



The 10-megawatt Chopin Wind Farm is up and running north of Weston.

Small wind farm near Weston up and running

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

A small wind farm is up and running north of Pendleton, with six turbines cranking out 10 megawatts of electricity. The Chopin Wind Project was placed into service Oct. 1 by developer BayWa r.e. Renewable Energy, of San Diego. Construction began over the summer on private farmland between Weston and Milton-Freewater, and a future phase of the project is already being considered.

Chopin was initially intended to be much larger, with as many as 33 turbines generating 99 megawatts. Umatilla County commissioners approved the turbines, but not an 11-mile overhead transmission line. Blue Mountain Alliance also protested the wind farm over effects on views, wildlife and property values.

In August 2015, developers returned with a scaled-back proposal: six turbines, and a transmission line that would be buried underground instead of running overhead. Still, farmers worried about losing productive land along



The six turbine Chopin Wind Farm was scaled back from its original 33 turbine proposal but future plans for expansion are still in the works.

Staggs Road during construction. The Umatilla County Planning Commission approved building permits for the new plan, and county commissioners voted 2-1 to uphold the ruling in April. BayWa CEO Florian Zerhusen said that, in general, the project was well received locally. “This project will provide long-term reliable energy and environmental benefits to the local community,” Zerhusen said in a statement. According to the company, Chopin will produce enough

energy to power roughly 7,500 homes in the area and save 32,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions. PacifiCorp has agreed to purchase the power generated by the wind farm. Zerhusen said the company is interested in building a second phase of the project adjacent to the first, but did not provide any further details. The entire project site includes 1,150 acres.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

BRIEFLY

Crash ejects man near Irrigon

IRRIGON — A 49-year-old man from Caldwell, Idaho, is in critical condition after a car crash late Wednesday near Irrigon. A caller driving west on Highway 730 from Umatilla at 11:26 p.m. reported following a yellow 2001 Jeep Wrangler whose driver seemed impaired, according to a report from Oregon State Police. The Jeep at milepost 177 outside Irrigon crossed over the north side fog line, took a sudden turn back onto the highway and drove off the south side. State police reported the Jeep went approximately 110 feet off the road, rolled, and ejected the driver, Timothy Liddman Moothart. Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, treated and released Moothart, and he is now at Kadlec Regional Medical Center, Richland, Washington, where hospital spokesperson Nikki Ostergaard confirmed he was in critical condition. State police did not have information about possible charges.

Grants to assist with juniper restoration

FOSSIL — A habitat restoration business and sawmill in Wheeler County have been awarded grants from Rural Development Initiatives, a nonprofit organization based in Eugene, to treat and harvest Western Juniper in central Oregon. RDI has awarded \$16,000 to Jim Epley, who runs his own habitat restoration outfit in Spray, and In the Sticks Juniper Sawmill in Fossil to purchase equipment that will allow them to expand operations. Funding comes from RDI’s WealthWorks Northwest program, which is supported by the Meyer Memorial Trust, Northwest Area Foundation and the Ford Family Foundation.

Farmers eligible to win \$2,500 for nonprofits

Farmers in Umatilla, Morrow and Malheur counties are among those eligible to win \$2,500 for a nonprofit of their choice through the America’s Farmers Grow Communities program, sponsored by the Monsanto Fund. Since the program began in 2010, America’s Farmers Grow Communities has awarded more than \$22 million in donations to organizations across the country. Two years ago, Joe and Cheryl Taylor, of Double T Farms in Boardman, were recipients and chose to donate their prize money to Morrow County 4-H. One winner will be randomly selected by the program in each of the 1,331 eligible counties across 41 states. To become eligible, a county must grow at least 30,000 acres in corn, cotton or soybeans. Farmers have through Wednesday, Nov. 30 to apply. “We are excited to team up with farmers once again to help support the causes that mean the most to them

and that have an impact in their local communities,” said Al Mitchell, president of the Monsanto Fund. More information and open enrollment is available online at www.growcommunities.com or by calling 877-267-3332.

Coho, steelhead fishing reopens on Columbia

Recreational coho and steelhead fishing is once again open on the Columbia River in Oregon and Washington after a two-week pause to protect Snake River chinook. Fishery managers made the initial closures Oct. 22 after chinook returns came in 29 percent lower than preseason forecasts. Fishing was closed to protect the upriver bright run, especially wild Snake River chinook, which are listed as a threatened species. Recent fish passage data at Bonneville and Ice Harbor dams suggest the run is now essentially complete, with the fall coho and steelhead seasons set to resume Saturday on the river from the mouth at Buoy 10 upstream to the Highway 395 bridge in Pasco. The daily limit is two fish per day, but only one can be a hatchery-born steelhead. Chinook retention remains closed through Dec. 31.

