

Umatilla County, deputy DAs reach labor deal

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Umatilla County and its deputy district attorneys have a tentative deal on a new labor contract that increases pay 2 percent a year for three years.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3742-4 has ratified the successor to the collective bargaining agreement that expired June 30, 2018, according to county documents. Now the county board of commissioners plans to decide Wednesday to ratify the deal.

District attorneys work on salary. Under the previous labor contract, beginning deputy district attorneys received \$4,413 a month.

New prosecutors under the new deal start at \$4,700. The prior pay scale topped out at \$7,084 for the longest serving and most experienced deputy district attorneys. Those positions under the new contract top out at \$9,790 in the third year.

The contract also includes health insurance, life insurance with a \$50,000 benefit and a maximum of 400 hours of vacation. The unionized employees receive 8 hours of time off in the month of their birthday. Per the contract, that amount rolls into their vacation accrual balance if they can't take the time off in their birthday month.

The new contract spans July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2021, and only covers the eight deputy dis-

trict attorneys in the office. District Attorney Dan Primus is exempt, as is the chief deputy prosecutor, Jacklyn Jenkins, as well as legal assistants and other staff. The office also is shy three deputy district attorneys.

The board of commissioners meets Wednesday starting at 9 a.m. at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton. The board also will consider approving new positions, including a legal secretary for the district attorney's office to handle recording grand juries. The total cost of that position is \$73,731, according to county documents.

Grand juries determine charges in most felony cases and review public safety officer shootings.

Oregon was one of 12 states that did not record grand jury proceedings. The 2017 Oregon Legislature changed that. Multnomah, Deschutes and Jackson counties began recording grand juries in 2018, and the state's remaining 33 counties have to get on board by July 1 this year.

Special transportation fund grants also are on the agenda. The board will consider 12 state-funded grants totaling \$384,986 for cities and organizations to provide public transportation, along with \$224,593 to Pendleton and \$267,754 to Milton-Freewater in pass-through federal funding to enhance the mobility of seniors and people with disabilities.

Pendleton tops the county's list

for special transportation fund grants with \$104,079 for bus services. Hermiston is No. 2 with \$61,014 for taxi tickets, and Milton-Freewater is third with \$57,821 for bus and taxi services.

The special transportation fund grants come with a big if this year. Hal Gard, administrator of the Oregon Department of Transportation's rail and public transportation division, in early January notified agencies Gov. Kate Brown called for eliminating the \$10 million the fund receives from the state's general fund. Gard in the letter stated while the Legislature will not finalize the budget until June, agencies should be ready for a 40 percent cut to those grants.

Imbibe @Blue gives local flavor to annual fundraising event

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Eastern Oregon artisans helped bring in scholarship money for Blue Mountain Community College students Saturday at the second annual Imbibe @Blue fundraiser.

Savory cheeses, rich chocolates and local wines tempted attendees of the Mardi Gras-themed tasting event on BMCC's Pendleton campus.

Laren Nebel of Arrowhead Chocolates in Joseph was offering up a table full of chocolates with flavors ranging from huckleberry to habañero lime caramel.

"We use natural ingredients where we can, we use organic where we can, we locally source where we can," she said.

"We're trying to pack as much flavor as we can into one bite."

She said she expected most people to go for the savory foods first and circle back to the chocolate samples to end their night.

King cakes from Lavender Mercantile of Pendleton were also tempting attendees' sweet tooth.

Dawn Alderman said the personal-sized cakes, made with an almond pastry filling, paid tribute to the Mardi Gras theme but were actually more in the French style than New Orleans style.

Lavender Mercantile sells items from their laven-



Lori Kennedy of the Don Carlo winery pours a glass of wine as her husband Tim looks on Saturday at the second annual Imbibe @Blue at Blue Mountain Community College.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

der farm out of a storefront on Main Street, but Alderman said they also have a "little mini bakery" that specializes in French cakes.

She said she was excited to be back at Imbibe @Blue for a second year.

"Last year there were a lot of people," she said. "It went really well. It was a fun

event."

At the cheese table people could sample an array of cheeses from Tillamook and ones from Great Pacific, donated by Sylvia Clawson.

Shannon Franklin and Laurie Post, who were handing out samples, said the most popular seemed to be an English cheddar with whole

grain mustard from Great Pacific.

Alex Hedges was giving out tastings of wines from Blue Mountain Cider Company and Watermill Winery.

The companies were started in 2003 by apple farmers in Milton-Freewater.

On Saturday, Hedges was offering a variety of wines

— sweet and savory, red and white — and craft cider made from locally grown apples and grapes.

"This is our first time (at Imbibe) so we're very excited to be down here," he said.

Prodigal Son was serving Packard IPA and Bruce/Lee Porter. Proprietors Jen-

nifer and Tim Guenther said the college has always been very supportive of Prodigal Son and they were happy to help out in return by supporting the scholarship fundraiser.

In addition to the tastings from various local artisans, attendees could also sample traditional New Orleans appetizers from Simply Catering such as crab cakes and Cajun shrimp.

John Fields, vice president of instruction for BMCC, was enjoying the appetizers Saturday night. He is originally from New Orleans, and said the muffuletta (a type of sandwich from New Orleans) were excellent.

Fields, who has worked for BMCC since July, said he was pleased to see so many people come out and support the Blue Mountain Community College Foundation.

He said he has personally seen students helped through the foundation.

