

REMOVED: PAWS brought 26 of the dogs to its shelter

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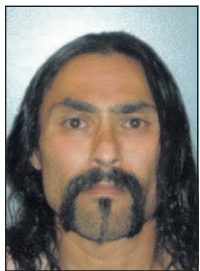
Pendleton, for child neglect and endangering the welfare of a minor. Zumwalt said the two children belonged to Michael Ruiz and Murray.



Michael Ruiz



Timi Murray



Richard Ruiz



Marina Ruiz



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

One of the dogs confiscated from a home in Stanfield this weekend sits in a pen at PAWS on Monday in Pendleton.

The animal neglect charges are felonies, and the rest are misdemeanors.

Officer Joyce Wright said they did not know how many dogs were at the home until getting a good look. Police soon realized they needed help and reached out to Fuzz Ball Animal Rescue, Hermiston, and the Pioneer Humane Society, Pendleton.

Matthew DeGarmo and Shindel Beers are instructors for Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton, and PAWS volunteers. The couple got the message around 8:20 a.m. Sunday to meet at the Pendleton shelter to help with the situation. They and other volunteers spent most of their day at the Stanfield house.

Beers said the search warrant had an expiration, so the clock was ticking to save as many dogs as they could before time ran

out. That meant venturing into a wreck of a home.

"There wasn't a square foot that didn't have dog feces," DeGarmo said.

He found dried feces between the box spring and mattress in a child's bed. Several dogs chewed their way into a mattress to hide. Nine small dogs scrambled for cover when he overturned the couch. They saw a Japanese sword on the main bed and plenty of drug paraphernalia. The home also had "security cameras all over the place," he said, and a main monitor in

the bedroom.

DeGarmo, who teaches criminal justice, said he helped at a couple of other animal rescues in his past, but none matched what he experienced Sunday.

"This was the worst place I've ever been, for sure," he said.

Most of the dogs were small, such as Chihuahua mixes. Beers said some of the dogs bit, but there were not big enough to do real damage.

"They were doing anything to get away," she said.

The dogs were sweet but scared, they said, and seemed more frightened of men than women. DeGarmo estimated the effort saved at least 36 dogs and even a kitten.

PAWS brought 26 of the dogs to its shelter. Beers said most of the dogs went to foster homes.

"There was a ton of people there yesterday coming down to get a dog," DeGarmo said. "It was a good community response."

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

"There wasn't a square foot that didn't have dog feces."

— Matthew DeGarmo, instructor at Blue Mountain Community College

SMOKE: "We're not going to get rid of this smoke until Thursday"

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of hazardous air.

Other fires added to smog-giness around the state. Firefighters are working to contain the Stubblefield, Seale, Buckhorn and Jennie's Peak fires in Gilliam and Wheeler counties. The Lonerock Fire burns near the community of Lonerock, about 22 miles southeast of Condon. Firefighters are battling the West-cliff Fire, northwest of Hood River, between Interstate 84 and the Columbia River. The Hood River County Sheriff's Office ordered evacuations for residents in the area of the fire, which burns in rugged cliffs.

"We're seeing a lot of smoke coming down from Canada and Washington," said ODEQ spokeswoman Katherine Benenati. "Every county in the state except for Curry and Coos is under a smoke advisory."

The Umatilla County Public Health Department advises people to limit exposure by staying indoors in well-ventilated areas. Administrator Jim Setzer advised everyone to lay low. People with heart conditions or any kind of lung impairment should take special care to avoid the bad air.

Setzer also advised against outdoor physical exertion such as running,

biking or training for sports teams.

"You're pulling more air in," Setzer said. "You're more at risk."

To avoid that fate, the Pendleton High School cross country team has trained inside the school's Gold Gym since last Tuesday.

"We've had to incorporate a lot of high intensity interval training, as well as sprints in the gym and stair repeats," said head coach Ben Bradley. "It's been a tough adaptation to dealing with the smoke, but the kids have worked their tails off and have done a great job dealing with this adversity early on."

Those craving fresh air

must be patient, according to National Weather Service forecaster Rob Brooks from the Pendleton office.

"We're not going to get

rid of this smoke until Thursday," Brooks said. "We're sitting under a high pressure system that is pushing the smoke downwards. It's just

sitting here."

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TURNER: Will assist with transition

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Turner said it was her decision to leave the association and she will assist with the transition, although she will not participate in the selection process for her replacement.

Bill Dochnahl, the association board's director of marketing and communications, said the new job at BMCC — the early college connections coordinator — was a good opportunity to take.

The association also put out a press release that repeatedly praised Turner and her tenure with the non-profit, a merchant organization dedicated to promoting and improving the downtown area.

The association credited Turner for coordinating events like the Pendleton Holiday Stroll and Pendleton Comes Alive, work-

ing with the Rivoli Restoration Coalition to secure a \$100,000 grant, and continuing the hanging of flower baskets in the downtown core.

The organization also praised her for her work in convincing the city to establish a source of public funding for the downtown association.

Turner was heavily involved in the campaign, lobbying the council repeatedly at public meetings and rallying support among the association's constituency.

The city eventually agreed to pay the association's entire \$55,000 operating budget in the first two years of the deal, before the city's contribution decreases by 10 percent each year in years 3-5. After the fifth year, the association will continue to receive \$25,000 per year indefinitely. The council does have the right

to review the agreement in 2020, but a different director will need to convince the council that it needs to keep the money flowing.

Turner was originally hired by the association as an intern through the University of Oregon's Resource Assistance for Rural Environments program and was promoted to lead the non-profit full-time in 2017.

Instead of using a similar process, the association plans to conduct a statewide search to find Turner's replacement.

If the association doesn't find a new director by the end of the month, Dochnahl said President Fred Bradbury and the rest of the board will run day-to-day operations until a permanent successor is found.

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WESTGATE: According to study, city could support 125 more rental units

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ton's need for housing.

According to Corbett, one of their recent conversations led Ivanov to take a trip to Pendleton, where the former EOTC property has been marketed as a site for potential housing.

Corbett said the depth of I&E's plans show that the

project is beyond the concept stage.

"This appears like he's serious about doing something," he said.

Corbett said he hasn't heard I&E's presentation yet and is unsure if the company will ask the city to buy the property or provide financial assistance.

If I&E went forward

with the project, it could meet Pendleton's current rental housing needs by itself.

According to a study commissioned by the city, Pendleton's market could support 125 more rental units and 90 for-sale units, especially three-bedroom units.



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