



Senior engineer Matt Williams, with Umatilla Electric Cooperative of Hermiston, shows the inside of a breaker box during a tour of the new substation off East Elm Avenue on Wednesday in Hermiston.

SUBSTATION: Will also serve Hermiston Energy Services customers

Continued from 1A

for UEC and three for Hermiston Energy Services — to make its way to individual homes and businesses. Meters at the site track the amount of energy coming in and out of the substation, and equipment there automatically steps down the higher voltages coming from BPA to the level needed for distribution through the feeders.

The substation currently has a single transformer, but UEC plans to add a second transformer sometime in the future as the Hermiston area continues to grow.

According to a fact sheet handed out during the tour, Hermiston and surrounding areas have experienced “ongoing population and electrical growth” and the Hermiston East Substation will help provide the added capacity needed to keep up with that growth.

Umatilla Electric Cooperative and the project’s contractor Potelco, Inc. are doing what they can to make the site as safe as possible, from protecting parts against birds to installing a network of copper wires grounding the equipment and snaking their way underground to help protect people standing nearby during a surge.

“We do it five feet outside the fence too, so if kids come up to look and



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The \$4.75 million substation will be coming on line later this month.

grab the fence they won’t get electrocuted,” Williams said.

The substation is owned by UEC but will also serve Hermiston Energy Services customers. The municipal utility contracts

with UEC for infrastructure, operations, maintenance, billing and much of its other day-to-day services.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

MARIJUANA: Commission has already approved two other marijuana grows

Continued from 1A

in,” Clough said. “It was not well done.”

Only four out of the seven planning commissioners were present for the hearing, and with some commissioners feeling like there were unanswered questions, Krenzler’s application could only muster a 2-2 vote. Burnswell was officially denied when a motion to continue the hearing to the next meeting also couldn’t get a majority, leading Krenzler to file an appeal to the city council.

Between hearings, Krenzler met with the planning department and worked to address the issues brought up by the commission. Questions over the fencing, line-of-sight and the footprint of the greenhouses used to grow the marijuana were addressed, Krenzler told the council.

But Krenzler’s adjustments weren’t enough to convince the neighbors.

Wendi Kelley, who owns a house on the property next to Burnswell, said she had initial concerns about security on the property, which were lessened when she and Krenzler spoke earlier that day. Kelley said she didn’t want to kill Krenzler’s dream, but she remained concerned about how the smell of the marijuana would affect her property value.

Kelley cited an article from the Spokane newspaper *The Spokesman-Review* that reported a family’s home being devalued by 10 percent after a marijuana grow opened nearby.

Michael Owens echoed

Kelley’s comments and said his 401 Highway 11 business, Powerhouse Diesel Performance, could eventually be surrounded by two marijuana grows: Burnswell and GhostTown Organix at 2515 N.E. Riverside Place. Owens said he spoke with other Riverside businesses and they were similarly opposed to the grow.

“We’re making Pendleton the pothead capital of Eastern Oregon,” he said.

Krenzler said he intended to install carbon filters that would eliminate the marijuana odor by 85 to 99 percent, but he couldn’t promise there wouldn’t be some smell when high winds were blowing or the greenhouse doors were open when workers were trimming the plants.

Krenzler said other businesses like coffee roasters, diesel mechanics and breweries are generally accepted despite the odors they’re known to produce. While he wanted to be accommodating and a good neighbor, Krenzler said he could only do so much.

“I don’t want to make so many agreements that I can’t be in business,” he said.

Despite Burnswell now meeting the city’s zoning criteria, Clough recommended the council refer the issue back to the planning commission rather than approve it. Clough said he wanted to see the commission finish what it started.

Councilor Neil Brown agreed with Clough’s recommendation, saying it would give more time for Krenzler to address any additional issues and tie up loose ends with neighbors.

“Good neighbors become not-good neighbors over little issues,” Brown said. “And this is not a little issue.”

Councilor Scott Fairley preferred approving Krenzler’s application immediately since it already met the city’s conditions.

“All we’re doing is delaying it by three weeks by foisting it back on the commission,” he said.

The council voted 5-3 to send it back to the commission, with councilors Fairley, Becky Marks and Dale Primmer voting against.

Despite the decision, this might not be the last time the council discusses Burnswell’s zoning application. Regardless of the commission’s decision, if people testify for and against Burnswell, the losing side can appeal the matter back to the city council.

In an interview after the meeting, Krenzler said his project was receiving a lot of scrutiny, especially considering the commission has already approved two other marijuana grows. Despite the setback, Krenzler seemed determined to press on.

“I’m willing to accept the challenge and I’m not dissuaded from my vision,” he said.

Whenever his next hearing is scheduled, Krenzler expects to deliver the same testimony he gave at the previous two meetings, the only addition being clarification to any questions the commission might have.

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

Travel ban faces scrutiny from judges who blocked it before

SEATTLE (AP) — Three federal appeals court judges who blocked President Donald Trump’s second travel ban earlier this year had some skeptical questions about his third and latest set of restrictions on travelers from six mostly Muslim nations during oral arguments on Wednesday.

Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judges Ronald Gould, Richard Paez and Michael Hawkins heard arguments in Seattle on Hawaii’s challenge to the ban.

The hearing came just two days after the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it was allowing the restrictions to go into effect at least until the 9th Circuit panel and their colleagues on the Richmond, Virginia-based 4th Circuit had a chance to rule on separate lawsuits against the ban.

