

PENDLETON

Boutique soars past 2016 boarding numbers

By ANTONIO SIERA East Oregonian

A little more than halfway through 2017, Boutique Air has already surpassed the previous year's boarding numbers at the Pendleton airport.

The Eastern Oregon Regional Airport recorded 3,051 boarding through July, easily breezing by the 2,380 enplanements the airport reported for the entirety of 2016.

The 495 people who boarded Boutique planes in July is highest figure from this year and last. And if Boutique maintains its current pace, it would represent a nine-year high in annual boarding figures.

"We're pretty pleased with Boutique," Pendleton Airport Manager Steve Chrisman said Friday.

Boutique has one advantage its predecessor, SeaPort Airlines, didn't — it doesn't look like it will declare bankruptcy in the latter half of the year and cease operations in Pendleton.

But SeaPort also struggled before it's sudden end, posting weak boarding numbers that eventually put Pendleton in jeopardy of losing its Essential Air Service subsidy.

SeaPort ceased operations shortly after the city chose Boutique as its new airline, meaning the airport recorded no boardings in September, October and



Photo contributed by Boutique Air

A little more than halfway through 2017, Boutique Air has already surpassed the previous year's boarding numbers at the Pendleton airport.

November.

"It was a pretty lonely place for 3-4 months," Chrisman said.

Since launching service from Pendleton to Portland in December, Boutique's introductory \$49 airfare price has been a selling point for the airline and Chrisman hasn't received any word that they intend to raise it.

If Boutique continues to post strong boarding numbers, Chrisman said he would advocate to increase the number of flights from Pendleton.

While switching from the eight-seat Pilatus to a larger

plane, he said airlines have mostly moved away from medium sized planes that seated 19-50 passengers, and bringing in a plane any larger would probably limit the number of flights to and from Pendleton.

Instead, he would like to use the existing planes to perform more than three trips per day.

Boutique's initial success also has the city and the San Francisco-based company discussing new destinations, like Seattle and San Jose, California.

Michelle McNulty, Boutique's marketing and community manager, did

not return multiple requests for comment.

The California Bay area is the home of A^3, a Silicon Valley Airbus subsidiary that is testing an air taxi concept at the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range.

Chrisman said the airport's commercial air service has been an asset to the UAS industry, with one drone company specifically citing that fact as one of the reasons it came to Pendleton.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

Judge finds Freel incapable of proceeding in murder case

By PHIL WRIGHT East Oregonian

The prosecution of Evan Freel of Milton-Freewater for murder of his infant child is on hold while Freel undergoes treatment for competency.

Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer on Aug. 11 ordered the suspension of proceedings in the case, according to court documents. Brauer found Freel "lacks the fitness to proceed" under Oregon law.

Freel, 17, faces the charges of murder and first-degree criminal mistreatment. The state has accused Freel of killing his

5-month old son, Dominic, on June 8, 2016. The search warrant affidavit from Milton-Freewater officer Morgan Dunlap stated a medical examination of the baby's body showed multiple injuries consistent with what Freel told police he did to quiet his crying son.

According to Brauer's order, Freel is a danger to himself or others. He requires commitment to the Oregon State Hospital "until capacity is gained or regained."

Under Oregon Law, the maximum time Freel can stay at the hospital for this case is three years, according to the order, and the hospital shall provide the court with progress reports at least every 180 days.

Brauer set a hearing for Sept. 9 to check on the status of the case.

BRIEFLY

Mosquito control district plans aerial sprays

The West Umatilla Mosquito Control District will be conducting aerial mosquito control sprays at sunset Monday in response to three confirmed positive West Nile virus samples this year.

A press release states that the district will target 10,240 acres north and east of Hermiston and along U.S. Route 730 between the city of Umatilla and the Umatilla-Morrow county line that have high populations of vector mosquitoes, although no areas within city limits are set for spraying.

The district initially detected West Nile on June 21 and two more samples were confirmed last week by the Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Corvallis. The positive samples were collected on U.S. Route 730 near the county line, Umatilla, and east Hermiston near Highland Hills.

The district is encouraging the public to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites and report sightings of dead birds so that the district can track the spread of the virus.

