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Race for UAS in the USA

How four drone testing sites are faring

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

When the Federal Aviation Administration established the unmanned aerial system test site program, it was advertised as a research opportunity.

But among the test sites that were selected on Dec. 30, 2013 — Alaska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Texas and Virginia — many of the participants were hoping it would be more than just sending data to the FAA.

The Pendleton UAS Range was born when Oregon teamed up with Alaska and Hawaii to gain access to the test site program, officially joining a race to get a piece of an industry that the Association of Unmanned Vehicle System estimates will generate \$82.1 billion in economic impact by 2025.

After a slow start, Pendleton's test range is starting to see business pick up while a handful of permanent jobs in the drone industry begin to trickle in.

But test ranges across the country are pursuing the same economic development goals as Pendleton, and administrators from three other test-site states — Nevada, New York and North Dakota — spoke about the gains their programs have made in the past four years.

Nevada

When selected in 2013, the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development helped establish the Nevada Institute for Autonomous Systems, a nonprofit that oversees the state's UAS program.

With financial support from the state, Nevada started six different test ranges across the state.

Brett Kanda, the institute's director of business development, said when northern Nevada has a harsh winter, southern Nevada is pleasant, and vice versa during the summer.

Nevada's test sites are a variety of towered airports, air strips and bare ground, but Kanda said the UAS industry has broad support wherever it goes in the Silver State.

"We don't have trouble finding places to fly," he said.

Kanda didn't know the exact amount of money the state has invested in its UAS program, but the institute employs five full-time

See **DRONES/12A**



Staff photos by E.J. Harris

Journalist Wil Phinney, the current editor of the *Confederated Umatilla Journal*, worked at *The Dalles Weekly Reminder* during the time the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh started a commune near the rural town of Antelope.

Remembering the Rajneesh

Release of documentary stirs memories of high desert commune

By **KATHY ANEY**
and **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

“Wild Wild Country” paints a story as incredible as any futuristic fantasy flick.

Consider the following plot: A mystic and his followers construct a utopian city and paradise of spiritual existence in the Central Oregon high desert. All seems right, then things get sinister. The commune slams up against local law. The group co-opts a nearby town and eventually attempts to take over the entire country. Before it's over, commune leaders face charges of biological warfare, attempted murder, wiretapping and immigration violations.

This twisty tale, however preposterous, is pure truth. The six-hour Netflix documentary chronicles the story of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and his followers. Some who witnessed the rise and fall of Rajneeshpuram share their impressions in the paragraphs below.

Wil Phinney

Every so often, Wil Phinney pulls his Rajneeshpuram box down from the shelf, lifts the lid and journeys back in time.



Journalist Wil Phinney holds a prayer necklace that has a photo of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh he collected while covering the events at Rajneeshpuram during the late 1980s.

WILD COUNTRY • For a timeline of the Rajneesh » **Lifestyles/C1**

Phinney, now editor of the *Confederated Umatilla Journal* in Mission, worked for *The Dalles Weekly Reminder* when the Bhagwan arrived at the ranch. A shot of Phinney's byline appears in episode four of “Wild Wild Country.” Over the next years, Phinney visited Rancho Rajneesh many times, got to know Rajneesh leaders and chronicled the cult's efforts to take over Antelope and Wasco County.

This week, he lifted the lid of the worn cardboard box once again and started removing items one by one, laying them on a long table in the *East Oregonian* conference room. He fingered a beaded necklace he got from a homeless person who had lived on the ranch. Inside a chunk of clear plastic, the Bhagwan smiled serenely from a tiny photo.

He pulled out a diary neatly penned by a Bhagwan follower.

“I felt on holy ground,” she had written. “I felt Bhagwan's presence spreading over every inch of this vast desert, permeating even the smallest twig by the roadside, his love and protection encompassing every bird and insect and even every blade of grass and every rock.”

See **RAJNEESH/11A**

Dems spare each other, save jobs for Walden



Democratic candidate Jim Crary out of Ashland speaks during a Democratic candidate forum for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District on Friday at BMCC in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Seven candidates find common ground

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Democrat contenders in the primary for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District presented a unified front Friday night in their quest to oust Republican Rep. Greg Walden.

Rather than take shots at each other during the forum at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, they aimed their barbs at Walden. Eric Burnette of Hood River made the first jab in his opening remarks.

“I live a couple of blocks from Greg Walden, and that is in part of why I'm running,” he said.

Walden has a pickup with a half-flat tire at his house, Burnette said,

and that tire is emblematic of the congressman ignoring needs in the district. The candidates, who are all vying for the right to face Walden in November, derided the long-serving congressman's support of the tax bill that granted big breaks to the rich and criticized him for backing health care legislation that would have deprived tens of thousands of his constituents insurance coverage.

The forum ran more than two hours, and they took on questions from how would they address climate change as a member of the U.S. House to gun control.

Michael Byrne of Parkdale said Walden chairs the House Energy and Commerce Committee but does nothing to make the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls, which is in the district, the nation's

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