be found in Arlington, Mitchell, Dayville, John Day and Prairie City, according to PlugShare.

The chargers will be promoted by Travel Oregon and Drive Oregon, Lankford added.

"It is our hope that by installing these four stations, we will help in some way with the connectivity of the east side of the state for electric car owners," the co-op recently announced. "It will provide another location for them to charge while heading east."

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

HERMISTON

Homebuilding program lands students jobs

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Real-world experience is already translating into real-world jobs for teenagers involved in the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding Program.

High school students in the program, which is about to enter its third year, spend the school year constructing a state-of-the-art home under the supervision of mentors from the construction industry. So far at least six students have been hired by industry partners impressed by their work.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Carlos Hernandez gets ready to clean up tools from a restoration project by O So Kleen, where he was hired for a summer job after catching the eye of owner Dave Smith during the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding Project.

one of the best programs you can have," he said.

Randy Multon of Mr. Insulation said Cody Boggs worked with one of his employees on the first student-built home in 2014-2015 and afterward that employee recommended him to Multon for an open position at the company. Boggs, who graduated in 2015, has worked for Mr. Insulation for about a year.

"Now he's doing jobs by himself," Multon said.

He said he is always grateful to find someone interested in installing insulation, because it's a job a lot of people won't do because the insulation irritates their skin too much.

Carlos Hernandez, who will return to the student homebuilding program as a high school senior this fall, lucked into a summer job with O So Kleen through his involvement with the

program.

O So Kleen, which repairs smoke and water damage in addition to cleaning, isn't an official industry partner with the homebuilding program, but owner Dave Smith is on the school board and got to know Hernandez while interacting with the homebuilders in that capacity. He was impressed with the young man's detail-oriented approach to trim work on the student-built home and offered him a job doing home restoration work all summer, including trim around windows and doors.

Hernandez said that type of cosmetic work was his favorite part of building a home.

"It's what people see when they walk in the house," he said.

He said O So Kleen was a fun summer job, and he enjoyed the chance to try working without a teacher

or mentor constantly looking over his shoulder.

"It's a great opportunity to take what I've been learning and put it to work," he said.

Smith said he was impressed with the quality of Hernandez's work as he watched him work on the student-built home.

"I saw Carlos's enthusiasm, and I had some work to do this summer," Smith said. "I saw his skill level and motivation. He's enthusiastic and very safety-conscious."

Jason Knutz of Inland Plumbing hired Drex Bailey after he graduated from high school, and Bailey recently got accepted as a plumbing apprentice. Knutz said he enjoyed being an industry partner for the program and working with students like Bailey who are "eager to learn."

"I have no doubt the experience was good for him," he said.

Curt Berger, who runs the program for Hermiston School District, said he always impresses upon the students that their work in the homebuilding class is being observed by more than 20 local employers over the course of the year.

"I tell them, 'We're on a job interview every day out there,'" he said. "The person watching you could hire you next summer."

Students from Hermiston, Umatilla and Stanfield will be building a third home in the Fieldstone subdivision during the upcoming school year.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Because of the wonderful people in our community, we were able to have the experience of a lifetime at the West Regional Little League Softball Tournament in San Bernardino, CA

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

10:00am ----- 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

20ft Water Slide

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firstfoodsfestival@ctuir.org

PENDLETON ROUND-UP™

NATIONAL ANTHEM TRYOUTS

Auditions to sing the National Anthem for the 2016 Pendleton Round Up will be held on August 15th at 6pm in front of the North Grandstands. Please arrive early to sign in and be prepared to sing the National Anthem. Full information on the selection process will be available at the audition. You will be considered for both the PBR and the Pendleton Round Up events.

For more information call 541-276-2553

or stop by the Round-Up & Happy Canyon

Office in the Hall of Fame Bldg.

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