BRIEFLY

Tania Wildbill wins National Indian Health Board award for yoga studio

Wildbill

PENDLETON — Tania Wildbill, the founder of the first fitness studio on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, was awarded a Hero in Native Health local impact award from the National Indian Health Board in September.

Through her Wellness Wave studio, Wildbill hosts workshops where Tribal members can practice yoga and meditation and, according to the award presentation, "has created a studio that Tribal members consider to be a sacred space to retreat and exercise."

Wildbill, who is not a Tribal member, was one of 24 recipients of the national award. She was recognized at the NIHB's annual conference in Phoenix, Arizona on Sept. 21.

Cayuse Technologies celebrates 10 years

MISSION — The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation invites the public to help celebrate the 10th anniversary of Cayuse Technologies.

The broad-spectrum technology solutions center serves multiple state and federal agencies as well as many of the Fortune 100 Technology companies. Established in 2006 by Accenture and the CTUIR, it has created opportunities for the tribe and surrounding areas. CTUIR Executive Director Dave Tovey said it started with 36 employees in a triple-wide mobile home — moving into its current five-acre site within Coyote Business Park with room for 500 employees just two years later.

The celebration is Tuesday, Oct. 18 from 5:30-7 p.m. at 72632 Coyote Road, Mission. For more information, visit www.cayusetechnologies.com.

B2B lunch features drone range manager

HERMISTON — Information about the Pendleton UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System) Range will be the topic of the upcoming Hermiston Chamber of Commerce B2B Luncheon.

Darryl Abling, Pendleton UAS Range manager, will share about its operations, how it benefits the local economy and will show some video clips of recent UAS operations. The no-host event is Tuesday, Oct. 25 at 11:45 a.m. at the Pheasant Bar & Grill,149 E. Main St., Hermiston. The cost is $10 for members and $13 for non-members. People are encouraged to bring a business card to enter the monthly drawing.

For more information or to RSVP for the luncheon, contact 541-567-6151 or info@hermistonchamber.com.

Pendleton receives safety award

PENDLETON — The city of Pendleton was awarded a silver medal by Citycounty Insurance Services at the League of Oregon Cities last week for its low amount of time lost to injuries.

Pendleton was one of 38 cities to receive a medal, the gold medal going to cities with zero time lost to injuries.

European Union backs off banning North American lobster

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The European Union is backing off a Swedish proposal to ban imports of American lobster into 28 member countries.

Officials with the EU say the European Commission has informed Sweden it will not propose the lobster be listed as invasive. It will instead pursue measures less likely to disrupt trade.

The EU decided last month to conduct an extensive review of a proposal to ban lobsters imported from the U.S. and Canada. A scientific panel had concluded Sweden raised valid points in requesting to declare the American lobster an invasive species.

Fishermen in New England and Canada, congressmen and scientists opposed the ban. They said the proposed ban wasn't based in sound science.

The dispute started when Sweden announced it had found 32 American lobsters in its waters.

U.S. bans Samsung Galaxy Note 7 smartphones from airliners

WASHINGTON (AP) — Passengers and flight crews will be banned from bringing Samsung Galaxy Note 7 smartphones on airline flights under an emergency order issued Friday by the Department of Transportation in response to reports of the phones catching fire.

The order, which goes into effect on Saturday at noon EDT, says the phones may not be carried on board or packed in checked bags on flights to and from the United States or within the country. The phones also can't be shipped as air cargo.

Passengers caught attempting to travel with the phones will have the phones confiscated and may face fines, the department said.

Samsung has recalled more than 2.5 million of the smartphones, citing a battery manufacturing error. The South Korean company discontinued the product earlier this week, less than two months after its August release.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission says there have been nearly 100 reports of batteries in Note 7 phones overheating in the U.S. One fire erupted on a Southwest Airlines flight earlier this month. In another case, a family in St. Petersburg, Florida, reported a Galaxy Note 7 phone left charging in their Jeep caught fire, destroying the vehicle.

The Federal Aviation Administration had previously warned passengers not to pack the phones in their checked bags and to power them off and not charge them while on board planes.

"We recognize that banning these phones from airlines will inconvenience some passengers, but the safety of all those aboard an aircraft must take priority," said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

Business briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to business@eastoregonian.com

The Raymond family so appreciates the out pouring of sympathy cards, flowers, food, hugs, memorial contributions and the many acts of kindness that continue to help us with our loss of Royal. It is that support and caring that makes this part of Eastern Oregon a wonderful place to live. Royal was one great person. He was kind and supportive and a friend when you needed a friend. Thank all of you who have shown love and caring to Royal's family. They are especially grateful for your friendship.

Most sincerely,

Wilma Raymond

Becky Evans, Monte, Josilyn, Casey Evans, Tony Raymond Chance, Tyson, Ryan, Raymond, Jennifer Davis, Julie, Justin Davis

PENDLETON

PDC considers new loan for development

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

With seven years left on its term and a dwindling pot of cash, the Pendleton Development Commission is looking at taking out another loan.

