

POLICE: Cuts would close Oregon State Hospital's facility in Junction City

Continued from 1A

said in addition to crime scene work, the Pendleton site provides critical drug analysis for Eastern Oregon. Packaging and sending evidence to a lab hundreds of miles away would eat into local police budgets, he said, and raises concerns about compromising evidence.

State police in 2014 planned to find a way for the 2017-19 biennium to fund a fully functional lab in Pendleton and even talked about a new building. Edmiston suggested the governor's office should talk with Eastern Oregon leaders and find out what might be available out here to meet the needs for the lab. He said even the old notion of moving the lab to La Grande, home of Eastern Oregon University, makes more sense than having no lab out here.

The local Blue Mountains Enforcement Narcotics Team also looks to take a hit in the upcoming fiscal year. Gov. Brown proposed cuts to state police drug detectives and have the agency pull out of drug task forces. Three state police — one supervisor in Hermiston and two detectives in Pendleton — work on BENT. Roberts chairs the team's board and said the three are crucial members.

"We've really come to rely on those resources from OSP just to sustain the team," he said.

Pendleton, Hermiston, Milton-Freewater, Boardman and Umatilla tribal police provide officers for the team, along with the sheriff's offices of Umatilla and Morrow counties. But some departments have not lived up to the obligation, and others,

such as the city of Umatilla police, do not participate. Taking away the three state police, Roberts said, would hurt BENT's ability to take down drug rings.

Those big cases can have connections to a range of crimes, from thefts to homicides, and Roberts said that can be where the state troopers and detectives really show skills vital to multi-jurisdictional teams, including interrogation techniques or drafting search warrant affidavits. He said the state personnel bring a certain level of expertise and experience that smaller agencies often lack.

And reimbursement could come up if the state leaves the team. Roberts said BENT sent one of its state members to learn how to access information from certain smartphones that are difficult to crack and even bought equipment for the task. He said that is a costly resource to lose.

The governor's budget also plans for the closure of Oregon State Hospital's \$130 million facility in Junction City after the first year of the 2017-19 biennium. Roberts, who has put a focus on policing and the mentally ill, called the proposition troubling. The move would leave the state hospital in Salem to treat people suffering from mental illness. Roberts said the 620 beds there are not nearly enough for Oregon. Roberts and Edmiston said they have seen the state propose these kinds of public safety cuts before, legislators don't give the state everything it wants. But this year, with such a wide gap in state resources and expenses, maintaining the status quo might be a long shot.

PERS: Lawmakers are restricted to two options for PERS reform

Continued from 1A

more kids graduate from high school," Critser said. "It will be invested in paying existing obligations, and skepticism about the value of government will grow rather than diminish."

Oregon Supreme Court rulings have restricted lawmakers to two options for PERS reform, said Tim Nesbitt, former adviser to Govs. Ted Kulongoski and John Kitzhaber and past president of the Oregon AFL-CIO.

"We can reduce benefits yet to be earned by current and future employees, or we can ask employees to pay at least some of the cost of their future pensions," Nesbitt said.

"These options demand a shared responsibility among all stakeholders."

Several members of SEIU Local 503 and Oregon AFSCME gathered outside the leadership summit at the Oregon Convention Center Monday to highlight how PERS benefits public employees.

"Many of us are working for less than we would in the private sector," a pamphlet from the unions states. "We agreed to that with the understanding that we would have secure retirement. Now we are facing further retirement cuts. That breaks the promise made to us."

Business leaders gave no specific proposals they would support for raising taxes on business. One example of a possible revenue source is a proposal from early 2016 by Sen. Mark Hass,

D-Beaverton, to levy a small commercial activity tax on corporations, Critser said. Hass said last week that he is running numbers on how much revenue could be raised from the tax. His proposal last year would have raised about \$500 million.

Gov. Kate Brown, who gave the keynote speech at the summit, challenged business leaders to bring her revenue proposals they can support.

"You might think that that puts a tremendous burden on me as your governor to find another way to fund Oregon's future," Brown said, referring to Measure 97's defeat. "But I'm here today to state that the price of victory is responsibility — both for me and for you."

