

SHELTER: Pendleton station max capacity is 20

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crowd,” Rossell said, adding that they don’t always see the same people at the station. While they do have a few regulars who are chronically homeless, Rossell said they also see a lot of people who are temporarily displaced — whether through unemployment, health issues, divorce or domestic violence.

Rossell said the center is not a soup kitchen, and focuses solely on providing shelter.

“We’re very focused on our mission of giving people a safe, warm place to sleep,” she said. “Everything else, we refer to outside agencies.”

Rossell said while they appreciate supplies, the most useful donations are monetary.

“When we put out a call for a certain supply, we often get inundated with that product, or it’s the wrong kind,” she said. “We’re not ungrateful (for the donations) but we have our preferences.”

The station has a pool of 100 volunteers, and it takes 45 volunteers to keep the station operational each week.

The Neighbor 2 Neighbor warming station in Pendleton has been busy as well, seeing an increase in attendance throughout the past couple of months. Chris Clemons, a volunteer for the station, said the weather has driven a lot of people to use the facility that wouldn’t ordinarily come.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Volunteer Tammy Richter, left, hands out food to guests Thursday at the Neighbor 2 Neighbor warming station in Pendleton.

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Dwight Johnson, volunteer at Neighbor 2 Neighbor

“We’re blessed to have gotten into our new building a couple nights prior to when the weather hit,” he said. “We haven’t seen a winter like this in quite a while.”

“I’d say we’ve experienced more people this year than in the past,” said Dwight Johnson, a volunteer for the station, which is located at 715 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton. He said on Christmas the station had

20 visitors, about three more than their highest attendance in previous years.

The current maximum capacity for the center is around 20, Clemons said.

The station is open from 6:30 p.m. to 6 a.m., and on abnormally cold days tries to stay open until 9 a.m. Along with shelter, they also provide a basic meal in the evenings.

Johnson said the station welcomes donations and has

their needs listed on their website at n2npendleton.org.

Other organizations are keeping up with the cold, too. Dave Hughes of Hermiston’s Agape House, which provides food and warm clothing to people in the area, said they haven’t seen a sharp increase in people using their services.

“I think the weather is keeping some people in,” he said. “We’re going through coats and blankets very quickly, but our supply has been meeting our needs.”

He added that their food supply was keeping up with needs as well.

PREGNANCY: Center open Monday through Thursday

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into about one per day.

Pregnancy Care Services offers pregnancy tests and immediate counseling for women who come in scared that they might be pregnant. Cissna and the volunteers who make up the rest of the staff provide emotional support but also information about pregnancy-related topics such as adoption, abortion, prenatal care and resources for new parents.

Cissna said they hope the women they see make a “life-affirming decision,” and they do not make referrals to abortion clinics. But even if a woman chooses to have an abortion after considering all of her options, the center will be there for her with post-abortion counseling to help deal with the complicated feelings that come along with terminating a pregnancy.

“We let her know regardless of her choice we’re there

for her,” Cissna said. “No judgment, no condemnation, we just want to love on her.”

The state recorded 16 abortions by Umatilla County residents in 2015; however, the department only counted abortions that took place in Oregon. For Umatilla County residents the nearest abortion options are clinics in Kennewick and Walla Walla.

For women who choose to keep their baby, Pregnancy Care Services provides continued counseling, peer mentoring and parenting classes. They also provide classes and peer mentoring with male volunteers for involved fathers-to-be.

The Earn While You Learn program gives women points for attending counseling sessions and classes, and those points can be redeemed at Pregnancy Care Services for baby clothes, diapers, bottles, blankets and car seats. All of the items are donated by the community.

During Thursday’s

ribbon-cutting celebration, volunteer Lois Cram showed off the boutique where women can shop with their points. On one shelf was a stack of care packages that included a handmade receiving blanket and hand-crocheted hats and booties. The nonprofit Linus Project also donates baby quilts made by members of the community.

“If we have a lady that needs something but we don’t have it, we just ask around,” Cram said. “We have a very generous community.”

Right now the center is open Monday through Thursday, 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m., but Cissna said there was a volunteer who said they would be willing to work Saturdays so they might be expanding their hours soon.

Larry Ables volunteered to help get the new space — formerly occupied by a trucking company — cleaned up and remodeled, and Cissna said she hopes to eventually expand into the

space next door too.

Pregnancy Care Services is holding a “Celebrate a Vision for Life” banquet Jan. 22 from 5-7 p.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center to collect donations and hear from keynote speaker John Ensor. Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering is also raising money for the center on Saturday at the Dancing with Your Hermiston Stars event at Hermiston High School at 7 p.m.

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RALLY: ‘There are about 15,000 in Oregon whose lives are at stake’

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“National Day of Action Events Against Trump Policies,” according to a news release by the One Oregon coalition.

Trump has said that he will seek to deport millions of undocumented immigrants from the country, end executive orders by President Obama that shield certain illegal immigrants from deportation, and start a Muslim registry.

The coalition is “deeply concerned about the impact this will have on immigrant and refugee communities, who are integral to Oregon’s economy and future,” said Diane Goodwin, a spokeswoman for Basic Rights Oregon, a member of One Oregon.

