

ECLIPSE: Spray has one motel and one convenience store

Continued from 1A

it out. Wheeler County commissioner and Spray city council member Debbie Starkey led the meeting along with her husband, Phil, the school district superintendent. The couple lived in Hermiston for several decades before moving to the small town.

"I want to make something perfectly clear: I take no responsibility for anything that's going on with this eclipse," she said to laughter around the room. "I'm really just trying to serve as a clearinghouse for information."

Consider Starkey Spray's chicken little. She went to a county meeting in January and realized that nearby cities were way ahead in planning for the eclipse.

"It is coming and that's the main thing: you really don't have a choice," she said. "You could sit there like we did for a year and think it was going to go away, but it's not."

The meeting-goers spent several hours trying to cover all the minutiae of accommodating and catering to thousands of visitors with limited resources and a tiny working adult population. These are issues towns all along the path of totality are grappling with. The concerns range widely, from whether the town could run out of water to where the incoming hordes will park. After all, there's only one main street in town, and no one wants their small streets lined with strangers' RVs.

"It's overwhelming," said Spray's mayor, Daniel Allen. "Are people scared? No, we're not scared. We're just

concerned that after the four days are over, what we're going to have left?"

The main concerns boil down to three big questions:

• **How are you going to keep everyone safe in an area prone to forest fires, heat stroke, and snake bites?**

As the group repeatedly pointed out, to cover the county's 1,715 square miles, there's only a half-dozen deputies, four ambulances and one medical clinic (the nearest hospital is 90 minutes away — with no traffic — in the neighboring county).

Which means local volunteer EMTs and firefighters might not get much sleep. Nor likely will Allen, who doubles as mayor and the town's only physician assistant.

• **How are you going to house and feed all of these people when there is only one motel and one convenience store?**

Like neighboring towns, Spray is looking to turn any big patch of grass — such as the school and town park — into campsites, where they hope to house anywhere from hundreds to thousands of campers.

Several ranchers are planning to turn their fields into campgrounds at hundreds of dollars per site for the weekend. Some are gearing up to offer water hookups, food and even entertainment — full weekend mini-festivals — while others will just provide space for toilets and to pitch a tent.

"We're planning up to 375 campsites," Frank Asher chimed from the back of the group as the Starkeys try

to add up how many people the town can handle. Asher's plans are by far the biggest in the county: accommodating potentially 3,000 campers (the maximum occupancy under the county permit), although he's offering the barest of necessities: space, bathrooms, and access to the river and hiking.

In tandem, local groups are debating cookouts to feed all the campers. The school is thinking of hosting a bake sale; the local grange is considering a biscuits and gravy breakfast; others are considering breakfast burritos or cowboy breakfasts.

"Nobody's really talked about something like a potato bar, a spaghetti feed or anything for lunch, so those things are sort of open," said Debbie Starkey as she runs through the list, writing everything on a giant pad of paper at the front of the group.

Some, like Asher, see big economic potential. "We just decided that we would step up to the plate and try to get some folks to come to Spray," he said. "Maybe give our economy a little shot in the arm, because we definitely need it." The hope is visitors would love the area so much they would come back again.

To attract visitors, Wheeler County, like neighboring Grant County, created a webpage with links to all the camping, housing and food options local people are offering, in addition to existing restaurants and gas stations.

But the economic opportunity comes with a big gamble: No one knows how many people are coming, so it's risky for a low-income region to stock up on food, ice, and help and have it go to waste.

BRIEFLY

Man charged in Oregon cliff death strikes plea deal

HOOD RIVER (AP) — A Bend man charged with pushing his girlfriend to her death off a trail in the Columbia River Gorge has pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide and coercion after striking a plea deal.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports Thursday that Steven P. Nichols had increased the life insurance policy on 23-year-old Rhonda Casto to \$1 million months before her 2009 death and was charged with murder.

But evidence problems created challenges for prosecutors.

The Oregon Supreme Court ruled an interview with Nichols after his arrest was inadmissible.

A lead detective also destroyed crime scene and autopsy photos.

Nichols was secretly indicted while living in China and was arrested in San Francisco in 2015.

He received three years of probation, with credit for 19 months of jail time while awaiting trial.

