

# Grant County sheriff cleared by Department of Justice

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Justice has found no “concrete evidence” that Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer unlawfully destroyed public records or issued concealed handgun licenses to out-of-state residents who occupied a national wildlife refuge in Harney County last year.

Palmer had been under investigation by DOJ since March 2016, in the aftermath of the 41-day armed standoff at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

The state agency that oversees training and discipline for public safety officials received multiple complaints about Palmer, and recommended DOJ investigate him, according to previous reporting by Oregon Public Broadcasting.

The sheriff, who has been in office since 2000, met with occupiers of the remote wildlife sanctuary in January 2016. County residents filed



In this 2015 file photo, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, left, hugs Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer as they enter a meeting with homeowners in Canyon City. The Oregon Department of Justice found insufficient evidence to file a criminal case against Palmer based on complaints that he destroyed public records and issued concealed handgun licenses to out-of-state residents.

complaints alleging Palmer had issued concealed handgun licenses to occupiers from other states.

Palmer also faced accusations that he deleted public records after John Day Police Chief Richard Gray filed a

complaint with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training alleging that Palmer deleted

a 2012 report that involved Gray.

Palmer had accused Gray, his then-opponent in the 2012 race for sheriff, of going into his office, a claim the Oregon State Police found no evidence to support.

Knowingly destroying a public record is considered a misdemeanor under Oregon law.

But DOJ Chief Counsel Michael Slauson said there was insufficient evidence to prove Palmer’s criminal wrongdoing beyond a reasonable doubt in a letter to Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter, dated Oct. 10.

Slauson said that the investigation was limited to “potentially criminal matters,” and the department did not opine upon whether Palmer complied with county policies or public records retention laws.

DOJ reviewed complaints submitted to the state’s Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, interviewed witnesses, reviewed sheriff’s office records and

policies, and court documents as part of a public records lawsuit filed by *The Oregonian* against the Grant County Sheriff’s Office.

Palmer produced the records after the lawsuit was filed, but was ordered in June to pay \$28,000 of the paper’s legal fees.

Lindsay Hale, director of DPSST’s professional standards division, was not immediately available for comment Thursday.

Other news outlets reported that an administrative committee within DPSST will look into the complaints about Palmer. Their review would have to do with professional standards for Oregon public safety professionals, not with state law.

A Grant County dispatcher said the sheriff’s office was unavailable for comment “after hours” Thursday at 4:30 p.m.

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

## BRIEFLY

### OSP identifies man struck by car

HERMISTON — Oregon State Police Sgt. Seth Cooney identified the man a car struck Wednesday afternoon north of Hermiston.

Victor De Diego Delmaral, 71, of Umatilla, tried to cross Highway 395 near Bensel Road when he stepped in front of a northbound Toyota sedan. The driver, Ralph Lortie of Stanfield, said he had nearly come to a stop when the collision occurred.

Cooney said a nearby commercial truck with a video cam caught clear footage of the incident. Delmaral was crossing illegally, but Cooney said state police don’t plan on giving him a citation.

A helicopter ambulance flew Delmaral to Kadlec Regional Medical Center, Richland, Washington. Cooney also said he did not know Delmaral’s medical condition but confirmed he was alive.

### Free flu shots for area veterans

BOARDMAN — Veterans can get free flu shots Friday at the Veterans Administration Telehealth Clinic in Boardman.

The Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center is sponsoring the walk-in flu shot clinic from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., except from 12-12:30 p.m. Flu shots are free for veterans who show valid identification. The Walla Walla VA’s full flu shot clinic schedule is available online at [www.wallawalla.va.gov](http://www.wallawalla.va.gov).

The VA is also partnering with Walgreens to offer enrolled veterans free flu shots at their local Walgreens store. Some restrictions may apply.

### Pendleton man avoids rape charge in plea deal

PENDLETON — John Harmon Calvert of Pendleton pleaded guilty to harming his wife and two children. In taking a deal, the state dismissed several charges, including first-degree unlawful sexual penetration and first-degree rape.

Calvert on Monday

in Pendleton changed his plea to guilty to charges of felon in possession of a firearm, fourth-degree assault, first-degree criminal mistreatment and third-degree assault. Court documents also show he turned 50 that day.

Circuit Judge Jon Lieuallen sentenced Calvert to two-and-half years in prison per the plea deal.

Pendleton police investigated and arrested Calvert in March after the Oregon Department of Human Services received information he was abusing five children, ages 5-12, all in his custody. Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts at the time said they allegedly were subjected to the physical abuse for 10 years.

### Recreation department seeks Halloween help

PENDLETON — The Halloween Carnival is just around the corner and Pendleton Parks & Recreation is seeking sponsors and volunteers to assist with the event.

Open to preschool-aged children through sixth grade, the free activity features safe Halloween fun Tuesday, Oct. 31 at the Pendleton Convention Center. Last year’s event drew more than 1,500 people and 100 volunteers. It cost roughly \$2,250.

Monetary donations are needed to purchase game prizes, snacks and candy for the children. In addition to city staff, community volunteers are needed to help put on the holiday carnival.

If interested in staffing a carnival activity booth, call Lisa Patrick, recreation supervisor, at 541-966-0228. In addition, checks can be mailed to Pendleton Parks & Recreation, ATTN: Lisa Patrick, 865 Tutuilla Road, Pendleton, OR 97801. For more information, stop by the parks office or visit [www.pendletonparksandrec.com](http://www.pendletonparksandrec.com).