Not only does the foundation hand out traditional scholarships, but Fields said when students face barriers to staying in school, foundation director Margaret Gianotti has given them a gift card for groceries or helped get their car fixed so they can continue to pursue their education.

"This helps make that possible," he said, acknowledging the crowded room.

Morrow County deputies find crash victim after 4-hour search

East Oregonian

A Boardman man who fled a rollover crash on Interstate 84 on Thursday night was found hours later, unresponsive and suffering from severe hypothermia about 4 miles from the crash.

It took help from multiple agencies searching through knee-high snow and sub-freezing temperatures, but authorities found Justin Don Connell, 26, and took him to the hospital where he is recovering.

Charges are pending as the investigation continues.

The Valentine's Day night search began at 11:36 p.m., according to a press release from the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, when a single vehicle crash was reported at milepost 175.

The vehicle was on its top and the driver had fled. Connell was last seen walking along the east-bound lanes of the freeway.

With the temperature at 23 degrees, heavy fog blanketing the

area and blood found in the vehicle, responders knew finding Connell was urgent. Deputies Thomas Way and Taylor Wasserman found tracks and started to follow them on foot, while Sgt. Nathen Braun and deputies Gordon Adams and Colleen Neubert searched nearby roads.

Tracks in the snow indicated that Connell was running, changing directions and going in circles, possibly trying to elude deputies, and had fallen down several times.

It also appeared he was making snow angels.

At 2:30 a.m., with snow falling harder and the temperature dropping, the pursuit became a search and rescue. The sheriff's office called for backup from Umatilla County Search and Rescue and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife K9 unit.

More than an hour later, at 3:46 a.m., responders located Connell. Deputies carried him to a vehicle and took him to a Boardman ambulance, which trans-

ported him to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston. He was later transferred to Kadlec Regional Medical Center in the Tri-Cities.

In the press release, Undersheriff John A. Bowles thanked Boardman fire and ambulance crews, Oregon State Police, Josh Hindman and Matthew Pells of USFW, and Umatilla County Search and Rescue for being on standby, as well as his deputies for their effort in the search.

BRIEFLY

Babies boogie at the library on Wednesdays

HERMISTON — A program specifically for children up to 4 years old is offered weekly at the Hermiston Public Library. Baby Boogie is each Wednesday at 10 a.m. at 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. The program is designed to engage children with music, improve their motor skills, spark creativity and supporting early literacy development.

Parents are encouraged to bring their little ones. For more information, call 541-567-2882 or visit www.hermistonlibrary.us.

Living Blue Democrats cancel meetings

HERMISTON — A group of Democrats that were meeting monthly in Hermiston have canceled upcoming gatherings. Living Blue had been meeting the third Sunday of each month. For questions, Bernie Sander-son at 541-626-9189 or cln42da87@yahoo.com.

Republican women announce essay contest

PENDLETON — Graduating seniors from select area schools and

those currently attending Blue Mountain Community College are invited to submit an entry for the scholarship essay program presented by the Round Up Republican Women.

Eligible students must attend school in Pendleton, Hermiston, Echo, Helix, Pilot Rock, Stanfield or Ukiah. Students in private, alternative or home schools in the area may apply. The group will present a \$500 scholarship.

Students are asked to write on the topic "Is a border wall immoral?"

The essay, along with transcripts and two letters of recommendation, including one from an educator, must be submitted by Sunday, March 31. A winner will be determined by Tuesday, April 30. Submissions can be sent to rounduprw@gmail.com or Round Up Republican Women, P.O. Box 984, Pendleton, OR 97801. For questions, call 541-969-2677.

Donor sets challenge for Blue Mountain Wildlife

A call out of the blue could help Blue Mountain Wildlife generate the seed money for massive upgrades at its Pendleton facility.

The nonprofit announced Monday that it was launching its "Soar Higher" fundraising campaign.

From now until April 20, every dol-

lar donated to Blue Mountain Wildlife will be matched up to \$25,000.

Blue Mountain Wildlife Executive Director Lynn Tompkins said the new fundraising drive was made possible by Linda Wolcott of New Mexico, who visited the rehabilitation center for wild birds south of Pendleton.

Although it's been several years since the visit, Blue Mountain Wildlife left enough of an impression that when she decided to make a charitable donation, she picked up the phone and called Blue Mountain Wildlife.

Tompkins said renovations will include a wildlife hospital, indoor and outdoor classrooms, new displays for the "ambassador" birds, and caretaker and intern housing.

People can make donations by visiting the Blue Mountain Wildlife website or writing checks to the nonprofit's 71046 Appaloosa Lane, Pendleton, OR 97801 address.

Donors can also give money in person at the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Winter Birds event on Saturday.

Blue Mountain Wildlife is set to release two bald eagles back into the wild at 10 a.m. the McNary Environmental Education Center, 64 Maple St., Burbank, Washington.

The event runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and also includes birding tours, children's activities, and live bird exhibits.


CHI St Anthony Hospital Scholarships

OPEN TO ANYONE IN UMATILLA OR MORROW COUNTIES

High school senior or College students pursuing a degree in healthcare.

Scholarships up to \$1000 will be awarded. Funded by the SAH Volunteers.

Download the application at sahpendleton.org/scholarship



Return your application packet no later than March 1, 2019. (Postmark does not count.)

Submit application to:
Emily Smith, Volunteer Services 2801
St. Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR 97801
EmilySmith@chiwest.com • Questions? Call 541-278-2627