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New laws will take effect in Oregon beginning Jan. 1, including increased fines for poaching, criminal penalties for impersonating military personnel or public servant to intimidate another, a widened definition of soliciting prostitution and the banning of sky lanterns.

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

NEW YEAR, NEW LAWS

Releasing sky lanterns and impersonating the mayor will be crimes in Oregon starting Jan. 1, while poaching penalties will go up significantly

The 2016 legislative session was a short one, but Oregon lawmakers had enough time to approve a handful of new laws that will go into effect Jan. 1.

Some — like a law authorizing the governing body of Tillamook County to establish wetlands — apply to a very narrow segment of the state's population. But others will affect all Oregonians.

As always, not knowing about a new law is not a valid legal defense if you get caught breaking it.

Criminal impersonation

Sending intimidating emails to your neighbor while pretending to be the city planner is now a crime.

Senate Bill 1567 makes it illegal to impersonate a public servant, veteran or member of the Armed Forces with the intent to cause another person injury.

The new law applies even in cases where the specific job title or government department used by the impostor does not actually exist.

Oregon's previous identity

theft law was interpreted by the courts to only apply to impersonations that involved financial fraud, leaving prosecutors unable charge those who did so only to intimidate or embarrass. The new law defines "injury" to include physical harm, threats, harassment and intimidation.

The crime is a Class A misdemeanor punishable with up to

a year in prison and/or a \$6,250 fine (a separate law already in effect makes impersonating a police officer or judge a Class C felony).

Poaching penalties

Would-be poachers who get caught unlawfully taking or killing wildlife will face substantially higher fines in the new year. The penalty for illegally

killing moose, mountain sheep and mountain goats will double from \$25,000 to \$50,000. A variety of other fees will increase significantly, including a hike from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for oversized sturgeon and from \$100 to \$1,000 for wild turkeys and sage grouse.

See LAWS/3A

Deadly fires increase in 2016

Three die in structure fires; most are human-caused

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Structure fires in Umatilla County claimed three lives so far in 2016, an increase from years.

Fires in homes, trailers or other buildings claimed a life in both 2015 and 2014, according to a search of records and news stories. Investigators in all but one case determined the fires had human causes.

- Feb. 27 in Athena — Smoking material, possibly a cigarette, caused the fire in a trailer that killed one man.

- June 1 near Hermiston — Fire in an onion shed at Columbia Basin Spreaders Inc. left one man dead. The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division has yet to release a cause.

- Aug. 1 in Stanfield — Smoking materials or electrical wiring sparked the home blaze that took a man's life.

- Mixing explosive materials to make fireworks killed one Pendleton man in 2015, and investigators determined a 2014 fire that killed a man in his RV in Stanfield was accidental.

Tom Bohm, fire marshal for Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 based in Hermiston, reported electrical issues topped the district's list of fire causes so far this year, with 14. Exposure fires — a fire that started outside a building but consumed a structure — was second, with 11, followed by eight smoking materials caused blazes and seven fires caused by cooking.

The Pendleton Fire Department this week responded to two home fires, and human causes were to blame in each.

A space heater started the blaze Sunday night in the third story of the home at 503 N. Main St. And a cardboard box left on a stove started a fire Tuesday night at a home on Jones Circle.

Shawn Penninger, assistant chief and fire marshal, said the occupants extinguished the burn before firefighters arrived.

Most investigations of building fires reveal a human factor at play, Penninger said.

The National Fire Protection Association reports cooking equipment is the leading cause of home structure fires and home fire injuries in the United States. From 2007-11 there were 366,600 home structure fires nationwide, and cooking fires accounted for 156,000, almost 43 percent. Home heating was the second most common cause.

Children playing with fire outside caused 37,400 home fires, the third most,

See FIRE/3A

OUR NEW NEIGHBORS

Pharma family finds fit in Pendleton

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

They met in Southern Oregon and lived in the Portland metro area, but Eastern Oregon was completely new to Marc and Celeste Rizzo when they moved to Pendleton in February.

Despite their unfamiliarity, Celeste accepted a job as a pharmacist at St. Anthony Hospital. The Rizzos packed up their Hillsboro home and headed east, bringing their infant daughter Bianca in tow.

Her husband, Marc, is also

a pharmacist. And although she was concerned he would have trouble finding an open position, he landed a pharmacy job at Walgreens within a few days of moving to town.

Good timing has often worked to the Rizzos' benefit.

Celeste grew up in Eureka, California, a small timber town 100 miles south of the Oregon border.

Celeste eventually moved to Ashland, working for a timber company to help locate endan-

See RIZZO/3A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Marc and Celeste Rizzo pose with their daughter Bianca on their front porch.

