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"It can go from boring to holy crap in a split second."
— Dave Galle, EOCI correctional officer

ON GUARD

Correctional officers walk fine line as custodians, protectors and rehabilitators



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton has 1,700 inmates and 270 correctional officers.

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Correctional officer Chris Barnhart appeared amiable and relaxed, but inside his head, he scanned constantly for anything awry. The hyper-vigilance was like a background program in his brain, barely noticed, but always running.

The bearded correctional officer sat behind his desk on an elevated platform in housing unit E4 at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. The officer's station sat equidistant between two dormitory tiers containing 40 inmates apiece. Some of the men snoozed in their bunks. Several listened to music on headphones. Others readied themselves for the day, brushing their teeth, using the bathroom or collecting items they would need for their prison jobs.

Some approached Barnhart asking this or that. The CO bantered easily with some, got serious and stern with others. A speaker crackled to life with an announcement.

Editor's note: This story is the second in a two-part series. Recently reporter Kathy Aney got a rare opportunity for two days of almost unrestricted access inside the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. Today, readers will step into the shoes of four different correctional officers. COs are known for guarding their privacy. Two chose to go only by their first initials and they chose not to appear in photographs.

"8:30 kitchen workers. 8:30 kitchen workers."

Barnhart spoke into a microphone. "8:30 kitchen workers."

Several inmates headed out to their jobs in the prison kitchen. A couple of them gave Barnhart half waves. He waved back.

Barnhart is the all-seeing eye, the maestro, the detective of the unit. He must keep

his flock of 80 inmates safe from each other. Ideally, he will help inspire them to find their better selves.

"My job sometimes feels like part psychologist, part circus ringleader, part football coach making sure your players don't beat each other up," he said.

Barnhart, known as "Barney" to his colleagues, wore heavy boots and a black ball cap. On his belt, he carried radio, handcuffs, keys, first aid supplies and pepper spray. No gun. No knife. Nothing that could prove deadly in the hands of an inmate.

'Shift in culture'

Barnhart is one of 270 who provide security at EOCI, keeping order among the institution's 1,700 inmates. Some staff housing units, either dorms or celled units. Other officers staff security checkpoints, the chow hall, educational building, kitchen, laundry, control room, tower, disciplinary segregation unit and any other place that inmates go.

See OFFICERS/10A

Initiatives for ballot whittled to four

Grocery taxes, abortion funding, sanctuary law could go to voters in November

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Of the 45 initiatives proposed for the Nov. 6 general election, only four remain in play.

Two of those are the subject of two separate signature-gathering fraud investigations by the Oregon Department of Justice.

The following proposals still have a chance of going before voters, after the Oregon Secretary of State's Office completes signature verifications. The deadline for verifications is Aug. 6.

- End publicly-funded abortions: "Stop Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act" (Initiative Petition 1) prohibits the use of public funds to pay for most abortions, unless medically necessary or required by federal law.

As a constitutional change, the measure needs at least 117,578 valid signatures to secure a place on the ballot.

Petitioners turned in 139,286 signatures by the July 6 deadline, and the Secretary of State's Office was still in the process of verifying their validity as of Friday, July 13.

The state spent about \$1.9 million in 2017-18 for abortions paid for by the Oregon Health Plan, the state's version of Medicaid, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Last year, the state passed House Bill 3391 to require health insurers to provide abortions and other reproductive health services without charge. The law also allows the Oregon Health Plan, to provide free abortions for undocumented immigrants.

IP 1 allows public funds to be spent on abortions in circumstances when federal law requires it, such as in cases of rape or incest, or when a woman is diagnosed with an ectopic

See INITIATIVES/10A

Umatilla County an island where self-serve is forbidden



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Josh Brown serves a customer at Heller & Sons Distributing Inc. in Hermiston on Thursday.

Fines still apply here while other rural counties can go attendant-free

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The rules used to be simple: Don't pump your own gas in Oregon.

Then in 2016, fueling stations in low-population rural counties were allowed to offer self-service at night. The rules changed again in January, when counties with populations of less than 40,000 were allowed to go to 24-hour self-service.

In Umatilla County — population 76,985 — it is still illegal to pump your own gas any time of day. But the county is an island in a sea of coun-

ties where pumping your own gas is allowed, including the four counties it touches in Oregon and everything north of the Washington border. Observation at local gas stations suggests some drivers and stations are taking a more lax attitude toward the law as a result.

Enforcement of the self-serve law falls not to law enforcement, but to the Oregon State Fire Marshal's office. The fire marshal can impose a \$500 civil penalty on gas stations found in violation of the law.

"The OSFM receives, responds to, and investigates any violations of the statutes and rules regulating the dispensing of class one flammable liquids," Richard Hoover, public informa-

See FUEL/9A

