

PENDLETON

Round-Up arena prepped for Whisky Fest

By BRITTANY NORTON
East Oregonian

The Round-Up Grounds are getting some updates for this year's Pendleton Whisky Music Fest.

At 7:30 a.m. Thursday, about 100 people went to work setting up the stage for the concert. And as a new addition this year, they were also installing sod on the hallowed grounds of the Round-Up arena. The newly laid grass is a new feature of this year's concert, as part of the premium standing area in the concert grounds.

Doug Corey, co-manager of the event, said the sod will make it a better experience for those watching the concert from the infield.

Corey declined to give the total cost of the 25,000-square-foot of sod, but said it came at a "significant cost."

This is the first year the

music festival offered the premium standing option, where spots cost \$125. Corey said they sold more tickets this year, due to an increase in demand. He expects to have 18,500 people in attendance.

This is the third year for the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest, and according to convention center manager Pat Beard, it keeps getting bigger.

"We're so appreciative for Doug and Andy (McAnally)," he said. "This is putting Pendleton on the map."

This year's concert features the duo of country singer Blake Shelton and rapper Pitbull.

According to Corey, it took several months for the musicians to agree to do the show together, but Corey and McAnally pursued the combination because they thought it would bring



A work crew hangs a banner on the stage while preparing for the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest on Thursday in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

a variety of tourists to Pendleton.

"Party in Pendleton is

kind of our tagline, and he just brings the party," said Corey of Pitbull.

The Pendleton Whisky Music Fest is one small part of an effort to increase the

town's allure as a tourist destination.

Beard estimates that no less than \$20 million will flow into the city from the Whisky Fest and Pendleton Bike Week — a motorcycle show set for the following week, July 17-22.

Beard said the Pendleton Round-Up remains the city's "marquee event," but he is happy to see other events bring people to the city. He said future events he would like to see include concerts in the Happy Canyon arena, bluegrass music festivals and a regional Crossfit event.

"Tourism is a business and industry and it's the brightest spot on Pendleton's future," said Beard.

As for the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest, will they pursue another unlikely combination for next year?

"We'll have to see how it goes," said Corey.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Fire crews stage on Hill Street while fighting a field fire on Thursday in Weston.

FIRE: One woman living in area received help for lack of oxygen

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cles swarmed the town.

The East Umatilla County Rural Fire Protection District led the effort to control the fire and received help from fire agencies out of Pendleton, the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Pilot Rock, and more, plus scene security from the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office. Roberts said the diverse group engaged in a coordinated effort that kept the flames from engulfing homes. He said one woman

who lived in the area needed medical attention for possible lack of oxygen, but otherwise there were no other injuries he knew about.

"This was a fantastic save," Roberts said.

Duane Thul, city councilor and former mayor, was helping to keep emergency traffic flowing at Main and Hill streets, where emergency responders amassed. Thul said the thick smoke limited visibility to 30 feet. His worst nightmare as mayor, he said, was this kind

of fire but with high winds. That nightmare could have become reality Thursday with 30 mph winds, he said.

East Umatilla Fire Chief Dave Baty was the incident commander and arrived to the fire early.

"I was knocking on doors like crazy to get people out," Baty said.

Baty relayed information and gave orders at the scene well after crews contained the blaze. He said he had not even had time to consider what started the fire.

CEMETERY: Premium plots crucial

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feature premium plots for cremated remains.

Premium plots in general are a large part of the cemetery's new business plan.

Hughes said market research shows that there's demand for mid-level and luxury headstones and cremation containers rather than just the standard burial materials Olney offers.

"We've always had a one-size-fits-all approach, but that doesn't always fit what people want," he said.

According to Hughes, patrons often seek upright headstones similar to the ones erected during the early 20th century.

Flat headstones are more affordable and easier to maintain for mowing and weeding purposes, but if people wanted to pay a premium price for upright headstones, the cemetery could accommodate more sections that feature them.

To promote these new services, Hughes wants to turn the conference room at the parks and recreation office into a showroom with headstone and container options.

As the maintenance needs at the cemetery begin to mount, Hughes sees this as a good way of driving up the cemetery's income.

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the cemetery had a \$263,350 budget versus \$77,050 in anticipated revenue, meaning the rest was subsidized by the general fund, which also covers

police, fire, and other parks and recreation services.

With all of the other city needs, Hughes said raising the cemetery's revenue was preferable to asking for an increased subsidy from the general fund.

"Olney Cemetery averages up to 80 burials per year," the business plan. "If we increase our average revenue from each sale by \$500, then we would generate approximately \$40,000 in increased revenue."

The business plan proposes using half to decrease some of the general fund subsidy while using the rest for cemetery maintenance and repairs.

And there's plenty in need of those services at the cemetery.

The 100-year-old mausoleum hasn't been renovated since 1964, and Hughes said there's some marble restoration and roof repairs that need to be done.

The cemetery itself is so massive that parks staff spends 40 to 48 hours per week just mowing and weeding the grounds.

More revenue for the cemetery fund could help pay for a larger lawnmower, which could shave off 15 hours per week in man hours.

As he drove through the cemetery Thursday morning, Hughes spotted a yellow-bellied marmot — commonly known as a rock chuck — scampering amongst the gravestones.