Hermiston man killed in rollover crash on I-82

A Hermiston man was killed in a rollover crash on Interstate 82 around 1 a.m. Friday morning, according to Washington State Patrol.

Kenneth Nichols, 45, was driving eastbound on I-82 about 11 miles south of Kennewick. According to police, Nichols lost control of his vehicle near milepost 124 and over-corrected to the right. His vehicle rolled, and he was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Nichols was wearing a seatbelt. An investigation is underway, and at this time officers do not know whether alcohol or drugs were a factor. Nichols' next of kin have been notified.

Search underway for new Morrow County administrator

Cutsforth named interim administrator

By GEORGE PLAVEN East Oregonian

The search is underway for a new top administrative officer in Morrow County.

A job posting was released Tuesday for the position, which was created two years ago when Morrow County shuffled its government structure, eliminating the long-standing county judge position in favor of three part-time commissioners.

Jerry Sorte was hired as the county's first administrator, but resigned last month to accept a new job as community and economic development director with the city of Sweet Home. Sorte's last day with Morrow County was Friday.

In the meantime, county commissioners on Aug. 16 hired Kim Cutsforth, a former Heppner city manager, to fill the administrator role on an interim basis

until a full-time replacement is found. Cutsforth will begin Monday.

Karen Wolff, Morrow County human resources director, said Cutsforth was a natural fit with her experience and knowledge of the area. The county hopes to have a new full-time administrator in place before the end of the year, Wolff said. The first review of applications will be Friday, Sept. 29.

The county administrator reports to the board

of commissioners and works with department heads to provide general management and oversight of county government. The position pays between \$95,000 and \$125,000 per year, depending on qualifications, plus benefits.

For more information, contact Wolff at 541-676-5620 or kwolff@co.morrow.or.us.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

www.eastoregonian.com

To subscribe, call 1-800-522-0255
or go online to www.eastoregonian.com
and click on 'Subscribe'

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday, Monday and Dec. 25, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Copyright © 2017, EO Media Group

Subscriber services:
For home delivery, vacation stops or delivery concerns: 1-800-522-0255

Didn't receive your paper? Call 1-800-522-0255
before noon Tuesday through Friday
or before 10 a.m. Saturday
for same-day redelivery

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Table with columns: Subscription Type, Rate, Savings off cover price. Includes EZPay, Local home delivery, Single copy price.

ADVERTISING

Advertising Director: Marissa Williams
541-278-2669 • addirector@eastoregonian.com
Advertising Services: Laura Jensen
541-966-0806 • ljensen@eastoregonian.com
Multimedia Consultants:
• Danni Halladay
541-278-2683 • dhalladay@eastoregonian.com
• Jeanne Jewett
541-564-4531 • jjewett@eastoregonian.com
• Dayle Stinson
541-278-2670 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com
• Angela Treadwell
541-966-0827 • atreadwell@eastoregonian.com
• Audra Workman
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com

Classified & Legal Advertising

1-800-962-2819 or 541-278-2678
classifieds@eastoregonian.com or legal@eastoregonian.com
NEWS
• To submit news tips and press releases: • call 541-966-0818 •
fax 541-278-8314 • email news@eastoregonian.com
• To submit community events, calendar items and Your EO News:
email community@eastoregonian.com or call Tammy Malgesini at
541-564-4539 or Renee Struthers at 541-966-0818.
• To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries:
email rstruthers@eastoregonian.com or visit www.eastoregonian.
com/community/announcements
• To submit a Letter to the Editor: mail to Managing Editor Daniel
Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801 or email
editor@eastoregonian.com.
• To submit sports or outdoors information or tips:
541-966-0838 • sports@eastoregonian.com
COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Production Manager: Mike Jensen
541-215-0824 • mjensen@eastoregonian.com

AccuWeather.com Forecast. Includes daily forecast for Pendleton and Hermiston, almanac, regional forecast, and sun and moon phases.

Regional Cities and World Cities weather forecast. Includes temperature and wind data for various cities across the region and globally.

National Weather Today. Includes a map of the United States showing weather systems, a national summary, and national extremes.