



Photo contributed by the Rebelle Rally
Taylor Pawley of Fossil, and teammate Micaela Windham of Phoenix, Arizona, race Windham's Jeep through the desert in Nevada and California in last week's Rebelle Rally, the first women's-only off-road navigation race in the United States.

RACE: Pawley was navigator

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Rebelle Rally spokesperson Kirsten Kuhn said their finish was exciting. "Taylor and Micaela did a fantastic job, and we were thrilled to have them be a part of our inaugural event," she said. Pawley and Windham met in person for the first time on Oct. 12, the day before the race began, but they had a good idea of how they wanted to work together. "We came into it like this was a job," Pawley said, and that attitude helped them. Pawley was the navigator, and Windham was the driver. During a typical day, she said, they awoke around 4:45-5 a.m., and Pawley would get latitude and longitude for the day's points and plot those on the map while Windham gathered their breakfast. The race staggered start times between 7 and 8:15 each morning, and for 10-12 hours, they drove to check points. Most days ended in a base camp, where Windham checked over her Jeep Wrangler and filled it with fuel and Pawley set up their tent. And they were fortunate, she said, to have a Michelin Star chef with a crew and impressive food truck that prepared "crazy good meals." Team Why Not, though, and some other racers also spent one night out of the camp and under the desert

skies. Pawley recalled they sat on sand dunes, ate "MREs," the "meals ready to eat" that fuel military troops, and talked about the day. Pawley said the rally helped her gain confidence to take on difficult tasks and "muscle down and do the job." But the adventure also was humbling. "There were days when nothing worked," she said, "and the map made no sense and that confidence you get can get torn down in a minute." Still, other teams, including off-road veterans, had their struggles. "It was like, OK, I'm not alone," Pawley said. And she said she found the Rebelle Rally served as the "perfect detox to get me into the right mode to get into a big trip like this." That big trip is with her husband, KP Pawley, 30, who hails from Echo. The couple is driving a pickup with a camper on a three-year journey that will take them from the Northwest to the tip of South America and over the Atlantic Ocean to Africa and who-knows-where. They begin the trek this week with stops in Utah at Arches National Park and then nearby Moab, where Pawley said they will visit a fellow Rebelle Rally racer. "From there," she said, "we're just going to keep working our way south and cross the border Nov. 15."

VOTERS: 11,574 voters had cast ballots by Monday

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Bodewig said whether or not people are vocally campaigning for a certain candidate, it feels important to at least cast a vote. "Regardless of whoever is chosen, the next few years this country is going to be faced with so many things," he said. Other Umatilla County residents wrote on Facebook that they, too, registered or voted for the first time because they felt this election took on special importance. "I have never voted in my life and I registered and voted for the first time this year," Martin Rosas wrote. "I'm 27. I just didn't feel like I could afford to be apathetic this year." Some of Oregon's newest voters have come onto the rolls due to age, not necessarily a change of mind about their place in the process. Emily Taylor of Athena registered to vote in 2015 at the age of 18, but after voting for "small-town things" in the primaries she said she is looking forward to casting her first vote for president. She said she went down to the DMV to fill out a registration form shortly after her birthday because her teachers at Weston-McEwen High School had impressed upon her the

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— Martin Rosas, Umatilla County resident

importance of having a voice in government. "I wanted to be able to vote because I wanted to have my say," she said. "... I think it's important for people to vote. Even if it seems like a small thing, it's a ripple effect, and other people don't vote either and then it's not a full election." Taylor said she wished there were "better options" for her first time voting for a candidate for the Oval Office. But she did say she is excited to vote for the ballot measure that would create a new taxing district to expand ambulance service in small towns like hers in eastern Umatilla County. She said she hasn't filled out her ballot yet but she has been researching candidates and ballot measures using the voter's guide and online searches. More than 230,700 new voters have been sent ballots for the first time in Oregon due to the Motor Voter law, but the real test of the law will be how many of those ballots get returned. The

state intends to keep track of the number of voters registered through the Motor Voter program who participate in this year's election, according to Oregon Secretary of State spokeswoman Molly Woon. So far 11,574 of the state's 2.57 million registered voters had cast ballots by Monday afternoon. The Motor Voter program took effect Jan. 1. Under the law, eligible voters who apply for a license, permit or ID at the DMV are automatically registered to vote as unaffiliated voters, unless they return a card mailed to them which gives them the option to register for a specific party or opt out of registration. Between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30, the majority of voters registered through Motor Voter were registered as unaffiliated, according to cumulative program data maintained by the Secretary of State's Office. According to that data, 29,741 Oregonians returned a card selecting a party —

13,246 Democrats, 10,030 Republicans and 2,211 Independents. About 3,300 people chose to designate themselves as nonaffiliated, although the Motor Voter law automatically designates voters as unaffiliated unless the voter decides to choose a party. About 24,000 Oregonians opted out from registration, and approximately 9,000 Motor Voter mailers weren't deliverable between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30. In 2012, 82.8 percent of registered voters cast ballots in the general election, according to data compiled by the Oregon Secretary of State's office. The deadline for registering to vote is past, and ballots have already been mailed out. Once completed, they should be placed in the mail this week, according to the secretary of state, but can also be dropped off at designated dropboxes (usually found at city halls and county courthouses) until 8 p.m. on Nov. 8. A list of dropbox locations is available at www.oregonvotes.gov/dropbox.

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GAS: City's best option is to connect to TransCanada's mainline

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own natural gas utility after a disagreement with Cascade Natural Gas in 2014. DuPont Pioneer had to halt a multi-million dollar expansion in Hermiston because Cascade Natural Gas told them the infrastructure needed to serve the expansion would cost \$450,000 but later came back and said there had been a mathematical error and reinforcing the pipeline would actually cost \$2.3 million. Former city manager Ed Brookshier recommended at the time that the city look into forming its own natural gas utility instead of paying for upgrades to a company's infrastructure that would then

be owned by that company instead of the city. The city later successfully defended its right to do so in court. Rivera, who has been researching the option, said the city's best option would be to connect to TransCanada's mainline that runs near Stanfield and run a transmission line of its own down Highway 395. It would also need to construct a gate station and odorizer where the city's line connected to TransCanada's line. The process would cost \$4 million to \$6 million and not count the distribution pipes to individual industrial

properties, the staff time to run the small utility and the contract with a company to respond to gas leaks. Rivera said he has developed a request for qualifications for an engineer, identified a company that could perform maintenance and inspections, made arrangements with TransCanada and done everything else necessary to pave the way for a future Hermiston Gas Utility Department. City Manager Byron Smith told the council that he felt it "wouldn't be wise" to just build the infrastructure and hope it attracted a future

industrial user that could help with the debt payments. Instead, he said, it would be better to only go forward if it guaranteed a large employer who could help "stabilize the system" up front. Councilor John Kirwan said even if that is the case, he was glad that the city could tell a potential developer that the natural gas could be ready in a year if they needed it. "The time we've spent getting to this point is not wasted," he said.

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