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EAST OREGONIAN

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2016

140th Year, No. 260

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Your Weekend



- Echo Crazy Corn Maze & Haunt
- Oktoberfest Pendleton at Round-Up Grounds
- Northwest boxing invitational in Pendleton

For times and places see Coming Events, 5A

Weekend Weather

Fri	Sat	Sun
64/51	62/51	60/47

Watch a game



Hood River vs. Pendleton Friday, 7 p.m., at Pendleton

Zoning, hunting focus of wolf plan review

By GEORGE PLAIVEN
East Oregonian

Living with wolves remains a polarizing subject in Eastern Oregon as wildlife officials chug along with a five-year review of the state's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission heard from 53 people who testified during an informational hearing Friday, Oct. 7 at the Blue Mountain Conference Center in La Grande, highlighting some of the chief concerns for managing wolf packs into the future.

The first Oregon wolf plan was adopted in 2005, and since then the fledgling population has grown to a minimum of 110 wolves at the end of 2015. Russ Morgan, wolf program coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, said the agency

See WOLVES/10A

BOARDMAN



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Lighthouse Resources has abandoned their efforts to build a coal terminal at this spot at the Port of Morrow in Boardman. The Port of Morrow, however, is pursuing their efforts to build an export terminal on this site.

Coal company dumps Morrow Pacific Project

Port will continue appeal for dock

By GEORGE PLAIVEN
East Oregonian

After five years of development, Lighthouse Resources — the company formerly known as Ambre Energy North America — announced Thursday it is backing out of a \$242 million project that would have shipped 8 million tons of coal per year to Asia through an enclosed terminal at the Port of Morrow.

The port, however, is not giving up yet on building the dock and will continue to appeal Oregon's decision to reject a key permit needed for construction in the Columbia River.

Based in Salt Lake City, Lighthouse Resources owns two coal mines in the Powder River Basin, including the Decker Mine in Montana and Black Butte Mine in Wyoming. Lighthouse began working on the Morrow Pacific Project in 2011 as a way to reach Asian markets via the Pacific Northwest.

But in 2014, the Oregon Department of State Lands denied a remove-fill permit needed to build the Coyote Island Terminal at the Port of Morrow. According to the state's decision, the dock would have interfered with usual and accustomed



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

An buoy used by tribal fishers to anchor gill nets floats in the Columbia River off of the Port of Morrow in Boardman.

tribal fisheries.

Earlier this year, Lighthouse also gained full ownership of Millennium Bulk Terminals in Longview, Washington, which would ship roughly 48.5 million tons of coal. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement of the project, which is expected to generate more than 2,000 direct and indirect jobs.

In addition, Lighthouse started sending coal to South Korea earlier this month through Westshore Terminals in Vancouver, British Columbia. As a result, Lighthouse CEO Everett

King said the company has decided to move on from Morrow Pacific.

"Our ability to now ship to our customers in Asia allows us to achieve our short-term goals while we continue to focus on further long-term growth at Millennium," King said.

King said the decision made by the Department of State Lands was "unprecedented," and prevented Lighthouse from adding trade, jobs and economic development in Oregon.

See PORT/3A

"Our ability to now ship to our customers in Asia allows us to achieve our short-term goals while we continue to focus on further long-term growth at Millennium." — Everett King, Lighthouse CEO

What will it cost?

Measure 97 will affect businesses and consumers

By AMANDA PEACHER and JEFF MANNING
Oregon Public Broadcasting/
The Oregonian

Mile upon mile of golden stubble — the remains of this summer's wheat harvest — surround the tiny town of Moro in the high plains of north-central Oregon. The soft white wheat grown by nearly 900 area farmers is the region's economic engine.

That engine would soon sputter without Mid Columbia Producers Co-op. After harvest, the co-op steps in as the key connection between local growers and the global marketplace. Mid Columbia buys, stores and eventually sells the 12 million to 20 million bushels produced annually by its member growers.

This obscure and largely apolitical company finds itself near the center of the stormy debate over Measure 97, the initiative on this fall's ballot that would dramatically overhaul Oregon's tax structure and bring in a colossal \$3 billion a year to state government.

Proponents say proceeds from the new tax would end years of chronic shortfalls and funnel much-needed money to schools, seniors and social services. The new money would come from a corporate sector that is under-taxed relative to other states, they argue.

But Mid Columbia executives say their company would be crippled by the gross receipts tax created by Measure 97, a 2.5 percent levy on all sales in Oregon over \$25 million. Had the tax been in place in 2015, the company would have paid the state \$1.8 million, instead of just \$100,000. Rather than posting an annual profit of \$1.5 million, the co-op would have tumbled into the red.

Mid Columbia opened its books to *The Oregonian*/OregonLive and Oregon Public Broadcasting last month — one of the few businesses willing to do so — offering one of the most detailed looks yet at how the measure would affect businesses across the state.

While much about the tax remains in dispute, this much is clear: If you happen to be a

See BUSINESS/10A

BMCC administrator dies in crash with train

East Oregonian

A Blue Mountain Community College administrator died Wednesday after a train collided with his pickup at a crossing on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Toshihiko Murata, 53, was killed in the crash, according to a written statement Thursday morning from Chuck Sams, spokesperson for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

A report came into tribal dispatch Wednesday at about 5:30 p.m. that a Union

Pacific train collided with a white pickup at a crossing along River Road near Cayuse, according to Sams. The eastbound train carried the pickup nearly half a mile from the crossing.

Tribal Police and the Union Pacific Railroad are conducting the investigation.

Murata, who worked at Blue Mountain Community College as the Associate Vice President of Institution Effectiveness, had been on his way to the

college for a meeting of the BMCC Board of Education, according to BMCC President Camille Preus. Preus was downhearted Thursday morning as she reflected on Murata and his sudden death.

"He was a wonderful man," she said.

Preus has known both Murata and his wife Mary Jane Bagwell since they both worked for her in Salem when Preus served as the state director of the

Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. At BMCC, Murata was known for his deep dives into institutional data about student success. Bagwell is the college's director of college prep.

Preus said Murata and his wife had just signed papers on a new house on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. He had driven home to take care of a few things, she said, and was on his way back to the college. She described Murata as a meticulous "data guy."

"He was a person who

kept his own counsel," she said. "He was quiet. He spoke when he had something to offer."

BMCC Vice President of Public Relations Casey White-Zollman sent a message to college staff Thursday morning about Murata's accident.

"Toshihiko has been with BMCC for just under a year, but he has had a significant impact on the institution and our ability to better serve to provide better services to students," she wrote. "We are proud to call him a colleague and a friend. He will be greatly missed."



Murata



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