Rescuers say man killed on Mount Hood was not using ice ax

PORTLAND (AP) — Rescuers who had come to a man's aid after he tumbled down Mount Hood in Oregon say he had not been using an ice ax.

Witnesses heard 32-year-old John Thornton Jenkins say, "I should have had my ice ax in my hand," shortly after he tumbled about 600 feet down the slope, *The Oregonian/OregonLive* reported Wednesday.

Rescuers believe Jenkins had been hiking with trekking poles. He was pronounced dead Sunday after an Oregon Army National Guard Black Hawk helicopter brought him to a Portland hospital.

Jenkins had been able to speak with rescuers, but gradually showed difficulty breathing, Portland Mountain Rescue team leader Rocky Henderson said.

"I've been doing this for 30 years," Henderson said. "This is my first experience of having a person in my care expire."

Rescuers are not sure if Jenkins had been climbing up or down when he fell, they said.

20 attorneys general call for independent probe into Russia

BOSTON (AP) — A group of 20 attorneys general, all Democrats, is calling for the appointment of an independent special counsel to continue the investigation into Russian interference in last year's presidential election.

The group led by Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey called Republican President Donald Trump's firing of FBI Director James Comey during the ongoing investigation a "violation of public trust."

The group said in a Thursday letter to Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein that only the appointment of an independent special counsel "with full powers and resources" can begin to restore public confidence.

Those signing the letter include the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Vermont and Washington.

HANFORD: Cave-in could have happened four days before discovery

Continued from 1A

safekeeping location for radioactive waste dating from World War II.

Authorities plan to investigate why and when the roof of the tunnel suffered a partial cave-in, creating the sinkhole that poured dirt into the tunnel containing railroad cars with nuclear waste, the agency said.

The cave-in could have happened as many as four days before its discovery Tuesday morning, said energy department spokesman Mark Heeter.

"We don't know exactly when it occurred," Heeter said.

No one was hurt and no radiation escaped into the environment before the sinkhole was filled in with 54 truckloads of soil late Wednesday night, the Energy Department said.

The 8 feet of dirt that fell into the tunnel after its roof partially collapsed may have prevented radiation from escaping into the environment, Heeter said.

But Washington state officials were taken aback upon learning after the collapse that tunnel inspections were made on what they called an infrequent basis.

"It's not acceptable that the hole could have been open for four days," said Alex Smith, nuclear waste manager for the Washington state Department of Ecology, which helps regulate the Hanford site.

Smith said that radioactivity would have been detected immediately by monitoring devices if it had escaped from the tunnel into the air.

The 360-foot long rail tunnel was built in 1956

from timber, concrete and steel. Eight flatbed railroad cars loaded with radioactive material were parked inside when the entrance was sealed in 1965.

The waste came from a nearby factory where between plutonium was extracted from 1956 to 1988 from spent nuclear fuel rods as part of the process to make nuclear weapons.

Smith said the tunnel contains about 780 cubic yards of waste — a mixture of radioactive and chemical waste and irradiated equipment, including the contaminated rail cars used to haul the fuel rods.

U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry said the filling of the hole "was accomplished swiftly and safely to help prevent any further complications."

"Our next step is to identify and implement longer-

term measures to further reduce risks," Perry said.

Hanford, created during the World War II Manhattan Project to build an atomic bomb, for decades made plutonium for nuclear weapons. Now it is engaged in cleaning up the radioactive waste.

The tunnel collapse reinforced longstanding criticism that toxic remnants at Hanford are being stored in haphazard and unsafe conditions, and time is running out to deal with the problem.

It also prompted a demand from Washington state officials for the federal Energy Department to immediately assess the integrity of Hanford tunnels.

"The infrastructure built to temporarily store radioactive waste is now more than a half-century old," said Maia Bellon, director of the state ecology department.

EAST OREGONIAN

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Clouds and sun, a shower; cooler	Partly sunny, a shower; cool	A passing afternoon shower	Cool with some sun, then clouds	Overcast, a little rain; cool

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

56°	39°	58°	39°	60°	40°	61°	42°	55°	41°
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HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

64°	42°	64°	43°	65°	43°	66°	45°	61°	42°
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PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	67°	52°
Normals	70°	46°
Records	98° (1931)	28° (1911)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.04"
Normal month to date 0.41"
Year to date 8.25"
Last year to date 4.52"
Normal year to date 5.52"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	73°	55°
Normals	72°	45°
Records	95° (1993)	29° (1999)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.07"
Normal month to date 0.43"
Year to date 5.95"
Last year to date 3.57"
Normal year to date 4.42"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:28 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:16 p.m.
Moonrise today	9:59 p.m.
Moonset today	6:57 a.m.

