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SPORTS/1B



SUNDAY DRIVERS
LIFESTYLES/1C



**FOURTH OF JULY
FIREWORKS OPTIONS**
REGION/2A

EAST OREGONIAN

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Texting at wheel penalty ramps up Sunday

Stricter rules mean possible jail time for third offense

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Penalties for using your phone while driving will start adding up on Sunday — in some cases all the way up to possible jail time for repeat offenders.

While Oregon's new, stricter distracted driving law went into effect last October, drivers had a grace period where offenses were dealt with individually. Now, the fines will get bigger with each offense, starting July 1.

"If it's not enough encouragement to think you might contribute to a crash, think that the police might be out specifically looking for people using their phones, and the dollars can add up," said Oregon Department of Transportation spokesperson Shelley Snow.

A first offense not contributing to a crash is a Class B violation with a fine of up to \$1,000. A second offense, or first offense contributing to a crash, is a Class A violation with a fine of up to \$2,000. Three offenses within 10 years ramps up to a Class B misdemeanor — meaning a fine of up to \$2,500, a criminal record and a possible penalty of up to 6 months in jail.

Drivers under 18 can't use any electronic devices while driving, even if they are hands-free. Adults can use hands-free devices but cannot use any function on a phone or other electronic device like a tablet that requires holding or touching the device beyond a single touch to activate. The rules include drivers who are stopped at a traffic signal or stuck in stand-still traffic.

A few exemptions apply,

See **TEXTING/10A**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Baker Charter School senior Sammy Moore sorts sprinkler heads in a shop Friday while working his summer job at Golden Valley Farm outside of Stanfield.

LEARNING LABOR

Agricultural jobs for teens affected by technology, new laws

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

Whether pulling weeds, picking berries or driving machinery, many people found their first job on a farm.

For Umatilla County kids, farm labor has been one of many options for making money in the summer, but the way young workers fit into the agricultural industry has seen major changes in the past several years.

Darrin Ditchen, owner of Golden Valley Farms East in Stanfield, said his minimum hiring age is 16, the age teens have to be to operate heavy equipment.

"If you can't run equipment on a farm ... they can't work too many hours," Ditchen said. "At a farming job, that's tough."

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries has several requirements for employing minors both under 16, and under 18. Among other restrictions, workers under the age of 16 are prohibited from working in places where power-driven machinery is used.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hermiston High School sophomore Avery Treadwell helps harvest grass seed with extension agronomist Ray Qin at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center on Friday in Hermiston.

He said the rapid changes in technology has also altered the way farms operate.

In less than 20 years, most machinery has become automated, which limits the number of jobs teens are needed to do.

"When I was growing up, you saw more younger people work-

ing simpler jobs on a farm, like picking berries," he said. "You don't see that anymore. For so many kids, their first job is at 16. And they've never been around a farm."

He said that lack of familiarity requires employers to spend more time training kids on how

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to operate and be safe around equipment.

"I've turned a lot of kids away this year," he said. "The jobs are out there, but it's a hard job."

Still, Ditchen said, he likes hiring high school and college kids to work for him. This year, he hired eight high school students and three college students.

Trevor Horn, 17, is a Hermiston High School student in his first year working for Ditchen.

As he drove a combine harvesting Kentucky bluegrass seed, Horn said he has been asked to do every type of task on the farm since he started working a few weeks ago.

"I probably enjoy helping in the mechanical shop most," he said. "Mostly because then I understand as much as I can."

Operating the combine is a close second, he said, but he's had to remind himself how big

See **JOBS/10A**

Entire Wheeler County Sheriff's Office resigns

Sheriff and 3 deputies give notice, leaving massive hole in county's law enforcement

By **TIM TRAINOR**
East Oregonian

Wheeler County Sheriff Chris Humphreys is resigning his post — and all of his deputies are going with him.

Humphreys, who was elected to the position in 2013, gave notice

to the Wheeler County Court that he wished to leave his position. He said he will give the county 4-6 months to find a replacement, but is ready to leave at any time. He said all three of his full-time deputies — Roy Nelson, Russell Mathiasen, and undersheriff Dave Dobler — will also leave the agency. Michael Boyd, a retired Prineville police chief who worked a few days a month, is also resigning. That means the entire law



Humphreys

enforcement community in the small county of 1,500 people is headed out the door.

Humphreys said the mass exodus is not ideal, and it's not what he had in mind. Once he decided to resign, he recommended all his deputies consider the job of sheriff, and he pledged his support to each. There were no takers, however.

"It's just kind of like when a band breaks up," he said. "When one person leaves no one else wants

to be here. And by here I mean in law enforcement ... no one wants to be here without each other."

He said each deputy was being recruited by larger agencies, and he understood why they would not want to take on the extra responsibility, paperwork and politics that comes with a sheriff's position.

"It's a lot," he said. "I'm just exhausted ... I'm doing all the administrative stuff at 2 p.m., then getting called out at 2 a.m., and trying to work again the next day."

See **SHERIFF/9A**

**"It's kind of like when a band breaks up.
When one person leaves no one else wants to be here."**

— **Chris Humphreys**, Wheeler County Sheriff



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