

PENDLETON

FAA authorizes UAS range to fly higher

East Oregonian

The Federal Aviation Administration just gave the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range its competitive advantage back.

The range announced Thursday that the FAA has granted Pendleton authorization to fly large drones as high as 9,999 feet, day or night, as long as they remain in visual line of sight of the operator.

The authorization covers all 14,000 square miles of the range and applies to both small drones and UAS weighing more than 55 pounds.

"It's definitely a unique

differentiator," Steve Chrisman, airport manager and economic development director, said in an interview.

While local officials had originally talked about the Pendleton UAS Range as a regional monopoly, it lost a key advantage when the FAA announced it was opening up commercial drone flight to all qualified pilots as long as they used a drone that weighed under 55 pounds and flew under 400 feet.

Chrisman said Friday's FAA authorization reflected the niche the range is trying to establish, as a place where companies can fly more

complex drone operations.

Chrisman added that the airport's runway and control tower make it an attractive site for businesses that wanted to test larger unmanned aircraft.

The FAA also ruled that companies that have already been authorized to fly their vehicles elsewhere can have that authorization transferred to Pendleton without needing to reapply.

The Pendleton UAS Range was approved by the FAA in late 2013 and has since attracted a small stable of clients, including the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.



EO file photo

In this Aug. 18 file photo, Gary Licquia, mapping products account manager for RDO Equipment, throws a Sensefly eBee agricultural drone into the air during a demonstration at the Drone Rodeo east of Stanfield.

HEPPNER

State recognizes Morrow-Grant OHV Park

ATV program celebrates 30 years

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
East Oregonian

Oregon State Parks celebrated the 30th anniversary of its all-terrain vehicle program by honoring some of the most successful projects for four-wheelers across the state.

Program officials gathered Thursday at the Morrow-Grant OHV Park south of Heppner, where they presented a plaque to Morrow County Parks and spent the afternoon riding the trails.

The park, which opened in 2003, features 300 miles of ATV trails spread over 8,200 acres straddling Morrow and Grant counties. The initial land acquisition was paid for by grants that were funded by permit sales and money appropriated from the state gas tax.

Ron Price, ATV coordinator for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, said their goal is to provide as much access to motorized recreation as possible. The idea started as a grassroots effort to obtain more money for ATV trails and maintenance.

"It would allow (riders) to develop more sites, and maintain what they had," Price said.

Price said the department typically receives \$9-\$10 million per biennium for ATVs. Local groups can apply for grants to pay for everything from buying new land to grooming existing trails. There are approximately 70 applications that will be up for review in February, Price said.



Photo contributed by Kirsti Cason.

Oregon State Parks presents the Morrow-Grant OHV Park with an award Thursday to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the state ATV grant program. From left: Tim Custer, ATV advisory committee member; Burke O'Brien, Morrow County public works director; and Ron Price, ATV program coordinator.

"We take pride in what we do with our park system. It's nice to be recognized, because everybody has put a lot of work in on that park."

— **Greg Close**, Morrow County Parks operations manager

Morrow County used ATV grants to purchase the land that would become the Morrow-Grant OHV Park from Kinzua Lumber. Today, the area is home to a variety of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities, including roughly 70 camp sites, hiking trails, fishing ponds and a playground for children.

The site also has a seasonal restaurant, rental cabins and emergency medical services available on site.

Greg Close, operations manager for Morrow County

Parks, said the OHV park typically draws more than 30,000 visitors a year from all over the Northwest. And that means economic development for the neighboring towns.

"A lot of people are stopping for fuel, they're stopping at the store, they're buying new tires and equipment ... there's quite an impact that hits this area," Close said.

Close said they have a core group of volunteers that work year-round to keep the park in good shape. Between private land and

Forest Service closures, he said it can be difficult for ATV riders to find a place to recreate.

"We take pride in what we do with our park system," he said. "It's nice to be recognized, because everybody has put a lot of work in on that park."

The Oregon ATV program honored Riley Ranch near Coos Bay in June and the Mount Emily Recreation Area in July. Price said four-wheeling is another way for Oregonians to get out and explore, and all three parks provide some of the best opportunities.

"Believe me, it was a hard choice," Price said. "All three of these are just really going like they should."

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

BRIEFLY

Oregon Real Estate Board elects Jef Farley as vice chair

PENDLETON — Jef Farley of Pendleton was recently elected to serve as vice chairman of the Oregon Real Estate Board.

