

PENDLETON

Wyden talks rural health at St. Anthony

Weekend visit includes town hall, health care roundtable

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden pulled double duty Saturday during visits to Umatilla and Morrow counties, hosting a town hall meeting in Boardman followed by a private discussion on rural health care with local doctors, administrators and patients in Pendleton.

The latter was part of Wyden's "rural health care listening tour" that included stops in Corvallis, Bend, Medford and Newport. Saturday's panel at St. Anthony Hospital voiced concerns about how cuts to Medicaid might affect services, and the challenge of recruiting new physicians to Eastern Oregon.

Wyden said there is a definite worry over budget cuts to Medicaid, and if that happens, it would "hit rural Oregon like a wrecking ball."

Harry Geller, St. Anthony president, said the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act has been key to lowering the uninsured rate for health insurance. Had the Republican plan to repeal and replace Obamacare succeeded, Geller said 400,000 Oregonians would have lost coverage.

Greg Miller, with the Mirasol Family Health Center in Hermiston — part of the Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinics network — said Medicaid expansion has allowed them to provide more services such as dietitians and dental care for migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

The more they can do to keep Medicaid, the more their patients can maintain access to health care, Miller said.

Troy LeGore, vice president of Good Shepherd Health Care System in Hermiston, said Medicaid expansion is a necessity for their patient base. Another



Sen. Ron Wyden speaks informally during a private roundtable discussion about rural health care with doctors, administrators and patients on Saturday at St. Anthony Hospital.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



Sen. Ron Wyden hugs Pendleton High School teacher Kathryn Youngman at the beginning of a private discussion about rural health care with doctors, administrators and patients on Saturday at St. Anthony Hospital.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

challenge, Legore said, is finding ways to recruit physicians into rural areas.

In particular, LeGore said

they do rely heavily on help from overseas in the form of Visa sponsorships to fill those positions.

"If that's impeded in any fashion, that's going to hurt us," he said.

Though Wyden said he is a supporter of the Visa program to recruit physicians, he added that better medical training in America needs to be part of the solution.

Kathryn Youngman, a Spanish teacher at Pendleton High School and three-time cancer survivor, was also asked to relay personal experiences dealing with her health insurance network while she was sick.

Youngman described one situation where it took eight months to resolve a conflict in network, all while undergoing chemotherapy. That being said, she is quick to point out that she is in a relatively great situation.

"I'm golden. I have insurance. I have a good provider. These folks on Medicaid, they don't," Youngman said. "It is essential that rural populations have Medicaid."

In addition to Medicaid, Youngman urged Wyden to continue pursuing a bill he introduced in March that would force pharmacy

benefit managers, such as Express Scripts Holding Company and CVS Health Corporation, to disclose the discounts they receive from drug manufacturers and shed more transparency on the cost of prescription medication.

Wyden discussed that bill further in Boardman, saying he would not sit around and allow drug middlemen to throw a veil of secrecy over what they charge.

"The problem is, we don't know what they're putting in their pocket and what they might be putting in your pocket," Wyden told the town hall at Riverside Junior-Senior High School.

Town hall

Other questions raised by constituents at the town hall ranged from immigration to veterans benefits and funding for higher education.

When it comes to America's immigration system, Wyden said it is a "broken, dysfunctional mess."

"This is very high-stakes stuff," he said.

Wyden said he has worked in the past with a bipartisan

group of lawmakers that voted to improve border security, while also allowing undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to pay a fine and place themselves on the track for citizenship — so long as they can prove they've committed no other crimes.

"I'm still hopeful we can get something like that passed," Wyden said.

Jennifer Rodriguez-Peña, an 18-year-old senior at Riverside, said she is the first member of her family to go to college and asked Wyden what Congress is doing to make school affordable. Wyden pointed immediately to the Secure Rural Schools Act, which has contributed \$3 billion to the Oregon Common School Fund through timber payments on federal land.

"Now, what we gotta do is figure out how to pay for it again and get harvest up in a sustainable way," Wyden said.

Larry Lindsay, who recently celebrated 50 years on the Port of Morrow commission, pointed out that trade along the Columbia River has taken a massive hit since the Port of Portland lost its container shipping service.

Lindsay said businesses at the Port of Morrow are still finding ways to ship their products overseas, but are paying more money than they did before to truck containers up to Seattle and Tacoma, Washington. That cost can add up to an additional \$500-\$1,000 per container.

"We suffer when Portland suffers," Lindsay said.

Wyden said he does not have all the answers, but listening at town halls allows him to take those perspectives back to Washington, D.C.

"This is what the Founding Fathers wanted it to look like," he said.

Wyden held another town hall Saturday evening in La Grande and at McLoughlin High School in Milton-Freewater Sunday. About 100 people attended the Milton-Freewater event.

Contact George Plaver at gplaver@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

Man dead, Pilot Rock woman injured in Rieth Road crash

East Oregonian

One man died and a Pilot Rock woman suffered serious injuries Saturday in a one-vehicle wreck on Rieth Road west of Pendleton.

According to the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, a 2001 white Jeep Cherokee was westbound when it missed a curve and hit a rock outcropping.

