



**DALLAS MEN SENTENCED FOR POACHING BULL ELK** REGION/3A

**INSIDE TODAY: YOUR GUIDE TO SPRING PROJECTS**



# EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 2017

141st Year, No. 127

WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

## Army drafts plan to transfer Depot

Delayed handover date set for Dec. 1

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
*East Oregonian*

It may be later than expected, but the U.S. Army has submitted a draft agreement to transfer ownership of the former Umatilla Chemical Depot into local hands. Members of the Columbia

Development Authority met over the phone Tuesday to review the 22-page document, which director Greg Smith said marks a huge milestone.

"It means we're in the home stretch of transferring the property," Smith said.

However, Smith added the

agreement was due by February, and delays have already cost the CDA millions of dollars in lost economic development over the past two years.

The latest timeline from the Army Base Realignment and Closure Division pushes the proposed transfer date back even further, from Sept. 1 to Dec. 1.

"This is an extraordinarily frustrating process," Smith said.

The CDA plans to use a portion of the depot land for industrial development in Umatilla and Morrow counties. Smith said a number of industries have shown interest in the property, including data centers, animal feed producers, aggregate mining and four different national hotel chains.

See **DEPOT/12A**

## Report: Wolf growth rate weak in '16

By **ERIC MORTENSON**  
*Capital Bureau*

SALEM — Oregon had only two more confirmed wolves at the end of 2016 than it did the year before, a growth rate the state wildlife department described as "weak" and a sharp drop from the 27 to 36 percent growth rates the previous three years.

The state visually documented 112 wolves at the end of 2016, according to ODFW's annual report. At the end of 2015, Oregon had 110 confirmed wolves.

Department spokeswoman Michelle Dennehy acknowledged the low population gain but said ODFW is not concerned.

"It's one year, one data point, based on what we saw," she said. "It's not a trend of growth rates decreasing."

Russ Morgan, ODFW's wolf program manager, said the weak population gain is a "byproduct of our counting methodology," in which wolves aren't counted without a confirmed sighting. He called that method "very conservative."

"You get what you get," he said. "It's not the actual population, but the actual minimum. You know there can't be fewer."

In the future, the department may rely more on pack counts than on breeding pair counts, he said, and include population estimates based on known birth rates and other information.

Oregon Wild, a conservation group long involved in wolf management issues, holds an opposite view.

In a prepared statement, Conservation Director Steve Pedery noted the report shows population growth is "stalled" and the number of breeding pairs and packs declined from 2015.

"This raises troubling questions about ODFW's continuing drive to pursue hunting and trapping," Pedery said. Oregon Wild and other activists believe the state may ultimately allow hunting of wolves, as it does cougars and bears.

The ODFW report lists several reasons why the wolf count is low, including disease.

Blood samples taken from wolves commonly show high rates of exposure to parvovirus; the same is true of domestic dogs, said Morgan, the ODFW wolf program manager. But in 2016, 68 percent of samples taken were positive for a specific marker that shows active or recent infections. Parvovirus can increase pup mortality rates, which would affect short-term population growth rates. However, the report indicates the finding is not expected to impact the wolf population long-term.

Another possibility is what the report calls known or unknown "human-caused" mortality. Seven wolves are known to have been killed during the year, including four by ODFW itself. The department shot members of the Imnaha Pack, including longtime alpha wolf OR-4, in March 2016. The wolves had attacked and eaten or injured calves and sheep in private pastures five times that spring.

Meanwhile, Oregon State Police continue to investigate two other wolf killings, and one wolf was legally shot by a herder when it was caught in the act

See **WOLVES/12A**

## Pendleton SWAT holds training in now-vacant Elks building



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Members of the Pendleton SWAT team train with Umatilla County Sheriff's department deputies and Hermiston Police officers in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks building on Tuesday in Pendleton. The Pendleton chapter of the Elks has ceased operating in their old building due to falling membership.

## Fraternal order fizzles out

Pendleton Elks close Third Street lodge due to dwindling membership

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
*East Oregonian*

At its height, a visitor would be hard pressed to find a local man who wasn't a member of Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Lodge No. 288.

The Pendleton Elks Lodge has since hit hard times, with leaders deciding to close the lodge at the end of March.

On Tuesday, as police used the abandoned building at 14 SE 3rd St. for SWAT training, local leaders talked about the

club's decline over the last half century and what's next for the organization.

Larry Blanc, the Pendleton Elks' esteemed leading knight and public relations coordinator, said the local Elks lodge "voluntarily surrendered the charter" to the national organization, which means the lodge will be mostly dormant for the near future.

Under the agreement, Blanc and two other trustees will

See **ELKS/11A**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton Police SWAT team members secure a stairwell in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks building while training Tuesday in Pendleton.

## Data boosts economy, but not without growing pains



AP photo/Andrew Selsky

In this July 2016 photo, the Facebook Data Center is seen in Prineville.

Pineville hosts Facebook and Apple data centers

By **AMANDA PEACHER**  
*Oregon Public Broadcasting*

In 2012, Steve Duke's garage in Prineville was filled with cardboard boxes. He and his family had reluctantly begun packing up toys, books and kitchen appliances for an imminent move to Texas.

Duke lost his job when his employer, Les Schwab Tires, moved its headquarters from Prineville to Bend. He spent the next year looking for work.

"It was horrible," Duke said. "There were no jobs in Central Oregon at that time."

But just before he was about to

uproot his life and move across the country, a friend encouraged Duke to apply for a job at Facebook. He was hired soon after. Now Duke schedules all of the electrical and mechanical maintenance for Facebook facilities in Prineville.

"Having [an] opportunity to stay here meant everything," Duke said. "I fully plan to retire in Central Oregon."

His community is one of many Northwest timber towns that struggled to reinvent themselves after the timber booms of the 1970s and '80s. Prineville was once home to at least five lumber mills, as well as the headquarters of Les Schwab.

A few years ago, the community welcomed an unexpected new

See **DATA/12A**

