

## Quick takes

### Speed-enforcement cameras absent — for now — in EO

Why do government and people depend so much on technology? Can't people do the work anymore?

— Kevin Linn

I would question the legality of these. You have the right to face your accuser. If a police officer isn't observing you speeding there is no witness to the violation. Therefore should be considered hearsay and thrown out.

— Monique Waine

I may not be able to visit anymore. Won't be able to afford the tickets.

— Diana Hayes Henning

### Vet receives overdue medals

He got it! Finally! He's a sweet man! I've known them for a while. This has been such a long time coming!

— Ashley Haapla

I'm grateful for his service to our country. Thank you for my freedom sir!

— Jason Bethel

### Pendleton's Carnegie Library celebrates its centennial

The basement is haunted!

— Marvin Williams

I used to work in this library, in the basement where we would pull a certain amount of books to send out to rural libraries. It was a fun, afterschool job!

— Tera Tolar

One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim\_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.

## Why east Umatilla Co. needs redrawn ambulance district

By ELIZABETH MCINTYRE

Friends of the East Umatilla County Health District

The East Umatilla County Health District wants to serve the citizens of the east county with professional ambulance services. The board has decided to put forward two ballot measures (30-120 and 30-122) to voters for the November election.

The board believes that passing these measures, which will call for the redistricting of the tax area and increased funding (\$1 per \$1,000 of assessed value), is the best approach to providing timely and professional care for the district's medical emergencies for many years to come. Both ballot measures must pass in order for the continuation of emergency services in the area.

#### History

The East County Health District was formed in 1988 and was allowed to receive dollars from what is known as the Athena-Weston School District boundary. The EUCHD has the responsibility to provide service to what is known as ambulance service area 5. ASA-5 includes a large portion of the area encompassing the cities of Athena, Weston, Helix and Adams, as well as the Tollgate area. That's a much larger area than the school district boundary.

For those who live in rural areas where access to hospitals and clinics are miles away, and with the increase of aging populations, better local medical care allows people to have access to consistent emergency care.

As a result, people are then able to stay in their homes longer, enjoy a better quality of life, and live securely in the knowledge that competent, compassionate and timely care is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Although this enhances livability, it also

puts pressure on the local EMS services. For example, ambulance personnel and equipment are needed to help on lift assists and to assess and treat minor injuries that do not require transport.

#### The reality

Current levels of staffing do not meet the needs of a 24/7 service. Additional ambulance personnel must be hired to provide needed coverage while a volunteer force continues to be developed.

Additional money is needed to bring our services to the level necessary to be truly considered ambulance providers.

Ambulances must be outfitted with state and/or federally approved equipment. Upgrading and replacing that equipment costs money, but is necessary for providing efficient and appropriate care.

Ambulances must be maintained. Replacing ambulances are expenses that must be budgeted for.

#### The ballot measures

As the board and administrator reviewed the current boundary lines, they found overlap in some Umatilla County taxing areas, while other areas were not covered by any service at all. With the redistricting measures, these discrepancies will be resolved. The board believes in being transparent and honest and this is the first step in communicating with voters concerning where the services are going and who is paying for them. The new district boundaries will improve our areas of service.

Ballot Measure 30-122 concerns the dissolution of the current district which by law has to happen before the reformation can take place.

Ballot Measure 30-120 will ask voters to approve the formation of the new district and change the permanent tax rate from the current 14 cents per \$1,000 assessed value to \$1 per \$1,000.

Until the ballot measures pass, the

district will continue to be covered and mutual aid agreements will continue to stay in place.

#### What are the end results?

There is peace of mind in knowing that quality and efficient care is available only minutes away. When accidents, illness, and traumas occur, our families, friends and communities can be assured that emergency services appropriate to meet any need, will respond quickly and with the equipment needed to save lives. Additionally, all those who are within the new district will be paying for essential services that make our communities stronger, safer and more livable.

If the ballot measures pass, changes in the ambulance board become necessary. A new board of directors will be needed to lead the health district. These will be at-large positions, but it is our hope that all four cities will put forward people to serve.

Money from a levy passed by voters in 2015 will expire in 2020. The current board feels that it is sensible to use these dollars in conjunction with the new tax dollars to ensure the ambulances are ready to roll when emergencies happen. As expenses continue to increase, and this is seen frequently in healthcare, it is prudent to continue to use these funds to replace ambulances.

It is economically prudent for the citizens of East Umatilla County to redistrict and raise our permanent tax base. Our region is a beautiful place to live — let's continue to work to make it a prosperous and safe place to live as well.

#### What can I do?

When the ballots come in the mail, please vote yes on ballot measure 30-122 and 30-120.

Elizabeth McIntyre is a member of the Friends of East Umatilla County Health District/Medic 400.



### What patients take to feel better...



### What drug companies take to feel better...



## Take another look at prisons

By Kenosha (Wis.) News

The U.S. Justice Department announced Thursday that it would phase out the use of private prisons because they don't provide the same level of correctional services and don't save substantially on costs.

