

Farm Bill a breakthrough for hemp

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
EO Media Group

Northwest hemp farmers scored a major victory on Wednesday with the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, which legalized the crop and defined it as an “agricultural commodity.”

The legislation removes hemp from the list of federally controlled substances, including products made with derivative extracts such as cannabinoid, or CBD, oil.

Hemp is closely related to marijuana, but unlike pot it contains less than 0.3 percent of tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the psychoactive component that gets users high. CBD oils promote a host of health benefits, from pain relief to preventing seizures and lowering anxiety. Hemp can also be used to make fiber, plastic and a building material known as “hempcrete” — a mixture of hemp stalks and lime.

Courtney Moran, a Portland attorney and president of the Oregon Industrial Hemp Farmers Association, said the bill greatly clarifies hemp’s legal status at the federal level, allowing farmers to sign up for crop insurance, work with banks and do business across state lines.

“It’s very exciting that Congress has realized the economic and agricultural potential for hemp,” Moran said. “It’s an incredible day for cannabis, and for all farmers worldwide.”

Moran spent two years working with U.S. Sen. Ron



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press, File

Hemp grows in an Oregon field. Congress has legalized the crop nationwide.

Wyden’s office on legislation. The law also provides USDA oversight and funding for hemp research, and allows states and tribes to become the primary regulators of hemp production.

Oregon established its Industrial Hemp Program, overseen by the state Department of Agriculture, in 2016. By the end of the year, 70 growers and 53 handlers had registered with ODA. The program has since grown more than six-fold, with 582 growers and 212 handlers.

Moran said she sees the industry growing significantly more under the Hemp Farming Act moving forward.

“I think it’s an incredible impact,” she said.

Senate Majority Leader

Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., was the bill’s chief sponsor. On Tuesday, McConnell tweeted that, “At a time when farm income is down and growers are struggling, industrial hemp is a bright spot of agriculture’s future.”

Sens. Wyden and Jeff Merkley, both Oregon Democrats, were also vocal supporters of legalizing industrial hemp.

“For too long, the outrageous and outdated ban on growing hemp has hamstrung farmers in Oregon and across the country,” Wyden said in a statement.

“Hemp products are made in America, sold in America and consumed in America. Now, hemp will be able to be legally grown in America, to the economic benefit of consumers and farmers

in Oregon and nationwide.”

Estimates show the total retail value of all hemp products in the U.S. in 2017 was \$820 million in 2017, according to the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, a national program funded in part by USDA Rural Development.

A report by New Frontier Data, which studies cannabis markets, also shows the U.S. CBD sales grew by nearly 40 percent in 2017, reaching \$367 million.

Moran said legalization could spur growth in even higher-value uses of hemp, like paper, fiber and construction.

“It’s really time we start building our national infrastructure in all aspects of the industry for what this plant can do,” she said.

Rewards for catching moose poacher total \$11,000

East Oregonian

Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife troopers continue to seek the public’s help to catch the poacher or poachers who shot and killed a bull moose in November in Wallowa County. And the Oregon Hunters Association’s reward in the case now stands at \$7,500.

Pledges from OHA chapters across the state poured in, according to a written statement from state police, which increased the cash reward amount to \$7,500 for information leading to a citation or arrest of who poached the bull moose.

And Krebs Ranch, near the Zumwalt Prairie Preserve in the Chesnimnus unit, is offering a \$3,500 guided bull elk hunt to the person that provides the



Contributed by ODFW

A bull moose was illegally killed in Wallowa County in November.

information.

State police reported the illegal kill occurred between Nov. 8 and Nov. 11, during the final days of the second season for bull elk, off of

the U.S. Forest Service 46 Road between Teepee Pond and mile marker 35 in the Chesnimnus Big Game Unit.

“Additionally, a side-by-side UTV was used to haul

the moose meat and parts from the kill site back to the campsite,” state police reported.

OHA Conservation Director Jim Akenson, who resides in Wallowa County, called the poaching tragic, “Especially because our moose population is low with fewer than 70 in Oregon.”

State police urged anyone in that area at the time with information that will help identify any suspect to call the Turn In Poachers — TIP — line at 800-452-7888, senior trooper Mark Knapp at 541-426-3049, or email TIP@state.or.us.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

School buses were parked in front of McNary Heights Elementary School Thursday after students were dropped off there to be reunited with their parents after a gas leak at Clara Brownell Middle School caused an evacuation.

Gas leak closes Umatilla middle, high schools

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

A gas leak at Umatilla’s Clara Brownell Middle School sent kids from both the middle school and Umatilla High School home for the day on Thursday morning.

Superintendent Heidi Sipe said the leak was detected in the middle school building around 8:30 a.m., but it was close enough to the high school that they evacuated both schools as a safety precaution.

According to the contractors, the leak was caused when a roofing contractor tried to flex a gas regulator vent so that it wouldn’t land on a rib. That resulted in a cracked fitting at the regulator.

Sipe said they initially expected the leak to be fixed quickly, but a technician had to come from

the Tri-Cities, and the process was taking longer than planned.

Sipe said students from both schools were moved temporarily to McNary Heights Elementary School but were ultimately sent home for the day. The gas leak was fixed shortly before 11:30 a.m. Thirteen students from the middle and high schools were not sent home early, because their parents could not be reached to give permission for them to leave. Those students stayed and helped in classrooms at the elementary school until the end of the day.

Sipe said people from Umatilla fire, police, and city hall all assisted, as well as Mid-Columbia Bus Company.

The elementary school remained in session. All after-school activities at CBMS and UHS were canceled for the day.

Pendleton RV fire kills dogs

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Four dogs died in Pendleton in a recreational vehicle fire.

Pendleton fire and police at about 12:20 p.m. Wednesday responded to Go Fish RV Park, 1500 S.E. Byers Ave., for a fire inside one of the vehicles on the lot. Fire Capt. Dan Hergert said there was little exterior indication of a blaze, but the burn was inside walls, floors and the ceiling. Firefighters tore down cabinets and more to extinguish the fire.

“It’s pretty much a total loss,” he said, and added the cause was a space heater.

The fire also claimed the lives of four dogs inside the RV, Hergert said, while a bystander used a fire extinguisher on a fifth to save it.

And Hergert provided an update on a Nov. 30 fire that gutted the interior of Pendleton Bare Bones, 1304 S.W. Dorion Ave. The cause appears to be electrical, he said, and stemmed from a back-up battery inside the convenience and tobacco store.



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