It is unknown how long the vehicle was in the roadway before a passing train saw the wreck and reported it to dispatch Saturday at 7:16

a.m.

Emergency responders found the vehicle resting upside down in the middle of the road with the passenger side of the vehicle crushed inward, according to a written statement from the sheriff's office. One woman was outside the vehicle receiving aid from passersby.

Sheriff Terry Rowan confirmed the victim was Angela Salemmme of Pilot Rock. The Pendleton Fire Department responded and helped transport Salemmme via air ambulance to Kadlec

Regional Medical Center, Richland, Washington.

Jim Hall, hospital spokesperson, said Salemmme was in serious condition as of Monday afternoon.

Sheriff's deputies initially thought Salemmme was the sole occupant of the Jeep. However, the tow truck moved the wreckage and revealed a man dead in the front passenger seat.

The crash is under investigation. The sheriff's office reported it would release the identity of the other victim after contacting relatives.

PENDLETON

Lifelong quilter to share craft at show

East Oregonian

Joyce Dean Gieszler is the featured quilter for the Pendleton Quilt Show.

The Hillsboro woman became fascinated with sewing when she was 4 years old.

"She told her mother she knew why the sewing machine was called a Singer — because it hummed," her website biography said.

Presented by Crazy Horse Quilters, the show will feature special displays of quilts by Gieszler and Alice Fossatti. In addition, the show is expected to display 200 quilts from people from across the region. Also, quilting vendors will be on hand offering a wide selection of quilting supplies and sewing accessories.

The show is Saturday, May 6 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, May 7 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at

the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate. The admission fee is \$5, which is good for both days.

Gieszler's love for quilting started when she happened upon a quilt shop in Texas that was housed in a converted carriage house.

"It was love at first sight," she said.

Gieszler has taught quilting for 15 years and designed patterns for more than a decade. In addition, she is the author of several books, including "Fantastic Stash Quilts" and "Then and Now Quilts." According to her blog, Gieszler plans to introduce a handful of new patterns at the show.

A limited number of quilters can take a class from Gieszler Friday, May 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Attendees will utilize her pattern "Grandma's Surprise" with several variations available. The session costs \$40 and participants will

need to have a kaleidoscope ruler with a blunt tip. After the class, people can remain on site to sew.

For more information, contact Marilyn Lohmann at lom1127@q.com, 541-377-0005 or visit www.krazy-horsequilters.org. For more about Gieszler, visit www.quilterchickdesigns.com.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at malgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

BRIEFLY

Five Pendleton men face charges for fake money

PENDLETON — Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus revealed the names of the five men facing charges for a counterfeiting scheme in Pendleton.

Dustin Verrall, Timothy McMurphy, Zachary James Norton, Tyler Dunn and Daniel Wilson, all of Pendleton, are under indictment for felonies, according to Primus.

Fake \$100 bills started showing up at Pendleton businesses in early March. Pendleton police detective Howard Bowen said the culprits used chemicals to remove ink from \$1 bills, then printed \$100s over the blanks.

Umatilla County Circuit Court records revealed no past criminal cases for Dunn or Wilson.

McMurphy in 2008 pleaded guilty to second-degree robbery and burglary in Umatilla County, both felonies. He took another deal in 2015 and pleaded guilty to felonies of coercion and third-degree assault. And in 2016 he pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine.

Norton pleaded guilty in 2014 in Umatilla County to second-degree burglary and in 2015 faced domestic violence charges and pleaded guilty to misdemeanors of assault and strangulation. He pleaded guilty in 2016 to tampering with a witness, a felony.

Verrall has a 2012 conviction in Umatilla County for possession of Hydrocodone.

He has an arraignment Tuesday to face five counts of first-degree forgery.

Quaempts resigns from CTUIR board

MISSION — Justin Quaempts, an at-large member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's board of trustees, submitted his resignation Monday.

The board accepted the resignation, according to a press release from CTUIR, which was effective immediately.

Quaempts was in his second two-year term on the board after receiving the most votes in November's election for the at-large seat.

"We appreciate Mr. Quaempts' service to the Tribal membership," Board Chairman Gary Burke said in the statement.

The general council and election commission will schedule a special election to replace Quaempts.

The move comes eight weeks after the resignation of Dave Tovey, the executive director for the CTUIR. It also follows the October recall of Board Secretary David Close, who was replaced in a special election in February by Kat Brigham.



Quaempts

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

Spring Sale!

Pergolas · Patio Covers
Awnings · Sunrooms
Sun/Solar Shades · Screens & More!

Proudly Serving Eastern Oregon With Quality Outdoor Living Products Since 2009!

Backyard By Design, LLC

541-720-0772

FREE No Obligation Estimates!

www.mybackyardbydesign.com

FOUR SEASONS BUILDING PRODUCTS | SUN CONTROL | Sunesta | BUILD THE BEST FOUR SEASONS SUNROOMS

We extend our sincere condolences to the family of

STEVE MCGEE

and to his employees at

The Rainbow Cafe

Carter & Nancy Kerns

The Milarkey Building