Despite capturing hun-

dreds of the burrowing rodents, Hughes said marmots and gophers have steadily chewed away at the cemetery's irrigation system.

Parks staff hand waters the patches of grass where the irrigation is damaged, and although the functioning sprinklers are run sequentially 24 hours per day, brown patches aren't hard to find at Olney.

With every ambitious plan comes questions about price, but Hughes believes it won't cost the city too much money to adopt the plan's proposals.

The biggest expense would be the river, and although Hughes said he wouldn't be able to provide an estimate until an engineering study was done, he didn't think the price would be "outrageous," especially if city staff could provide the labor to install it.

Hughes said he still needs to pitch the idea to local mortuaries and Friends of Olney, a group of volunteers that plants American flags on veteran graves on Memorial Day and has helped out the parks and recreation department in the past with enhancement projects.

Ultimately, the department will have to convince the Pendleton City Council that a little luxury at the cemetery will go a long way.

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FIREARMS: Curriculum would cover how to respond to an unsecured firearm

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"In spite of the efforts of some extremist groups to simply ban firearms, rational people recognize that firearms will continue to exist irrespective of any law," Starrett wrote in an email to the Pamplin/EO Capital Bureau. "Rather than fostering ignorance and fear, we hope to provide knowledge and promote safety."

Schools would be required to provide a fire-

arms instructor certified by law enforcement or a national or state firearms instruction certification organization to teach the class.

The curriculum would cover how to respond to an unsecured firearm, how to safely secure a firearm if an adult is absent, safe muzzle direction, avoiding touching a trigger and semi-automatic weapon function "to demonstrate that removing ... the magazine doesn't mean the

firearm is unloaded."

The initiative also bans any material encouraging or discouraging firearms possession or purchase and any live ammunition during the class.

"A person does not have to support firearms ownership to recognize that there is always the possibility that a child might encounter a firearm in an unsupervised setting," Starrett said. "We want to make sure that young people have every tool to stay safe in such a

situation. It seems obvious that a child who has had the opportunity to learn how to respond to this kind of event will be safer.

"We believe denying young people this knowledge is irresponsible."

W.J. Mark Knutson, pastor of Augustana Lutheran Church in Portland, and Michael Cahana, rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel in Portland, were chief petitioners of an initiative to ban semi-automatic fire-

arms. They said they oppose requiring sixth graders to take a firearms safety class.

"This is a very poor idea for our state," Cahana said. "It accepts the status quo of guns as an ever-present danger, that there is no way to reduce the overwhelming prevalence of guns in our children's lives. We believe it is time to change the status quo."

Knutson and Cahana who lead the interfaith coalition, Lift Every Voice Oregon,

proposed Initiative Petition 43 to ban assault-style firearms for the Nov. 6 election but had to suspend the effort because of legal obstacles to the wording of the initiative ballot title. The group plans to submit another initiative for 2020 to ban the sale of assault weapons and high capacity magazines. They said they also hope to work with state legislators in 2019 to ban the kind of weapons used in mass shootings around the nation.

Police say they made an 'error' in arresting Stormy Daniels

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Prosecutors on Thursday dropped charges against porn star Stormy Daniels just hours after she was arrested and accused of illegally rubbing undercover police officers' faces against her bare breasts during a performance at a strip club.

Her attorney said she was "set up" in a Columbus police sting operation, calling it an "absurd use of law enforcement resources." Police said they routinely conduct such undercover operations.

The 39-year-old adult

film star, who claims to have had sex with Donald Trump before he became president, was charged with three misdemeanors, each punishable by up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine upon conviction. She was released on \$6,000 bail around daybreak Thursday.

By early afternoon, prosecutors said they were dropping the case because Ohio's law against physical contact between strippers and customers applies only to someone who "regularly" performs at a club. In Daniels' case, it was her first appearance at Sirens in Columbus. A person who answered

the phone at Sirens declined to comment.

Columbus police chief Kim Jacobs said "one element of the law was missed in error."

"A mistake was made, and I accept full responsibility," she said.

Officers were well within their area of responsibility when making the arrests, she added. But she said the officers' motivations will be reviewed internally. Without providing details, she said unsubstantiated allegations



Daniels

about their motivations were circulating on social media.

Daniels' lawyer called for an investigation into the arrest, saying some of the officers had what appeared to be "very Pro-Trump" social media pages. The lawyer, Michael Avenatti, tweeted screenshots from what he claimed was the Facebook page of one officer with a pseudonym and asked people to help confirm it.

Daniels considered reappearing at Sirens but later

opted for a different club, Vanity Gentlemen's Club, a Thursday night performance confirmed by manager K.J. Kopras.

Police said Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, smacked the faces of two female officers and one male officer with her bare breasts during the Wednesday night show. Officers knocked on the door of her tour bus after the performance and took her into custody in an arrest that Avenatti said left her "traumatized and rattled."

She was booked under a 10-year-old state law known as the Community Defense

Act, which says dancers at "sexually oriented" businesses are prohibited from touching customers and vice versa.

Franklin County Municipal Court records show 23 similar cases this year, including the charges against Daniels, 14 last year and six the year before.

Daniels has said she had sex with Trump in 2006, when he was married. Trump has denied it. Before the election, she was paid \$130,000 to stay silent in a deal handled by Trump's personal attorney Michael Cohen. She is suing to invalidate the nondisclosure agreement.