Debate over the restrictions has centered on whether they constitute a legitimate exercise of national security powers or the “Muslim ban” Trump promised during his campaign.

But much of Wednesday’s arguments focused on a narrower point: whether the president satisfied immigration law in issuing his latest travel order, which targets 150 million potential



Washington Solicitor General Noah Purcell, center, speaks during a protest rally, Wednesday, outside a federal courthouse in Seattle.

travelers from Chad, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

In June, Gould, Paez and Hawkins blocked Trump’s second travel ban, saying he had not made a required finding that the entry of people affected by that measure would be detrimental to U.S. interests.

Neal Katyal, the former U.S. solicitor general representing Hawaii, insisted that Trump had failed again and did not have authority to issue his latest travel restrictions.

“They have not made the findings this court called for,” Katyal said. “They came back with zero.”

Deputy Assistant

Attorney General Hashim Mooppan noted that the government had conducted a 90-day, multi-agency review, after which Trump determined that certain countries do not provide enough information to sufficiently vet their citizens’ backgrounds.

The ban is needed to keep out “foreign nationals about whom the United States Government lacks sufficient information to assess the risks they pose to the United States,” the president said in his September proclamation announcing the latest travel restrictions.

“You might disagree with the finding, but you can’t disagree that the finding was made,” Mooppan said.

ROUND-UP: Retail sales grew by 12.1 percent more than the year before

Continued from 1A

2017. The previous high in 2010 provided the Round-Up with \$1.1 million in ticket sales.

Thomas and Graybeal credited much of the Round-Up’s growth to the arena’s east end improvements, which Thomas called “high-end experience enhancers.”

Following the removal of the dilapidated east end seating, the Round-Up board instituted two new ticketing options for the 2016 Round-Up: the Let ‘Er Buck pass and the 1910 Room.

Those tickets are an opposite sides of the economic spectrum. For \$20, the Let ‘Er Buck pass gets the customer through the gate and access to any unreserved seat in the arena. Ranging from \$150 for an individual ticket in an open seating area to \$5,000 for a 20-person private suite, the canopied 1910 Room provides arena-side views with gourmet dining.

Graybeal said these new ticket options helped the Round-Up have its best Saturday ever, in both total attendance and ticket revenue. Although the Round-Up didn’t sell as many seats as it did in 2010, total ticket revenue surpassed 2010’s amount.

While Graybeal couldn’t say exactly where the ticket purchasers were coming from, he said the Round-Up is “more renowned at a worldwide scale.” The Round-Up is heavily represented at the PRCA convention and the National Finals Rodeo,

Pendleton Round-Up wins third straight Best Outdoor Rodeo award

The Pendleton Round-Up won its third straight PRCA award for Best Outdoor Rodeo.

The award was announced Wednesday night in Las Vegas at the PRCA annual awards banquet, held in conjunction with the National Finals Rodeo.

The Round-Up has won the award four times: in 2010 and now from 2015-2017.

Round-Up veterans Gary Rempel also won the PRCA’s award for best pickup man, and Dusty Tuckness won best bullfighter.

where Round-Up has a booth manned with board members, staffers, volunteers and rodeo court royalty to promote the Round-Up beyond the confines of the Northwest.

The Round-Up’s brand is strong enough that people are buying more and more of its memorabilia. Graybeal said retail sales grew by 12.1 percent more than the year before. Graybeal said one of the strongest areas of growth was through the Round-Up’s online store, which saw a 52 percent jump in sales.

Besides the new ticketing options, Thomas pointed to some of the upgrades the Round-Up has made in recent years, including improvements to the rodeo’s Wi-Fi, information technology and ticketing system.

With the latter upgrade in place, the Round-Up was able to process tickets for other events besides the rodeo, opening up the Round-Up Grounds to events like the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest and the Thunder in the Blues motorcycle race. Graybeal said the Round-Up processed 100,000 tickets in 2017,

almost double the amount the Round-Up processes for the rodeo alone.

Thomas said some stockholders have taken issue with the increase in staffing the Round-Up has made in recent years. But according to Thomas, the new hires are needed to handle the higher volume of business demonstrated in recent financial statements.

Dissatisfaction with the board of directors was strong enough that stockholders nearly defeated the board’s pick for president in 2018 at a November meeting. After the meeting, the newly elected president, Dave O’Neill, promised increased transparency and better communication with stockholders and volunteers.

Stockholders will get a chance to evaluate the Round-Up’s financial prospects themselves when the board discusses its 2017 financial statement at a special February stockholders meeting.

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

HOTEL: Owners will have 180 days to pay back the county or face foreclosure

Continued from 1A

Rodeo City Inn. We have done everything possible to try to mitigate the problem. It’s a blight, it’s a safety hazard, it’s a crime center, and the owners have kind of thumbed their noses at us. They haven’t responded in good faith ... I think it’s time to move forward.”

Elfering said this step might have enough teeth and muscle to move the property owner to action, and it gives them 180 days to pay back the county or face foreclosure.

The site is beginning that process, with property taxes three years in arrears.

The two commissioners voted for the county to take control of the inn and secure it. (Board chair Larry Givens is in Fort Worth, Texas, for the National Association of



EO file photo

Umatilla County will board up the doors and windows at the Rodeo City Inn near Pendleton, which has been designated a dangerous building.

Counties’ fall board of directors meeting and poverty summit.)

Stephens also presented the board with bids showing the cost for that work could reach more than \$10,000.

Commissioners did not affirm if they would contract or have staff handle it.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.