

Umatilla County paying \$43,000 for May election

County outsourced mailing to private business to cut down on errors

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Ballots, envelopes and postage for Tuesday's election cost Umatilla County almost \$43,000. Most of that money was split between private businesses and the United States Postal Service.

The county owes: \$17,379 to Ryder Election Services, Bend, for printing 53,557 ballots for the election; \$5,521 to BMS Tech-

nologies, Bend, for printing, filling and delivering envelopes for the election; and \$20,000 to the United States Postal Service.

The elections division used to handle this work in-house, said Dan Lonai, administrative services director for the county.

"And no matter what, I always ended up with errors," he said, "... stuffing errors, human errors. That was a big part of it. We want to make sure the right ballots are stuffed in."

Even a 1 percent error rate with 30,000 ballots means there can be 300 errors. And the state's voter motor registration law boosted the county's voter

total to more than 40,000. As of April, the county had 42,519 voters, about 2,400 more than the same time last year.

All told, the county owes \$42,901. That includes \$5,570 to Elections Systems & Software, Chicago, for maintenance of the ballot reader.

The costs are in the county's 2017-18 budget and are about the same as what the county allocated for a part-time surveyor or improvements to the Stafford Hansell Government Center, Hermiston. The county board of commissioners plans to approve the payments during its meeting Wednesday morning

starting at 9 at the county courthouse, 216 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton.

It wasn't just a concern for accuracy that caused the county to outsource the work — the election costs began mounting for the county a few years back.

First the Postal Service stopped using Pendleton as a distribution center, which for a long time allowed the county to receive a discount.

"If I want to drive my ballots down to Portland, I can get still get a good discount," Lonai quipped.

And the county no longer has its own print shop. So the county pays Ryder Election to handle the precise printing on card stock

that ballots require. Lonai said Ryder also services the county's election machines.

Ryder also is "right next door to Bend Mail Services," he said, which prints the envelopes and makes sure the right ballots go inside.

"That's still a bit more than in-house," Lonai said, "but everybody gets the right ballot."

Well, almost everybody. Some voters move and don't update their registration, he said, and the ballot goes to the address the county has. That's most common when someone moves out of a family home, he said.

The county in those cases can mail a second bal-

lot. Lonai explained serial numbers on the envelopes allow the county to keep track and make sure someone does not vote twice. He said keeping this all under the county's roof would be nice, but Eastern Oregon lacks the volume to make that work.

The county also used its new elections machines. The first batch of results went online soon after the polls closed at 8 p.m., and late collections meant the final results weren't available until about 11 p.m.

Elections volunteers and staff still must verify those later ballots, he said, and that alone can take a couple of hours.

HERMISTON

Woman faces 174 counts of theft, fraud, bail set at \$100,000

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Claudia Renee Dugan of Hermiston pleaded not guilty Monday to 174 counts of fraud and theft.

Umatilla County sheriff's detective Kacey Ward investigated the case and said Dugan is prison-bound.

Ward said there are about 15 victims in the case and Dugan's thefts totaled almost \$6,000. He said his investigation covered from August 2016 to August 2017, then discovered her crimes stretched into late 2017.

Dugan worked for several employers, most in elderly care, he said, and if she lost one job she moved to another. She used her cellphone to take photos of the front and back of credit cards belonging to the residents, he said, and that gave her all the information she needed to use the cards to put funds onto the accounts of inmates at the Umatilla County Jail and in state prisons.

The Oregon Depart-

ment of Corrections caught on to her scheme, he said, and banned her from its facilities. She then tried clear her name using fake court documents.

"She actually forged a judge's signature," Ward said. "That compounded things a bit."

Dugan copied the electronic signature of a judge from legitimate court documents onto her fake one, he said, a move that amounted to a felony in Oregon.

Court records show Circuit Judge Dan Hill recused himself from the case due to a conflict.

Records also show Dugan faced 25 counts of theft and fraud in August 2017. Ward said he asked the state to dismiss that case when he found a greater number of crimes. He also said police departments in Hermiston and Pendleton investigated Dugan, and he brought those cases in with his under one



Dugan

large umbrella.

Ward said the investigation took months and required multiple subpoenas and search warrants for financial records, particularly from Telmate, the company that provides phone com-

munications to inmates at the jail and state prisons. Telmate proved difficult to work with, he said, sometimes sending information in a minuscule font or without any context, which required more follow-up.

The Umatilla County District Attorney's Office charged Dugan with dozens of counts each for theft, identity theft, fraudulent use of a credit card and unlawful credit card payments, according to the 39-page indictment.

Circuit Judge Eva Temple set Dugan's bail at \$100,000. Her next court hearing is June 11 at the Stafford Hansell Government Building, Hermiston.

