

FIRE: Two single-propeller planes circled the burn

Continued from 1A

getting a bulldozer working for this very reason. Three state troopers reassured him firefighters saved structures.

Pardee moved here about a year ago from Biloxi, Mississippi “to keep from getting shot at anymore.” He said wildfire was a new danger for him.

“I now know what my vehicle tops out at,” he said.

Locals walked horses down Kirk Road, away from the danger zone. Reitz said one barn was lost in the fire, but no livestock.

“There were local ranchers moving the livestock to safe locations,” she said.

One fire started within a quarter mile of a barn belonging to Preston Winn on CRP land northeast



Staff photo by Phil Wright

Flames peek over a ridge Wednesday afternoon in Weston.

of Weston, but he said a neighbor put it out as the wind pushed it south. If the wind was blowing north, he said it could have done real damage to his property.

Reitz said multiple agencies responded to calls for aid, including Pendleton,

Hermiston, Helix, Pilot Rock and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Members of the Oregon State Police and the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office kept roads clear for emergency vehicles. The Oregon Department

of Forestry also provided resources, including a helicopter with a water bucket.

Two single-propeller planes circled the burn, and a larger plane dumped fire retardant on the fire. Farmers also provided key resources for the effort.

“We couldn't have gotten this contained without them,” Reitz said.

Firefighters began heading home around 8 p.m., and the East Umatilla crew headed home about 9 p.m. Reitz said the Oregon Department of Forestry stayed overnight to monitor the hot spots.

She also said the crews had to thank the Long Branch Cafe & Saloon in Weston for cooking burgers and other food for the firefighters.

East Oregonian news staff also contributed to this story.

CARE: Keeping the animals' living spaces clean a big part of the challenge

Continued from 1A

also tries to avoid putting a coat on her animals, which many people do to keep them clean before showing.

“I'll wash her tonight and put a coat on her right before she shows,” Leetch said. “But they pant and foam, and it's not good.”

Leetch also takes Wilma for frequent walks outside her pen, to work her before the show.

“At home she'd have a lot more space to run around,” Leetch said. “The pen's kind of small.”

Some have unique needs.

“With the pigs, there's a lot of skincare needs,” Baker said. “Their skin's like ours, so we use gentle soap. We also put sunscreen on them, because if we're not careful, it can scar.”

For steers and lambs, Baker said it's important to keep the pens well-ventilated and cool.

Keeping the animals' living spaces clean is a big part of the challenge, as well.

“You don't let the animals lie down, or they get shavings or dirt on them,” said Ethan Hobson, 17, an Echo School student who shows beef.

He said the new facility makes animal hygiene slightly easier.

“The wash racks are easier to use,” he said.

Maintaining the animals' pens, and the space between them, is also a constant task.

“We probably rake the stalls every hour,” said Sydney Parker, an 11-year-old who was busy shoveling the aisles in the swine barn.

In the small animal barn, competitors have to watch for some unique issues.

Billie Roberts, who shows guinea pigs and rabbits, said the animals have to be regularly

“We check their ears, eyes, mouths. We clean their cages twice every two days.”

— Billie Roberts, shows guinea pigs and rabbits

checked for lots of little things.

“We check them and make sure their nails aren't chipped, because it can rip off their toenails and make them bleed,” she said. “We soak towels and lay them across the cage so they drip down, or get our hands wet and wipe them on their ears.”

They also lay frozen water bottles alongside the animals to keep them cool.

With so many animals in a small space, it's important to be constantly aware of their conditions.

“We check their ears, eyes, mouths. We clean their cages twice every two days,” Roberts said. “Because it's summer, there's the possibility of flystrike, where the flies crawl up their butts and eat the insides.”

Unpleasant problems like that can be avoided by regular cleaning of cages, Roberts said.

For animals like geese, cleaning the pens is a two-person job.

“They can fly,” said Melany Post, a seventh-grader from Arlington who shows the large birds. “They just don't realize they can. They're a lot harder to keep from escaping.”

One person has to stand guard and keep the geese in one corner of the stall while the rest of it gets cleaned.

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CATTLE: Sells three market steers every year

Continued from 1A

Urenda said. More important, it represents her ticket to college. Steers like Wyoming can fetch as much as \$5,000 at auction, and Tejada Urenda has already set aside \$13,000 to pursue a degree in agriculture.

“This is the only way, aside from scholarships, I'll be able to go to college,” she explained. “It's going to fund my future.”