One of Obama’s executive orders, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, protects from deportation undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. Young people who are eligible must apply for the program every two years, receive a work permit and may attend college.

“There are more than 700,000 individuals nationally and about 15,000 in Oregon whose lives are at stake, whose ability to continue their education and their career is at stake based on what President-elect Trump does,” said Andrea Williams, executive director of Causa. “A lot of times, they have never been to their home country, don’t know the language or have not been there for a very long time.”

The One Oregon coalition of 60 organizations opposes anti-immigrant policies. Immigrant rights organizations Causa, APANO and Unite Oregon lead the group.

The coalition plans to support state legislation in 2017 aimed at reducing racial profiling during

police stops, expanding Medicaid to more children and increasing affordable housing funding.

There are no known counter protests to the event. Oregonians For Immigration Reform, which frequently clashes with Causa on policy proposals, had no plans for a counter demonstration Saturday, said OFIR President Cynthia Kendall. OFIR has scheduled a meeting the same day as the demonstration to discuss the results of the election and 2017 legislation.

Trump’s immigration proposals have begun to address many of the frustrations some Americans have had with immigration policy and practices, Kendall said.

“I think the Trump administration has nailed it when he said we need to reassess what we are doing and why and how is it benefiting the United States,” Kendall said.

She said she supports Trump’s plan to end the DACA program.

“Those parents made the choice for their children to pick them up and bring them to this country,” Kendall said. “I didn’t make that choice for them.”

OFIR attempted to advance ballot initiatives last year that would have made English the official language of Oregon, required businesses to use a federal program to verify citizenship of employees and required proof of citizenship to vote. The initiatives ultimately were tied up in court after immigrant rights organizations and the ACLU challenged the ballot titles.

OFIR plans to offer at least four pieces of legislation next session, though Kendall declined to disclose specifics Wednesday, Jan. 11. None are expected to gain momentum in the Democratic-controlled Legislature.

WORLD BRIEFLY

Watchdog to probe Comey’s, FBI’s actions before election

WASHINGTON (AP) — In yet another aftershock from the chaotic presidential campaign, the Justice Department inspector general opened an investigation Thursday into department and FBI actions before the election, including whether FBI Director James Comey followed established policies in the email investigation of Hillary Clinton.

Democrats have blamed Comey’s handling of the inquiry into Clinton’s use of a private email server, and his late-October public letter about the case, in part for her loss to Republican Donald Trump.

Workers are now putting final touches on preparations for next week’s Inauguration Day festivities, and the new probe will not change the election results. But it revives questions of whether the FBI took actions that might have influenced the outcome.

Inspector General Michael Horowitz, the department’s internal watchdog, will direct the investigation, which comes in response to requests from members of Congress and the public.

Comy said he was pleased about the review and the FBI would cooperate fully with the inspector general.

“I hope very much he is able to share his conclusions and observations with the public because everyone will benefit from thoughtful evaluation and transparency regarding this matter,” he said in a statement.

Officials: More than 40% of California out of drought

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — More than 40 percent of California is out of drought, federal drought-watchers said Thursday at the tail end of powerful storms that sent thousands of people fleeing from flooding rivers in the north, unleashed burbling waterfalls in southern deserts, and doubled the vital snowpack in the Sierra Nevada in little more than a week.

Declaring California as a whole to be past its official three-year drought emergency will be up to Gov. Jerry Brown, who will probably wait until the end of the winter rain and snow

season to make that decision.

But for people in northern cities such as Sacramento, where state workers opened flood gates to ease pressure on levees for the first time in a dozen years, releasing a two-mile-wide torrent of excess water from the surging Sacramento River, the call on declaring the dry spell over in Northern California looked much clearer.

The weekly drought report by federal and academic water experts showed 42 percent of the state had emerged from drought. This time last year, only 3 percent of California was out of drought.

Mass murderer says prison isolation ‘damaged’ him

SKIEN, Norway (AP) — Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik told a panel of judges Thursday that his solitary confinement in prison had deeply damaged him and made him even more radical in his neo-Nazi beliefs.

Dressed in a black suit, the right-wing extremist who killed 77 people in a 2011 bomb attack and shooting spoke coherently and without emotion as he addressed the panel considering if his isolation is inhumane.

Breivik, 37, spoke during a hearing at the high-security prison in southern Norway where he is serving a 21-year sentence and has been in solitary confinement since 2012.

The government is appealing a lower court ruling that held his constant segregation was degrading and violated European human rights standards.

Saying he felt locked in a bubble, Breivik complained about his lack of personal contacts. He is allowed to receive visits from family and friends, but hasn’t had any except one from his mother before she died.

The self-proclaimed neo-Nazi also told the three-judge panel he agreed with government attorneys’ evaluation that he had become more radicalized in prison.

Attorney General Fredrik Sejersted, representing the government, said that before Breivik carried out the 2011 massacre, he had envisioned continuing to be a fascist, right-wing extremist leader if he ended up in prison instead of killed by police during the attacks.





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