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# EAST OREGONIAN

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## Charities wary of donation misuse, theft

How nonprofits protect themselves from sticky fingers, embezzlement

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

Small nonprofits can do an outsized amount of good in their communities. But their part-time, volunteer nature can also make it easy for abuses to go unnoticed.

It happens in Eastern Oregon. Shawn MacGregor, former director of the Pendleton nonprofit shelter Tonya's House, was arraigned earlier this month on charges of theft after being accused of embezzling more than \$10,000 from the organization, which had to close its doors in 2017 for financial reasons. The Umatilla Chamber of Commerce, Spray Rodeo Association and Haystack Cemetery Association have reported thefts by employees in recent years.

Nonprofit thefts in the news was what led Nicole Shelton to recently broach the subject with the board of the Hermiston Warming Station. Shelton, who was a board member until she resigned Sunday, said there were signs that donated items were being mishandled.

Once, for example, she saw a board member take home a pair of bras that were among clothing items donated to the Warming Station. She said when confronted later the person said they had given them to their daughter's friend who is on the verge of homelessness. Another time a volunteer told Shelton they witnessed a board member take home a donated tube of toothpaste with the comment they had run out of toothpaste at home. When Shelton complained, they said the toothpaste was expired and slated to be thrown away anyway.

Shelton said the organization keeps careful track of

See **NONPROFITS/11A**

## UMATILLA-MORROW HOMELESS COUNT



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Stephen Scarbro, who came from San Antonio, Texas, walks along the Pendleton River Parkway on Thursday in Pendleton. Scarbro, who is currently homeless, says he spends his time maintaining a low profile while waiting to start a new job.**

# Hundreds more homeless

New method finds 557 living on streets, in cars, crashing on couches

By **PHIL WRIGHT**  
East Oregonian

Case managers for Community Action Program of East Central Oregon had a problem with their 2017 count of the area's homeless population.

The point-in-time census counted 55 homeless people in Umatilla County, one in Wheeler County and none in Gilliam or Morrow counties — the regions where the nonprofit aims to help low-income populations. Glenda McDaniel, one of those CAPECO case managers, said the figure was surprising because it was so small.

They conducted a second count at the end of the summer, that time finding 64. Still lower than their estimates.

The latest count came Jan. 31,



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Stephen Scarbro puts a Danish he saved from his lunch at the Salvation Army into a bag to save for later Thursday in Pendleton.**

and it revealed 557 homeless people in the four counties.

"We knew the numbers were out there," McDaniel. "And there are probably even more."

Gilliam and Wheeler counties

had no documented homeless population. But 46 were counted this time in Morrow County, including 17 females and 18 males in Heppner. Umatilla County had 511, with 292 in Pendleton, 123 in Hermiston, 51

in Athena, 44 in Milton-Freewater and one in Echo.

Males outnumbered females 274 to 252, and 31 people did not identify their gender.

The census found they ran the gamut when it came to where they spend the night: 1.4 percent squatted; 15.1 percent stayed on the street; 40.6 percent stayed with friends.

"A lot of people are one paycheck away from losing housing," McDaniel said.

Susie Stuvland and Sean Ruud, fellow case managers, said the organization examined its methodology and added more volunteers to arrive at a more accurate picture of the area's homeless situation. The effort included talking to school districts to find homeless students and going to where the homeless gather, from churches to The Salvation Army to the banks of the Umatilla River. They also worked on asking better questions and asking questions in better ways.

See **HOMELESS/12A**

**"A lot of people are one paycheck away from losing housing."**

— **Glenda McDaniel**, CAPECO case manager

## Districts train for better reporting on sex misconduct

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian



Photo illustration by E.J. Harris

**Sexual misconduct between teachers and students can include both sexual conduct and "grooming" — developing a romantic relationship intended to become sexual.**

In the first month of 2018, a grim statistic was perpetuated.

On Jan. 24, Ione Community Charter School music teacher Bryan Bates was arrested for official misconduct, two counts of harassment and two counts of third-degree sexual abuse for incidents with a 16-year-old female student.

Less than two weeks later, Windy River Elementary School teacher Robert Weems was arrested for one count of official misconduct in the first degree, two counts of sexual abuse in the second degree, and one count of sexual abuse in the third degree for ongoing sexual contact with a teen in The Dalles, where he used to teach.

### Safe at school

**Through the month of March, the EO will report on the many ways schools protect students, both on and off campus.**

Despite tight-knit communities and small-town values, Eastern Oregon hasn't been immune to sexual misconduct between teachers and students.

According to state records, the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission has disciplined 10 teachers for explicit sexual misconduct from 2007 to 2017 in Umatilla and Morrow counties, an average of one case per year in an area with a combined population of 87,000 residents.

See **SEX ABUSE/11A**



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