Last	New	First	Full
May 18	May 25	June 1	June 9

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Showers today; however, a couple of showers and a thunderstorm across the north.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Times of sun and clouds today with a shower; cooler, but dry in the south.

Western Washington: Variable clouds today with a shower and thunderstorm around.

Eastern Washington: Variable cloudiness today with a shower in places.

Cascades: A little rain today; however, rain and snow showers in the south.

North Central California: A quick shower today; clouds and sun in the interior mountains. Mainly clear tonight.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	56	45	t	54	45	sh
Baker City	52	28	sh	51	27	c
Bend	52	32	pc	51	31	pc
Brookings	52	44	sh	52	43	c
Burns	52	30	pc	51	25	sh
Enterprise	44	27	r	46	29	sh
Eugene	57	43	t	55	41	sh
Heppner	56	36	pc	55	35	pc
Hermiston	64	42	pc	64	43	pc
John Day	54	34	pc	51	31	c
Klamath Falls	50	27	pc	50	27	c
La Grande	51	34	r	52	33	sh
Meacham	48	31	r	51	33	sh
Medford	60	42	c	59	41	sh
Newport	53	44	t	52	44	sh
North Bend	55	46	sh	55	45	sh
Ontario	58	38	c	61	36	pc
Pasco	66	40	pc	66	42	pc
Pendleton	56	39	pc	58	39	pc
Portland	58	46	t	56	46	c
Redmond	55	31	pc	54	30	pc
Salem	57	44	t	55	43	c
Spokane	53	38	c	56	40	sh
Ukiah	49	31	sh	49	30	sh
Vancouver	57	46	t	55	45	c
Walla Walla	60	43	pc	60	45	sh
Yakima	64	37	pc	64	40	pc

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	87	53	s	84	53	s
Hong Kong	87	79	c	86	77	sh
Jerusalem	78	57	s	84	60	s
London	66	51	pc	65	52	pc
Mexico City	81	57	pc	76	56	pc
Moscow	48	30	pc	51	33	pc
Paris	68	53	t	66	50	pc
Rome	75	56	pc	73	54	pc
Seoul	71	54	c	74	52	t
Sydney	68	57	pc	72	59	pc
Tokyo	77	64	pc	68	62	r

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Saturday
Boardman	WSW 6-12	WSW 8-16
Pendleton	SW 6-12	WSW 7-14

UV INDEX TODAY

1 3 5 5 3 1

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

National Summary: Rain will gather over the central Appalachians and the Chesapeake Bay region while severe storms extend from the southern Appalachians to the lower Mississippi Valley today. Showers will dot the Northwest.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 99° in Fernandina Beach, Fla. Low 25° in International Falls, Minn.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	79	56	s	85	56	pc
Atlanta	82	63	t	76	59	t
Atlanta City	57	50	c	55	49	r
Baltimore	58	48	r	56	45	r
Billingham	84	50	s	62	41	sh
Birmingham	80	63	t	77	56	s
Boise	56	37	c	57	38	pc
Boston	53	45	c	54	43	c
Charleston, SC	89	68	pc	78	60	t
Charleston, WV	64	52	r	69	50	pc
Chicago	66	45	pc	75	54	pc
Cleveland	59	46	c	66	51	pc
Dallas	79	60	pc	83	61	s
Denver	77	49	s	84	48	pc
Detroit	63	45	pc	68	48	pc
El Paso	87	63	s	94	64	pc
Fairbanks	66	45	sh	65	42	pc
Fargo	74	47	pc	83	53	s
Honolulu	85	74	sh	84	73	sh
Houston	87	64	pc	87	64	s
Indianapolis	69	47	pc	72	55	pc
Jacksonville	93	65	pc	83	64	t
Kansas City	73	49	s	78	56	s
Las Vegas	92	64	s	84	61	t
Little Rock	74	56	sh	77	54	s