Three men prison bound for sex crimes

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Three men are heading to prison for unrelated sex crimes in Umatilla County. Judges in the past week sentenced Shaun Allen Dick, 38, of Pendleton; Gerry Lee Lutcavich, 29, of Pendleton; and Eric Allen Lowry, 31, of Walla Walla. Dick and Lutcavich lost their cases at jury trials, while Lowry took a plea deal, according to court records and a statement from the district attorney’s office. Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer on Oct. 28 sent Dick to prison for 16 years, eight months after a jury found him guilty of the following: sodomy, two counts of unlawful sexual penetration, attempted rape and two counts of sexual abuse, all in the first degree, plus coercion and menacing. Dick and a woman met through an online dating service, according to court records, and on Jan. 17 she agreed to stay the

night at his home outside Pendleton, where they had consensual sex. She went to leave in the morning but Dick convinced her to stay, according to the sentencing recommendation from the district attorney’s office. Then he forced himself on her. The woman escaped without her pants, according to the document, and on the witness stand she recalled Dick said, “I could bury you and no one would ever find you.” The state accused Lutcavich of having sex with a girl younger than 14 on four occasions between Nov. 20, 2014, and Jan. 31, 2015. Brauer on Oct. 27 sentenced Lutcavich to 12 years, six months in prison after a jury found him guilty of two counts of second-degree rape. And Circuit Judge Lynn Hampton on Tuesday sent Lowry to prison for six years, three months.



Dick

He pleaded guilty to two counts of first-degree attempted sex abuse of a girl younger than 14. The state accused him of fondling the girl on two occasions between late 2013 and mid-2016. Court records also show Hampton on Tuesday sentenced Sarah Marie Carr, 25, of Pendleton to almost four years in prison for second-degree kidnapping and fourth-degree attempted assault. A jury found her guilty of the crimes for taking a man against his will, trying to use a stun gun against him — the device failed — and then stranding the man in a field outside Pendleton. Her co-defendant Daniel Joseph Avila, 28, pleaded guilty on July 19 to second-degree kidnapping and also received a 46-month sentence.

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Third-grade teacher Ipolito Maloy’s adds a one-pound bag to a box that sits a top a straw and tape structure while doing an earthquake experiment Thursday at Rocky Heights Elementary School in Hermiston.

EARTHQUAKE: Part of state’s next-generation science standards

Continued from 1A

straws bent under the pressure and the entire structure collapsed. As each team brought their contraption up to be tested, Glyn Lystrup and Colby Lerten said the earthquake unit had been a fun one. “We learned a lot about earthquakes,” Glyn said before launching into a detailed explanation about the difference between earthquakes on divergent boundaries, convergent boundaries and transform faults. Colby said they “both had to give up something” in their designs after they couldn’t agree on a lot of parts. Where they couldn’t compromise they used rock, paper, scissors to decide. Glyn, who said he wants to be an electrical engineer when he grows up, said the most important thing was following the guest speaker’s advice to add diagonal cross beams instead of just putting all of the straws in the same direction. “My brother wants to be in construction, so I’m probably going to tell him about this so he builds it right,” Glyn said. Over at the earthquake simulators, some students

were having more luck than others. One group looked disappointed after their structure fell down as soon as a second pound of weight was added. “It’s all right, we learned, right boys and girls?” Maloy said. Lucy Teegarden and Fernanda Nava ended up with the sturdiest structure, which survived an earthquake with eight pounds on it before the plastic straws folded. They said the secret was lots of tape and lots of diagonal straws. “On the top we put a cross, and on the side a V,” Fernanda said. Hands-on projects like the earthquake structures were why she “always wants to do science,” she said. Maloy said the project was part of the state’s next-generation science

standards. Previously the students tracked weather around the United States with an app on their classroom set of iPads; next they will study tornadoes. Students were encouraged to approach the earthquake project using the scientific method. They filled out worksheets predicting what would happen and why, documented their methods, filmed the test for further review and wrote about what went wrong that they could fix if they tried again. “There has been a lot of support from the principal this year in pushing science,” Maloy said. “It’s been fun. I remember the science lessons as a kid. These are the ones that stick with you.” Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.



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