Brown and House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, both endorsed Measure 97 during the campaign.

At last year's leadership summit, Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, urged lawmakers, unions and business to reach a compromise on Measure 97 before the election. On Monday, he continued his message of collaboration.

"A state whose political and economic forces are always at odds will never be all that it can be," Courtney said.

The leadership summit marks the Oregon Business Council's release of its annual Oregon Business Plan. The plan makes recommendations for statewide policy on issues that affect business, including taxes, state spending, labor regulations and educational outcomes.

Obama legacy: Handing Trump a broad view of war powers

WASHINGTON (AP) — After eight years as a wartime president, Barack Obama is handing his successor an expansive interpretation of the commander in chief's authority to wage war around the globe. And that reading has continued to grow even as Obama prepares to pass control to Donald Trump.

In his final weeks in office, Obama has broadened the legal scope of the war on extremism, the White House confirmed Monday, as it acknowledged for the first time the administration now asserts it is legally justified to take on the extremist group al-Shabab in Somalia.

The determination is based on an expanded application of a 9/11-era use of force authorization, a statute Obama has repeatedly leaned on to justify military operations. That rationale has raised concerns about how Trump might use Obama's precedent to justify other

overseas entanglements — without consulting Congress.

The White House staunchly defends Obama's use of military power, arguing in a detailed report Monday that all operations have been firmly grounded in domestic and international law. White House counsel Neil Eggleston called the report — the first of its kind — a demonstration of how Obama has ensured "that all U.S. national security operations are conducted within a legal and policy framework that is lawful, effective and consistent with our national interests and values."

Yet the report, which Obama said should be updated annually, also reveals how his administration has relied overwhelmingly on the 2001 authorization, which even Obama acknowledges is outdated.

Though the law's targets were al-Qaida and the Taliban, a clause in the bill

includes "associated forces" of al-Qaida, in Afghanistan or beyond. That clause is now being used as a catch-all for military action in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Libya, the report shows, plus the basing of U.S. troops in other countries.

Trump has promised a more muscular and militaristic approach to counterterrorism, occasionally using expletives to suggest he'd aggressively bomb ISIS militants, although he has been vague on details.

Deborah Pearlstein, a former White House official and international law professor at Yeshiva University, said it's likely the next administration will use Obama's framework as its starting point. "By practice and long history, those opinions tend to stand," she said.

For Obama, the heavy reliance on 9/11-era authorities is a powerful illustration of how his campaign pledges

to construct limits on the president's war-making powers were confounded by difficulties of dealing with Congress and the pressures of rapidly evolving threats.

Obama came into office aiming to reverse what he argued were the overreaches of his predecessor, George W. Bush. In the first days of his presidency, he signed executive orders prohibiting secret CIA "black site" prisons and ending harsh interrogation techniques considered by many to be torture.

Yet Obama quickly discovered that imposing strict constraints made it harder to pursue his preferred approach to counterterrorism.

Wary of major overseas entanglements, he turned increasingly to surgical, stealthy operations like drone strikes that have traditionally operated under a murky legal framework.

FIRES: Family extremely grateful for the support

Continued from 1A

their two Jack Russell terrier mixes with them when they went out.

"I didn't have time to be tactful, because I was worried about the dogs," she said. "I called and said, 'Your house is on fire; do you have the dogs?'"

The answer was no. The family arrived at the burning house, fearing the worst about the beloved family pets. But firefighters emerged from the home with the dogs in hand and deposited them into the arms of their overjoyed owners.

"Everyone was crying," Poulin-Foster said.

She said they weren't sure what had caused the fire, but it left the Holcombs with nothing but the clothes they had been wearing when they went to the store. They are currently living with Poulin-Foster and she said while they have appreciated offers of new furniture and household goods they won't have room to store the bigger items for at least a few days until they find a new place to live.