For Tejada Urenda, raising cattle is more than a hobby — it's entrepreneurship. Over the course of three years in 4-H and now two years with Hermiston FFA, she has established her own livestock program from the ground up, complete with breeding stock and market animals.

And, while the rewards can be rich, the amount of time and work it takes to care for all those cows is a big ask for any high-schooler.

In addition to classes, student council and the National Honor Society, Tejada Urenda spends hours every day with her animals. She must bathe them, groom them and make sure they have plenty of food, water and shade during the summer.

“It's like a little beauty salon at my place,” she jokes.

The cattle actually stay on her family's pasture just outside of Hermiston, where her father, Martin Tejada, also raises livestock. Tejada Urenda visits the herd twice a day, a chore that has become much easier since she earned her driver's license earlier this year.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hermiston junior Isel Tejada Urenda lets her heifers drink water after showing the animals on Wednesday at the Umatilla County Fair in Hermiston.

Tejada Urenda sells three market steers every year at the Milton-Freewater Junior Show, Pendleton Junior Livestock Show and Umatilla County Fair. She attends seven livestock shows total between the months of April and September, which makes for a packed schedule.

“Sure, sleepless nights are sometimes a deal, but it's fine,” Tejada Urenda said with a smile. “I have a planner at home, and I always try to ask for dates ahead of time.”

Leah Smith, an agriculture teacher and FFA adviser at Hermiston High School, said Tejada Urenda has done as much as she can to continue growing her cattle program through hard work, commitment and motiva-

tion. “She's really aspiring to do something that's not as easy for her as for someone who has 100 acres out their back door,” Smith said. “This cattle program is a lifelong commitment.”

County fair is the one week that all FFA kids look forward to every year, Tejada Urenda said. It is a bitter-sweet combination of hellos and goodbyes, a chance to visit with old friends while at the same time bidding farewell to animals they have spent months raising.

Wyoming — named for the state where he was born — will be sold at Saturday's fair auction. Every year, Tejada Urenda said she cries when it comes time to part with one of her cows, but understands that is the nature

of the business.

“His purpose in life is to be a good market steer,” she said. “I just remember the great life I gave them.”

Tejada Urenda is not sure yet where she will go to college, but when she does leave, that won't mean the end of her program. She plans to keep some of her higher quality cattle, and her father has offered to care for the herd as long as she continues to pay for their feed.

“It's something I hold near and dear to my heart,” she said. “I love the species. It's something that if you work, they'll work with you.”

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RECLAIM: Employed 28 people in Boardman at its peak

Continued from 1A

scrap tires every year. Tires came in shredded and pulverized into a product known as crumb rubber, similar to the grainy material used for cushioning in artificial turf.

Crumb rubber was then fed into the plant, where it was heated at high temperatures in the absence of oxygen — a process known as pyrolysis. That resulted in the separation of two main products: recovered carbon black, which is used as a reinforcing agent in rubber products, and tire-derived oil, which can be mixed into alternative fuels.

“Essentially, it's true recycling for tire rubber,” Redd said.

Changes in energy prices ultimately proved to be the Boardman plant's undoing. Between 2015 and early 2016, Redd said the price of crude oil fell from more than \$100 per barrel to around \$30 per barrel. Those low prices made it impossible for Reclaim to compete in the market.

“Our technology was not clearly viable at such low energy prices,” he said.

The Boardman plant stopped production in January 2016, though Reclaim held out for months to see if energy prices would recover or if the facility could be converted to another use. When nothing came up, Redd said they decided to divest their assets.

“Of course, it was a very difficult decision,” Redd said. “Boardman and the Port

of Morrow are really great places to operate. They've been completely supportive over the years.”

At its peak, Reclaim employed 28 people in Boardman. The company has since gone on to form a new joint venture, named Pyrolyx USA, seeking to recycle scrap tires with a different technology that Redd claims is cheaper and more efficient. A new plant will be built in Indiana.

Redd said the company has no other plans in Oregon, but hopes the former plant will be purchased and put to good use.

Assets at the facility include a full control room with electrical, oil and natural gas infrastructure. The port also offers rail and barge service, along with 50,000 gallons of bulk oil storage. There is room for expansion, according to Maas Companies.

Potential buyers may inspect the 20,000-square-foot building prior to the auction. Private appointments can be made with Maas Companies, which is handling the sale.

More details about the sale are available at www.maascompanies.com or by calling 507-285-1444.

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