

BRIEFLY

Lost hunter found near Ukiah

UKIAH — Umatilla County Search and Rescue located a missing hunter early Tuesday morning in the Blue Mountains near Ukiah. Virgil Thompson, 85, of Portland, was reported missing by his son at about 10 p.m. Monday after he did not arrive at their designated meeting location earlier in the evening. Search and Rescue personnel found Thompson roughly four hours later, a mile and a half away from where he was supposed to meet his hunting party. Thompson was disoriented, but not injured. He did not have a map, compass or GPS. He was able to build a fire to keep himself warm. Search and Rescue escorted Thompson back to his hunting camp.

Driver for refuge occupier an informant

PORTLAND (AP) — An Oregon State Police trooper testified a government informant was driving Ammon Bundy when the Oregon standoff leader was arrested on his way to a community meeting north of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Trooper Jeremiah Beckert said Wednesday that informant Mark McConnell alerted police that Bundy and other occupiers were traveling Jan. 26 and provided their location. Beckert then described the ensuing traffic stop and arrests. He said he did not see what happened to Robert "LaVoy" Fincum, the occupation spokesman shot by police after fleeing the stop. U.S. District Judge Anna Brown warned attorneys not bring up the circumstances of the Fincum shooting in front of jurors. When it was mentioned, she told jurors this trial is not about the Fincum shooting. Bundy and six co-defendants are charged with conspiring to impede federal officers from doing their jobs at the wildlife refuge.

Brown says big budget cuts coming without Measure 97

By PARIS ACHEN Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — Gov. Kate Brown Wednesday defended her decision to support a corporate sales tax measure as the only viable alternative to deep cuts at state agencies and rollbacks to recent education and health care investments. Deciding to endorse Measure 97 "truly was the most difficult decision I have ever made during my time in office," Brown said. The measure would levy a 2.5 percent gross receipts tax on certain corporations' Oregon sales exceeding \$25 million and would represent the largest tax increase in the state's history. It would raise \$3 billion a year. Voters will decide whether to pass the measure in the Nov. 8 election. Brown made the comments during a full-house meeting of the Portland Business Alliance, in an appearance that one businessman described as walking into a "lion's den."

The alliance of nearly 1,900 businesses — similar to a chamber of commerce — has come out against the corporate sales tax measure and has dedicated much of its homepage to campaigning against the tax measure. Brown said Oregonians have for too long been paying more than their fair share for the cost of state services, and it's time to increase corporations' contribution. Opponents have focused on studies that show consumers would pay for much of the cost of the tax. The typical Oregon family would see their costs climb by about \$600 in the form of higher prices and job opportunities, according to an estimate by the nonpartisan Legislative Revenue Office. Economists disagree on the exact impact the tax will have on consumers, Brown noted. However, the alliance's vehement resistance to the tax proves that corporations won't be passing all of the cost onto consumers, she argued. Brown claimed Measure 97 is the only viable alternative to keep the state's existing investments in early child education, full-day kindergarten, college and university tuition grants and expansions in health care coverage. Yet the governor took no action during the February legislative session when state lawmakers proposed more moderate alternatives to the tax. Our Oregon, a union-backed advocacy group, developed the tax measure through the state's initiative petition process. "I don't see the initiative process as the best way to make public policy," Brown said. Describing the process as "blunt instrument," the governor said she believes lawmakers would need to make statutory changes to improve the law, if voters approve it. She said she would involve the business community in any process designed to modify the tax measure. Without the tax, an estimated \$1.35 billion shortfall in 2017-19 would force state agencies to trim their budgets by 10 percent, Brown said. "That is just untenable for me," she said.