Pauline-Foster said family friend Roxann Fisk has set up an online account for monetary donations at www.gofundme.com/richard-and-roxanne-needs-richard-help. If people have



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Umatilla County Fire District 1 put out an RV fire at Pioneer RV Park in Hermiston on Monday afternoon.

clothing, household goods, food or other items they are interested in donating to the family they can email roxiracoon@gmail.com.

She said the whole family is extremely grateful for the support they have received from family, friends and community members and want to show their thanks for the fire and police departments, which have been doing extra patrols around the house to make sure

people don't try to trespass. "The community outpouring has been phenomenal," she said. "The police and fire department were amazing. They did everything they could as fast as they could."

Umatilla County Fire District 1 also responded to a second structure fire on Monday shortly before 1 p.m. at Pioneer RV Park, 1590 W. Highland Avenue in Hermiston.

The RV was fully engulfed when fire crews arrived.

The owner, who was staying at the park temporarily, was inside the RV at the time of the fire but escaped uninjured before the fire trucks arrived.

A cause has not been determined.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

LEAD: City to hire certified lead tester to re-assess building

Continued from 1A

of the test results until a local radio station contacted him about the article on Friday.

Corbett said he followed up on the newspaper report by speaking with a representative from the Oregon Health Authority, who further elaborated that because the basement wasn't used as a child care facility, apartment complex or some other function where children or adults would regularly come in contact with it, the city

wasn't creating a health issue. Lead is a neurotoxin that can cause brain damage, especially in young children.

Corbett said he has directed city staff to hire a certified lead tester to re-assess the convention center and verify whether there's elevated lead levels in the basement.

"I don't know what's a lot of lead and what isn't a lot of lead," he said.

Although there's isn't a set timeline on the testing, Corbett said the results will help determine if the base-

ment is a health hazard to maintenance staff or anyone else who uses the room.

The city passed a \$1.7 million bond in 1990 to acquire the armory from the Guard and remodel it into a convention center.

Previous to coming under city ownership, the armory was already used for community events for the Pendleton School District and Blue Mountain Community College, among others.

The city has made additional renovations to the

facility since 1990, one of the most recent coming in 2015, when it made an \$897,000 expansion to the east side of the center.

The convention center hosts dozens of events per year, including well-attended mainstays like the Pendleton Festival of Trees, the 2A high school basketball tournament and Goldie's Bar at the Canyon during Round-Up.

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



HARRISON FAMILY MEDICINE

1100 Southgate Suite 6
541-215-1564

Come Give a friendly Eastern Oregon welcome to Harrison Family Medicine's new PA-C ~ **Erika Acuna!**

Please call for an appointment or stop by our **NEW LOCATION!**


Accepting new patients

THANK YOU


to our Sponsors, Auction Donors, Basket Donors & those who attended **Grillin' for Grants** on November 5th.

Our community raised more than \$22,000 for Pendleton students through the Education Foundation of Pendleton

<p>Scholastic Sponsors \$1000</p> <p>CHI St. Anthony Hospital Gordon's Electric Kirby Nagelhout Construction Umatilla County- Economic and & Community Development</p> <p>Academic Sponsors \$500</p> <p>Alder Family Dental - Pendleton Barhyte Specialty Foods Coldwell Banker Whitney & Associates - Jef Farley Columbia Bank Dan and Barbara Ceniga</p>	<p>Dr. Andrew Bower & Susan Bower Edward Jones - Ben Buchert (SW 1st Street) Edward Jones - Robert Blanc & Casey Hunt (Main St.) Grocery Outlet - Pendleton Hill Law Office Kelly Lumber Supply Jim and Karen Kullnat Les Schwab Tires RDO Equipment Co. Riverside Veterinary Clinic Round-Up City Plumbing James and Julianne Sawyer</p>	<p>Kirt and Annette Skinner Swire Coca-Cola Thews Sheet Metal United Grain Corp. Vern's Food Service Wenaha Group</p> <p>In-Kind</p> <p>CAPPS Broadcast Group East Oregonian Hill Meat Safeway Sodexo Starbucks</p>
---	---	--



EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF PENDLETON



www.educationfoundationofpendleton.org