UNDERGROUND ROYALTY



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Tour guide Cindy Iverson points toward the ceiling while talking about the construction of a service tunnel to a group of Pendleton Round-Up, Happy Canyon, and Portland Rose Festival princesses Tuesday during a tour of the Pendleton Underground.

Pendleton's underground 'Comes to Life'

More than 75 actors will bring the Pendleton Underground Tours to life this weekend. Card players, dancers, Chinese workers and merchants from the past are all there to greet people. Pendleton Underground Tours "Comes to Life" is Saturday with 2 hour tours from 9:15 a.m. to 7:15 p.m. at 31 S.W. Emigrant Ave. Reservations are required for the special 21-and-older tours. Tickets are \$50 per person. For more information, call 541-276-0730 or visit www.pendletonundergroundtours.org.

Certifications on the hook for local corrections officers

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Two corrections officers in two local state prisons are facing the revocation of their state public safety certifications.

The Corrections Policy Committee of the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training in February voted 10-0 to recommend that Hector Torres and Robert Nungaray lose their corrections certifications for life. The recommendations went up the chain to the Board on Public Safety Standards and Training, which on April 26 approved the recommendations.

Eriks Gabliks is the director of Public Safety Standards and Training. He said the policy committee shoulders the work of reviewing cases, and while the board here agreed with the committee, the officers have not lost their certifications. Rather, the department issued notice to the officers of their rights to request a hearing to contest the board's decision. They have 60 days to make that request.

"This is in essence a peer review," Gabliks said, that involves representatives for the officer and the state and culminates with an administrative law judge deciding the case.

If an officer does not ask for the review, the department instead issues its final notice and yanks the certification.

Torres in November 1999 started working as an

officer for Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla, and resigned in September 2015, according to the online Oregon Criminal Justice Information Records Inquiry System. Nungaray was an officer at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, Pendleton, from July 2015 until he resigned in April 2017.

Torres "failed to supervise an inmate work crew allowing additional felony crimes to be committed," according to the minutes of the Feb. 13 Corrections Policy Committee meeting. That amounted to "gross misconduct," the committee found, but Torres' actions also involved the "misuse of authority" and dishonesty for changing the time on logs to try to cover up his failure, only to later admit to the falsifications.

The department in April found Torres resigned in lieu of termination. TRCI spokesperson Sherry Iles confirmed Torres' dates of employment but did not have information about his case.

Nungaray of Ontario in 2016 pleaded guilty in Malheur County to driving under the influence of intoxicants, according to the committee meeting minutes and state court records, and entered into a diversion program. But he was arrested on July 5, 2017, for DUII.

The court revoked his diversion and he pleaded guilty to the two DUIIs. The Corrections Policy Committee found he committed gross misconduct for the offenses and "when he failed to take

a breathalyzer test and when he switched vehicle license plates."

The Corrections Policy Committee at its meeting May 8 looked at two more corrections officers at the Pendleton prison. Gabliks said the committee wants more information before taking action on Mario Lagao, and the committee voted to recommend denying Tyler Beers' certification for ten years for gross misconduct. State court records show Lagao in October pleaded guilty in Umatilla County to driving while suspended or revoked, but state courts show no criminal cases for Beers. Gabliks said the meeting minutes detailing their cases soon would be public.

He also said the department is serious about holding officers accountable. The state has about 8,000 public safety officers, he said, and fewer than 1 percent face this kind of discipline.

WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO

5/16

Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie • Today • 12:00 PM
Hang 'em High

LIFE OF THE PARTY (PG13)
4:50 7:10 9:30

OVERBOARD (PG13)
4:40 7:20 9:50

AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR (PG13)
6:30 7:00 9:40
7:30 3:50* 10:10

I FEEL PRETTY (PG13)
7:30

RAMPAGE (PG13)
5:00 10:00

BAD SAMARITAN (R)
4:00

* Matinee Pricing
wildhorsesort.com • 541-966-1850
Pendleton, OR 97151 • Exit 216

Pendleton FireMed

BECOME A MEMBER AND SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Membership means you and your family will pay **no** out-of-pocket expenses for emergent, medically necessary Pendleton FireMed ground ambulance transport and/or air ambulance transport by **Life Flight Network**.

Choose our Basic Plan with ground ambulance or the Plus Plan with emergency air ambulance.

Basic PLAN

\$60

per family per year

Pendleton FireMed Ground Ambulance Service

- Emergency prehospital, medical treatment and transportation
- Non-emergent, medically necessary ambulance service preauthorized by a physician
- Emergency paramedic rescue
- Emergency ambulance transportation between local medical facilities

Plus PLAN

\$125

per family per year

Pendleton Ground PLUS Emergency Air Ambulance Service

We invite you to enroll today by visiting

lifeflight.org/membership

or by calling 800.982.9299

There. When You Need Us.®

Life Flight Network operates under its own FAA Part 135 Air Carrier Certificate. Boise-based fixed-wing services are provided by Jackson Jet Center.