Vapor may slow emptying of Hanford tanks

RICHLAND, Wash. (AP) — New deadlines for emptying some Hanford nuclear waste tanks might not be met if the government takes steps to better protect workers from chemical vapors. The Department of Energy requested that its tanks contractor look at the potential impact of a union demand that workers use air respirators not only within the boundaries of Hanford tank farms, but also in an expanded area of 200 feet beyond tank farm fences. As a result, contractor Washington River Protection Solutions concluded that emptying nuclear waste from five leak-prone tanks may not be completed until 2021 instead of in 2020. The DOE has notified the Washington State Department of Ecology of the possible issue with deadlines "in the spirit of cooperation and transparency," Kevin Smith, DOE Office of River Protection manager at Hanford, said in a letter sent last week. The state of Washington regulates Hanford tank waste and is a plaintiff in the lawsuit that led to the consent decree. "The federal government is offering more excuses," state Attorney General Bob Ferguson, said in a statement Tuesday. His staff said that he was speaking on his own behalf rather than in his role as the attorney for the Department of Ecology. A group estimated that an expanded vapor control area could add \$512 million to \$769 million in total costs.

reported Wednesday another nine tanks in two tank farms may not be emptied until March 2026 instead of 2024. The new deadlines were set by a federal judge six months ago after the 2010 court-enforced consent decree was revised because the DOE was unable to meet many of the remaining deadlines for emptying certain tanks and building a so-called vitrification plant to treat the waste for permanent disposal. Hanford has 56 million gallons of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste stored in 177 underground tanks from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program. The DOE has notified the Washington State

Department of Ecology of the possible issue with deadlines "in the spirit of cooperation and transparency," Kevin Smith, DOE Office of River Protection manager at Hanford, said in a letter sent last week. The state of Washington regulates Hanford tank waste and is a plaintiff in the lawsuit that led to the consent decree. "The federal government is offering more excuses," state Attorney General Bob Ferguson, said in a statement Tuesday. His staff said that he was speaking on his own behalf rather than in his role as the attorney for the Department of Ecology. A group estimated that an expanded vapor control area could add \$512 million to \$769 million in total costs.

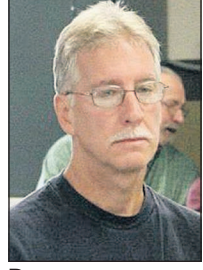
Court wants new release date for killer of John Day police officer

By STEVEN DUBOIS Associated Press

PORTLAND — An appeals court ruled Wednesday that the state parole board incorrectly rescinded the release of a logger who beat a John Day police officer to death with his fists and firewood nearly a quarter-century ago. The Oregon Court of Appeals also directed the parole board to reinstate the release date of Sidney Dean Porter, 56, who had been set to be freed in June 2013 before objections from then-Gov. John Kitzhaber and law enforcement officers led the board to reverse itself. Kristina Edmunson, a spokeswoman for Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, said the state is reviewing the court decision and has yet to decide whether to petition the Oregon Supreme Court for review. If the state declines to challenge the ruling, Porter could be released within a few months, said Andy Simrin, his attorney. In its ruling written by Judge Joel Devore, a Kitzhaber appointee, the appeals court said the parole board did not have a valid reason to rescind the release. Once a date is set, the law says the board can only postpone it if the prisoner engages in serious misconduct, has an inadequate

release plan or receives a psychological diagnosis that concludes he's a danger to the community. The board nixed Porter's parole just days before his release date and then conducted a new exit interview in September 2013. It found that Porter "suffers from a present severe emotional disturbance such as to constitute a danger to the health or safety of the community."

The Appeals Court said such a finding had to occur before the June 2013 release date. "After that release date had passed, it does not suffice to later find a reason to have postponed his release," the opinion states. Simrin said in a phone interview Wednesday that public outcry is not a valid reason for keeping his client in prison. "The board simply responded to letters from various concerned citizens, most of whom were law enforcement officers and one of whom was the governor of Oregon, all asking them to reconsider what they had done," he said. Authorities say Porter, who stands 6-foot-5 and weighs 225-pounds, was drunk when he killed Frank Ward in 1992 after the John Day police officer responded to a domestic violence call. The officer had a wife, daughter and twin 2-year-old sons.



Porter

Corrections

A woman was misidentified in an IA outline Wednesday. In the "House of Love" story, the woman pictured is Socorro Perez. The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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