Charles Denight, the commission associate director, and Councilor Chuck Wood, the commission chairman, explained the urban renewal district's options at work session Tuesday.

When the urban renewal district was established in 2003, the city and other taxing districts that cover the area agreed to "freeze" the assessed value and allow the commission to collect the money that comes from increases in property value.

While property value in the urban renewal area continues to rise, Wood said the state doesn't allow the commission to use that revenue directly for the improvement projects it helps fund.

Instead, the commission has taken out two loans from Banner Bank and Community Bank to pay for its operating fund, using tax revenue to pay down the loans.

As of Sept. 30, the commission has $410,488 in its operating budget, not including the $73,049 it has committed to Old West Federal Credit Union for second floor improvements and an $8,000 façade grant promised to Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery.

The budget would not able to fund an ambitious slate of projects planned for the remaining years of the urban renewal district, which is set to expire in 2023.

Denight projected $3,173,790 in expenses throughout the commission's next seven years, including $1,078,000 for second story projects and $300,000 for a proposed festival area on South Main Street where Webb's Cold Storage used to stand.

Hence, Wood and Denight reasoned, the need for a new loan.

Denight presented the commission with some options, with loans ranging from $1 million to $3 million either over a period of seven or 10 years.

With a 10-year loan, the urban renewal district could continue to collect tax revenue to pay for the loan after its term ends, but it would not be able to start any new projects.

Denight said the advantage with a seven-year loan is that it will save money in interest payments.

The commission would have to play a balancing act when choosing the terms of a new loan, finding a middle ground between retaining financial cushion when the district dissolves and leaving too much money on the table at the end of the term, especially since the commission's ending balance will be redistributed among the other taxing districts in 2023.

Although the commission could continue to collect revenue for a 10-year loan, Councilor Paul Chalmers, who also serves as the Umatilla County director of assessment and taxation, said extending the urban renewal district might not be prudent.

Besides requiring a drawn-out process similar to the one used to establish the district in the first place, Chalmers said extending the district's term would re-freeze the tax rate at its higher value, meaning the commission would have to restart at square one in terms of revenue collection.

Wood said he would compile a more specific list of projects that would be funded through the new loan, something a bank would need to see before approving a loan.

In an interview after the meeting, Wood expects the commission to obtain a new loan by the first half of 2017.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

U.S. removes limits on Cuban rum, cigars

The Obama administration announced Friday that it is eliminating a $100 limit on the value of Cuban rum and cigars that American travelers can bring back from the island.

The administration is also lifting limits on cargo ship travel between the U.S. and Cuba and easing U.S. and Cuban researchers' ability to conduct joint medical research. The measures are contained in a new round of regulatory changes meant to ease U.S. trade with Cuba.

The Obama administration has now made six sets of changes loosening the U.S. trade embargo on Cuba in the hopes that the normalization of relations with the island will not be reversed by a future administration. This round is expected to be the last before President Barack Obama leaves office.

Cuban rum and cigars will now be subject to the same duties as alcohol and tobacco from other countries, meaning most travelers will be able to bring back as many as 100 cigars and several bottles of rum. Because high-end Cuban cigars can sell for more than $100 apiece outside Cuba, every U.S. traveler can now legally bring back many thousands of dollars of Cuban products, potentially generating hundreds of millions of dollars in new annual revenue for the Cuban state.

The change does not mean that Cuban rum and cigars will be available for sale in the U.S. — the change is aimed at tobacco and alcohol brought home for personal use.

The previous limit restricted travelers to a combined value of $100 in rum and cigars, although enforcement of the limit notably declined after President Barack Obama declared detente with Cuba on Dec. 17, 2014.

The administration has described its policy goal as aimed at helping the Cuban people improve their lives by winning greater economic and political freedom from the single-party state.

"Challenges remain — and very real differences between our governments persist on issues of democracy and human rights — but I believe that engagement is the best way to address those differences and make progress on behalf of our interests and values," Obama said in a statement announcing the changes.

Rum and cigar production is entirely government-run under Cuba's centrally planned communist economy. While the first regulatory changes focused narrowly on helping Cuba's growing private sector, Friday's new rules are almost entirely aimed at similarly state-run industries including shipping and medical products.

The package of regulatory changes announced Friday also allows cargo ships to visit U.S. ports directly after docking in Cuba. They had been barred from U.S. ports for 180 days after visiting Cuba. Cuba blamed that measure for harming its ability to import and export and dampening hopes that a new military-run port in the city of Mariel could serve as a major link in the regional cargo shipping system.

A senior Obama administration official said the new regulations' focus on Cuban state enterprise should not be interpreted as a shift away from helping ordinary Cubans.

"We have designed the policy very much to have the maximum benefit to the Cuban people, broadly, but in so doing we are not restricting engagement with the Cuban state."