



EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2018

142nd Year, No. 237 WINNER OF THE 2018 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD One dollar



Dry mud lies curled and cracked above the current shoreline of McKay Reservoir on Monday south of Pendleton. The area has seen below average rainfall since May.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Dry spell stretches on

Rainless September follows
0.03 inches in August

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Summers are dry on the east side of Oregon, but the 2018 version was quantifiably drier than usual. When September ended on Sunday, it marked the 57th consecutive day the National Weather Service didn't record a measurable amount of rainwater at the Pendleton airport.

The current streak began on Aug. 28, the day after Mother Nature graced Pendleton with 0.03 inches of rain, but before that the city had already gone 43 straight days without rainfall.

Although the warm weather months have been abnormally dry — May, June, July, and August all received below average rain amounts — Pendleton's current dry spell barely slips into the all-time top 10, according to weather service assistant forecaster Ann Adams.

Adams said the record was set in 1974, when Pendleton went 82 consecutive days without rain. But regardless of 2018's place in history, local growers are starting to feel the effects.

Don Wysocki, a soil scientist for Oregon State University Extension Service, said wheat farmers have been



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

There is currently no surface water running in McKay Creek that feeds into the McKay Reservoir, shown Monday, south of Pendleton.

forced to move back their planting dates while they wait for rains to arrive.

While farmers usually use the first rains of the season to eliminate the resulting weeds before they plant their crop, Wysocki said the late seed dates mean weeds will likely grow alongside the wheat stalks, which could mean smaller yields.

Even though some growers were able to plant their wheat crops around

Labor Day by drilling down into moister soil, Wysocki said farmers will eventually seed and fertilize their soil with or without rain.

"We're starting off with a smaller glass than we did last year," he said.

Agriculture isn't the only local institution forced to change their customs due to the recent dry spell.

See DRY/10A

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— Don Wysocki, soil scientist for OSU Extension Service

MEASURE 30-128

Gun rights measure puts power in sheriff's hands

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pro-Second Amendment activist Jesse Bonifer of Athena wants the oversight of constitutionally-protected gun rights to become local.

"We're trying to bring everything back to the county level," he said, "and have it checked by the people who are actually policing it."

Bonifer headed up the effort that placed Measure No. 30-128 Umatilla County Second Amendment Preservation Ordinance on the local ballot for the Nov. 6 election. The proposal would restrict Umatilla County from using resources to enforce state or federal laws that will infringe on the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. Chad Jacobs, a Portland attorney, said the measure also designates the sheriff as "the guy to decide if it's unconstitutional or not."

Jacobs is an attorney with the firm Beery Elsner Hammond, which works with the intersection of local, state and federal constitutional issues. He said these proposals, in large part, define what the county does with public money.

"I would frame it as this is a statement of policy for the county to decide how they want to prioritize the use of their resources," Jacobs said. "I think it's completely legal for a local government to say here is where we put our resources."

In that vein, the ordinance is like other policy or funding decisions. But, Jacobs said, there are problems of enforcement.

Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan said he had discussed implementing a similar rule with the board of commissioners a few months ago, after finding out that some other Oregon counties are proposing ordinances that place oversight of gun rights in local control. Columbia County has collected enough signatures to place a measure on the ballot next month, and some counties, like Wallowa and Wheeler, got an ordinance passed through the board of county commissioners.

"I'm certainly very supportive of our Second Amendment rights," Rowan said. "I don't think our forefathers would appreciate people meddling with the words they defined as important to the people of this country."

He said he feels there is a degree of uncertainty about those rights, especially around the anniversary of the Las Vegas mass shooting, where a shooter claimed the lives of 58 people and injured nearly 500.

"That always spurs added conversation in

See GUN/10A

Hunters offered new reward for turning in poachers

Three suspected poachers cited on Sunday for shooting deer on private land

East Oregonian

Oregon hunters are getting a new incentive to turn in poachers.

A program, approved by the 2016 Oregon Legislature and put into effect this month, offers the option of big game preference points instead of cash for providing information that leads to an arrest or citation for poaching-related crimes.

The Turn in Poachers program is a collaboration between the Ore-

gon Hunters Association and Oregon State Police, and until this season offered only cash rewards for such tips.

According to a release from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, for cases involving bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose or wolves, the tipster will be awarded five preference points. For cases involving elk, deer, pronghorn, cougar or bear, the person will be awarded four preference points. All preference points must go to one hunt series (elk, buck deer, antlerless deer, antelope or spring bear).

Five preference points would allow a hunter to draw 76 percent of buck deer hunts, 69 percent of

See POACHERS/10A

HERMISTON

EOTEC hosts 'Walktober,' equestrian opportunities

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Fair season is over, but the public is still encouraged to visit the grounds of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The center is hosting a "Walktober" by encouraging people to come and walk the paths around the property every Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Those who stop by the office on their way in can enter their name into a drawing for prizes that will happen at the end of each week.

Three loops around the flat, paved trails at EOTEC equal a mile. EOTEC general manager Al

Davis said the event is scheduled for October, but could run longer depending on conditions.

"We'll keep going as long as the weather holds out," he said.

Davis is also opening the rodeo arena at EOTEC to public horseback riding from 3 p.m. until dark every Wednesday in October.

"Bring your colts, Western pleasure, seasoned barrel horses or ponies," the flier for the event advertises, and enjoy "the 2017 best footing in the PRCA." The charge is \$10 per horse or \$20 per trailer.

Davis said he is always looking for new ways to get people out to

See EOTEC/10A