### AARP classes cruise into region

Drivers can gain useful information that can assist when on the road during upcoming driving classes.

The AARP Smart Driver course also provides

information about how age-related factors can impact driving and ways to make adjustments. While the classes are designed for older drivers, anyone with a license is welcome to attend.

To register for upcoming classes, numbers are listed:

•Friday, Nov. 3 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Blue Mountain Community College, Milton-Freewater (541-938-7176).

•Saturday, Nov. 11 from 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton (541-861-0024).

The fee for the class is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members. For more information, call 503-861-1813.

### Northwest Cancer Clinic opening Hermiston office

HERMISTON — The Northwest Cancer Clinic is opening an office in Hermiston.

Patients will still have to visit the clinic’s Kennewick location for radiation treatment but will now be able to stay in Hermiston for new patient consults, follow-up care and integrative oncology services starting Oct. 19.

The Hermiston office is located at 1050 W. Elm Ave., Suite 150, in the Columbia Professional Plaza across from Good Shepherd Medical Center.

Brian Lawenda, M.D., of Northwest Cancer Clinic said in a statement that the company was “pleased” to announce the satellite office.

“This will allow us to continue providing convenient, state-of-the-art cancer care to our patients where they live,” he wrote.

According to the news release Lawenda is a Harvard-trained radiation oncologist and Stanford/UCLA-trained medical acupuncturist. He incorporates integrative oncology into his practice, which combines conventional treatments such as radiation with lifestyle changes and complementary treatments such as acupuncture.

For more information visit [www.nwcancerclinic.com](http://www.nwcancerclinic.com) or call 509-987-1800.

## Joint meeting first in years for county boards

By **PHIL WRIGHT**  
East Oregonian

The boards of commissioners for Morrow and Umatilla counties will make a rare move Friday — a joint meeting.

Doug Olson, long-serving attorney for Umatilla County, said he could not recall the last time the two governing bodies sat down together. Umatilla County board chairman Larry Givens has been commissioner since 2007 and said the last joint meeting was years ago.

Morrow County has two new commissioners — Melissa Lindsay and Jim Doherty won elections last fall. Givens said that makes this a good time to sit down with Umatilla County’s neighbor to the west and work on some bridge-building on issues of mutual concern. Kim Cutsforth, Morrow County interim administrative officer, echoed the sentiment and added the two counties also have overlap in certain programs and services.

Workforce and water

issues lead off the discussion topics for the public meeting, which begins Friday at 10:30 a.m. at the Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room, 110 N. Court St., Heppner. Givens said the boards likely are going to discuss workforce housing as well as water projects near the counties’ border, plus siphoning more Columbia River water for development.

Givens said he didn’t know if watermasters would be a topic. Umatilla County used to provide its watermaster to Morrow County for a fee, but last year the Oregon Water Resources Department absorbed the department and its employees. Still, the two counties share other programs, Cutsforth said, including public health inspections and veteran services. Both are on the agenda, as is 911 dispatch.

Morrow County’s dispatch center backs up Umatilla county’s and vice versa, and Givens said the ability for emergency services to communicate could come up.

### At a glance

**What:** The board of commissioners of Umatilla and Morrow counties hold a joint meeting to discuss key mutual topics. The meeting is open to the public.

**When:** Friday starting at 10:30 a.m.

**Where:** Bartholomew Building Upper Conference Room, 110 N. Court St., Heppner

All three of Umatilla County’s commissioners are going, along with Olson. The meeting is open to the public, and there is time at the beginning for individuals to address commissioners about issues not on the agenda. Cutsforth said the boards may also have a working lunch and no board will vote on anything. The boards also plan on taking a tour around 1 p.m. of the Bartholomew Building, Morrow County’s new administrative center.

Contact Phil Wright at [pwright@eastoregonian.com](mailto:pwright@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0833.

## Fire season coming to end in northeast Oregon

East Oregonian

Fire season will officially come to an end Saturday on state-protected forests in northeast Oregon.

Despite wetter and cooler weather, Matt Hoehna, unit forester for the Oregon Department of Forestry in Pendleton, said people should remain vigilant when out in the woods.

“We’ve gotten some moisture and it has reduced our fire danger, but the condition of the light fuels, grasses and light brush can change quickly with wind or sunny days,” Hoehna said.

If weather conditions become warm and dry, Hoehna said landowners should check their burn piles for remaining heat that could cause problems.

“We often find ourselves fighting escaped burns in October and November,” he said.

Fire season was declared

June 26 in the ODF Northeast Oregon District, which covers more than 2 million acres in mostly Umatilla, Union, Baker and Wallowa counties. Despite numerous large wildfires across the state, the Blue Mountains escaped relatively unscathed — according to the Blue Mountain Inter-agency Dispatch Center, the total number of acres burned locally was just 5,419 acres.

With fire season over, landowners do not need to obtain a burn permit for

residential yard debris, though slash piles must be registered with ODF at least seven days prior to burning. Anyone under the protection of a rural or city fire department should check their burning restrictions ahead of time. Burning on tribal land also requires a permit from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

For smoke management forecasts, call 541-963-9781 or visit the ODF website at [www.odf.state.or.us](http://www.odf.state.or.us).

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**Molly’s Revenge** is back Tue, Oct. 24!

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