The board, which has nine members, is appointed by the governor to oversee operations of the Real Estate Agency. Seven members are from the real estate industry and two are public members.

Farley is in his second four-year term on the board. He began his career in 1991 with Lutz Snyder and Co. in Portland. He went to work for Whitney and Associates in 1994. He is now an owner of Coldwell Banker Whitney and Associates and is active in listing and selling residential and commercial properties.

For more about the board, visit www.oregon.gov/rea.



Farley

Three running for Hermiston City Council, deadline to file is Tuesday

HERMISTON — The deadline to file for Hermiston City Council is Tuesday, and so far only three candidates have filed for the four at-large seats up for election in November.

Incumbents Manuel Gutierrez, Doug Primmer and Rod Hardin have filed for re-election, while John Kirwan has not.

Hermiston has four city councilors who represent zones of the city and four at-large members that can live anywhere within the city. For the at-large seats, any number of candidates can enter the race and the top four vote-getters during the Nov. 8 election will be awarded the four open seats.

Terms are four years. Candidates must be a qualified voter of the state, not a city employee or candidate for another city position, and must have lived in the city for at least one year prior.

Filing forms and manuals are available at city hall or on the Secretary of State's website at sos.oregon.gov. They must be returned to the city recorder by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 30 at city hall, 180 N.E. Second St., in Hermiston.

BMCC orientation coming to Pendleton

PENDLETON — New students to Blue Mountain Community College can register now for the "Welcome to the Pack" new student orientation.

Welcome to the Pack will be Friday, Sept. 23 at the BMCC campus in Pendleton.

This is an opportunity for students to meet faculty and staff, take a sample class, locate classes on campus, and learn about BMCC resources and programs.

There will also be activities and opportunities to meet and mingle with other new students.

A free lunch will be provided along with opportunities to win scholarships, a tablet and other prizes.

Orientation runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and students can begin checking in at 9:30 a.m.

Registration is available by logging onto the student Wolf Web account. Call 541-278-5853 with questions or visit www.bluecc.com for more information.

Pendleton school open houses on Sept. 8

PENDLETON — Middle and high school students will begin school in Pendleton on Monday, while elementary students won't start until Sept. 19 because of final construction work on both Sherwood Heights and Washington schools.

Open houses at all schools will be Thursday, Sept. 8, with Pendleton Early Learning Center, McKay Creek Elementary and Pendleton High School from 4-6 p.m., Washington Elementary from 5-7 p.m. and Sherwood Heights Elementary from 6-8 p.m.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com. Submit community news 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.

UMATILLA

District to hold public meetings on bond

\$10.5M would add new roofs and increase security

East Oregonian

Umatilla voters will be asked to consider a \$10.5 million school bond in November.

If voters approve the bond the Umatilla School District will also receive \$4 million in matching state funds from the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program.

At all three schools in the district the funds would pay for roof replacements, entry and office remodeling to increase security, direct digital controls for the HVAC systems and security updates such as cameras and lock-



EO Media Group file photo

This 2014 file photo shows Umatilla High School. The Umatilla School District is asking voters to consider a \$10.5 million bond in November to help improve all three schools in the district.

down assistance.

The funds would also pay for additional space to be added on to McNary Heights Elementary School, a cooling tower replacement at Umatilla High School and plumbing,

electrical, HVAC, window, flooring and bleacher replacement at Clara Brownell Middle School.

The bond package was put together after the school district contracted with the

Wenaha Group to conduct a facility study and create a long-term facility plan. The study is available for review at the school district office, 1001 Sixth Street in Umatilla.

The district is holding public bond information meetings and tours of the school buildings starting at Clara Brownell Middle School at 7 p.m. every Tuesday in September.

"We want to give our community many opportunities to learn all they can about our current school facilities and what the bond can accomplish, if it passes," Superintendent Heidi Sipe said in a news release. "We are excited to share our vision and plans."

For more information about the bond, contact the district office at 541-922-6500.

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HERITAGE STATION
The Umatilla County Historical Society Museum

HERITAGE LUNCHEON 2016

A Walk Through Oregon

KERRY TYMCHUK • Executive Director
Oregon Historical Society
Saturday • October 1st • 12-2 pm
Pendleton Convention Center

\$40 UCHS MEMBERS • **\$50 GENERAL PUBLIC**

Tickets available at Heritage Station Museum & Pendleton Book Company