The decision will affect only a small percentage of the nation's prisoners — unless it is a signal of other reforms to come. If states would also phase out the use of private prisons, for example, it would affect a lot more people.

Even that, however, wouldn't affect Wisconsin. It (like Oregon) is one of the minority of states that does not have privately operated prisons.

Nevertheless, a signal from any level of government that something about prisons needs to change is welcome. In our view too many people are incarcerated, and the costs, both fiscal and social, are unnecessarily high.

A recent report from the U.S. Department of Education pointed out that Wisconsin, like most states, had increased state and local per-capita spending on corrections at a far higher rate than per-pupil spending on education over the last 35 years.

Wisconsin spends far more than neighboring Minnesota on its corrections system, even though the two states have similar populations.

Wisconsin also spends more than its other neighboring states.

The Wisconsin Budget Project reported that in 2013 Wisconsin's state and local spending on corrections amounted to \$259 per capita. The comparable numbers for other states were Michigan \$252, Minnesota \$163, Illinois \$157 and Iowa \$152.

There is also the social cost to consider. Incarcerating so many people has a bad effect on families and neighborhoods. This was brought to light dramatically by Laura Kaeppler of Kenosha when she was named Miss America in 2012. She made mentoring children of incarcerated parents — a subject she could discuss from her own experience — her personal platform.

Right now, there are more than 22,000 people in Wisconsin state prisons, according to the Department of Corrections, plus hundreds if not thousands more in county jails. There are huge costs associated with incarcerating so many people — direct costs to taxpayers, but also costs to families and society.

There are other ways of coping with crime and criminals, and other states are using some of them. Minnesota, for example, has half the number of people incarcerated as Wisconsin.

The federal government just initiated a small reform. Let's hope states follow the lead.

## The Park Service's messy birthday bash

By PAUL LARMER

Writers on the Range

For most of us, birthdays are happy occasions, when friends and family pay fond attention, lavishing us with gifts to prove that we are loved and valued. For one day, our foibles are accepted with a smile, or at least diplomatically ignored.

The National Park Service's 100th birthday this August has been less joyful. In fact, anyone paying attention to the news might think that the proud agency, which oversees 412 units across more than 80 million acres, has had its centennial celebration ruined by a series of uncomfortable revelations.

In January, the Interior Department's Office of Inspector General released a report detailing two decades of sexual harassment by boatmen in the Grand Canyon's river district and the failure of senior officials to adequately respond. In March, the agency abolished the river district and announced that it would increase sexual harassment training and conduct an agency-wide survey to ascertain how widespread the problem is.

Then, in February, Chief Jon Jarvis was reprimanded by his bosses at Interior for publishing a book on the parks through a private company without federal approval.

Meanwhile, the Park Service remains hobbled by byzantine bureaucratic policies that have contributed to its struggle to hire a workforce that reflects the nation's racial diversity, despite decades of "we're-on-it" rhetoric. Today, 83 percent of its 23,000 employees are white, no more racially diverse than it was a decade ago.

The agency also lacks an adequate funding base, not only to maintain current operations, but to address the crumbling, neglected infrastructure at parks around the country.

Annual appropriations from Congress, which make up about 88 percent of its roughly \$3 billion budget, declined 8 percent between 2005 and 2014 after adjusting for inflation, according to a December report from the Government Accountability Office.

The funding crisis is so bad that the agency is considering corporate sponsorships, a move that has some worried that "America's Best Idea" will end up auctioned off to the highest bidder: Arches National Park brought to you by

McDonalds.

It's enough bad news that some park officials probably wish that they'd planned a low-key event at some remote park in, say, South Dakota, rather than the yearlong media-saturated, Subaru-sponsored celebration that is keeping the agency in the public eye.

But I'm glad the Park Service went big on its centennial, and I'm even glad that its dirty laundry is getting an airing. After all, birthdays are more than just celebrations; they're also a time for reflection and redirection. The fact that we are having such deep, passionate discussions about our national parks and their problems is proof that they are loved and that they matter.

Besides, there are some bright spots: The agency continues to lead the way in helping us understand how climate change effects ecological systems; over the past five years, its new climate response program has studied climate change impacts on national parks from Acadia in Maine to American Samoa in the Pacific.

Director Jarvis has also convened a panel of independent scientists, who in a report called Revisiting Leopold, urge the agency to stop trying to preserve each park as a "vignette of primitive America" and "act immediately, boldly and decisively" to prepare for volatile conditions, including severe wet seasons and deep droughts. That is forward thinking all land agencies need to embrace.

And the Park Service has expanded its vision beyond protecting gorgeous landscapes to embracing parks and monument, some brand new, that spotlight America's unique cultural heritage in all its remarkable, complex and occasionally ugly glory. Places like Cesar Chavez National Monument in California's Central Valley and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park in Maryland.

The centennial may not go down in history as the Park Service's happiest birthday celebration ever, but hopefully it was the most memorable and transformative one. We can all raise a glass to that.

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