

Wolf kills calf in NE Oregon

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Capital Press

ENTERPRISE — As the vote on a new state wolf management plan approaches, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is investigating the depredation of a calf at a Wallowa County ranch.

Pat Matthews, district wildlife biologist for ODFW, said the attack likely happened early in the morning of May 26 between the towns of Lostine and Wallowa west of Enterprise. The area is not identified as wolf territory, although Matthews said they did find fresh tracks about 2 miles farther south on May 29.

“We still don’t really know much more than that,” Matthews said.

Without more details, Matthews said it is impossible to tell whether the wolf dispersed from another pack, whether it is alone and whether it is passing through or there to stay.

The agency has set up a trail camera in hopes of piecing together more clues.

Until then, Matthews said the ranchers are trying to check on their cattle every day and have buried the calf carcass to avoid attracting more predators.

“Their cows are starting to be put up on some of their summer range,” Matthews said. “They’re scattered out. If there are wolves staying in the area, they will be potentially vulnerable.”

Oregon has at least 137 wolves as of the most recent count in 2018. Most packs are concentrated in the far north-east corner of the state.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission is scheduled to vote on a revised Wolf Conservation and Management Plan at its monthly meeting on Friday in Salem. Part of the plan regulates how and when ranchers can kill wolves that repeatedly prey on live-

stock in Eastern Oregon — a standard known as “chronic depredation.”

Wolves east of highways 395, 78 and 95 are managed under Phase III of the current plan, which defines “chronic depredation” as two confirmed attacks on livestock over any period of time. The revised plan calls for amending the definition to two confirmed attacks in nine months.

Western Oregon wolves are still protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, though that could change under a delisting proposal now under consideration.

Ranchers have long argued they need the ability to kill problem wolves to protect their businesses. Environmentalists counter that the species remains vulnerable, occupying a small fraction of its former habitat, and more emphasis should be placed on non-lethal deterrents to protect livestock.

Rescuers free one from crash



Photo contributed by the East Umatilla County Rural Fire Protection District
Emergency personnel work to free an occupant from a crash early Wednesday on Highway 11 near milepost 22. The East Umatilla County Rural Fire Protection District and East Umatilla County Area Ambulance Health District responded to the scene a little after midnight Tuesday. Crews braced the vehicle for safety before removing one person. The fire protection district also reported an ambulance took the victim to a local hospital.

Stanfield passes 2019-20 budget

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

STANFIELD — The Stanfield City Council passed a new budget on Tuesday that includes money for a road project and new community room at the library.

The 2019-20 budget is the last under city manager Blair Larsen, who is leaving June 19 to become the community and economic development director for the city of Sweet Home. He said he has enjoyed his time at city hall in Stanfield and the relationships he has built with area partners.

“It’s been a great six years,” he said.

The adopted budget includes money for feasibility and design work to add a “community room” to the Stanfield Public Library. The city would like to connect the library to the adjacent building and renovate the city council chambers there into new room that could host library and city events, as well as private event rentals.

Stanfield is also adding \$61,000 in city funds to a \$100,000 state grant to pave Harding Avenue. Larsen said the project will go from Main Street toward Edwards Avenue, as far as the funding will carry it.



EO File Photo

The 2019-20 budget for Stanfield includes money to make structural repairs to the old water tower downtown.

In the public works department, the city currently has 2.75 regular public works employees and a seasonal worker. Larsen said there are projects not getting done around the city because of insufficient staff, which is why the new budget includes funds to hire an additional public works employee.

“The workload requires it,” he said.

The city is also putting aside \$5,000 for code enforcement to use in abating some nuisances where the property owner is “unwilling or unable to cooperate”

with code enforcement and the city deems it better to pay to clean up the problem itself rather than wait for the lien process.

At the end of 2018 the city surveyed residents about whether they would rather the city’s landmark former water tower be torn down or repaired and repainted.

After two-thirds of residents voted to refurbish the tower, the city will complete \$62,000 in repair work in 2019-20 and complete the remaining \$123,000 of painting and repair the following year.

The developer of the Panoramic Ridge subdivision is donating land for a new park within the subdivision, and the city plans to use dollars from the fuel tax fund to start the process of creating the park, which will add new features over time as funding becomes available.

During its June 18 council meeting, the council plans to complete one final supplemental budget for 2018-19. The city recently sold a storefront it owned at 170 E. Main St. and plans to put that money toward the debt payment on its city hall.

LOCAL BRIEFING

UC Fair Board chair pleads guilty to elk poaching

IRRIGON — Gay Newman, chair of the Umatilla County Fair Board, pleaded guilty to poaching an elk.

Oregon State Police game troopers in November 2018 responded to a complaint about hunters trespassing and killing a five-point bull elk on private property off Gurdane Road, Morrow County. Troopers found Newman, of Hermiston, shot two elk and validated his wife’s second-season spike tag for the five-point. However, according to state police, that tag was valid for a different hunting unit.

The Morrow County Justice Court, Irrigon, heard the case, according to court records, and Newman in May pleaded guilty to taking a bull elk without a tag. The court fined him \$1,005, gave him a year of bench probation and prohibited him from applying for a hunting license for three years.

The court also ordered police to return Newman’s hunting rifle to him.

development program in the spring of 2014. The program includes leadership development, succession planning and employee engagement, and it encourages employees to focus on their personal professional growth.

Commissioner George Murdock was instrumental in implementing the program. He said strong professional development is foundational to building an exceptional organization.

“Helping staff members build their skills is not only an important contribution to their current job, but also helps prepare them to take on additional responsibilities as our organization moves forward,” he said.

NACO gives the achievement award in 18 categories, from children and youth to criminal justice to civic engagement. The association will recognize award-winning counties at its 2019 annual conference in July 2019 in Las Vegas.

Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer and program consultant Susan Bower of Eastern Oregon Business Source will represent the county at an awards luncheon.

UC professional development program earns national award

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Umatilla County received national recognition for its professional development program.

The National Association of Counties selected Umatilla County from 616 entries across 32 states for the Achievement Award. According to NACO, the award honors “innovative, effective county government programs that enhance services for residents and the internal organizational culture of the county itself as an employer.”

The county implemented its professional

Umatilla County takes control of school health centers

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Umatilla County is taking control of the school health centers in Pendleton.

The county operates one center at the high school and the other at the middle school. The county last year contracted with Columbia River Health to staff the centers. The Boardman-based health organization in February notified the county it would not renew that contract.

Alisha Southwick, deputy director of Umatilla County Public Health Department, told the board during its meeting Wednesday in Pendleton the new plan is for the county to staff the centers directly. She said the health department met with school district officials and representative from St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, and they wanted the county to employ the health officials who work in the centers.

“The reasoning behind

that is to help promote some stability in the center,” Southwick told the board. “When we were contracting ... we had a lot of turnover through that, which made it an unreliable service for the students in the schools.”

Making the positions county employees, she continued, would give the schools more confidence in the service and lead to more students using it. Each center saw 150-200 students a year, she said, but that dipped with staffing vacancies the last two years.

She also said providing mental health services was a big part of the work at the centers.

The health department asked the county to approve hiring a nurse practitioner and two mental health specialists. Southwick said they would work full time when school was in session. State funding, insurance payments and some grants cover all the program costs, she added. The board approved the positions.

And the county’s \$91 million budget for the upcoming fiscal year received the stamp of approval.

The county board of commissioners voted Wednesday morning in Pendleton to adopt the 2019-20 budget, which goes into effect July 1 with a general fund of \$32.4 million, about \$3.7 million more than the current budget. The county in the upcoming fiscal year also boosts its number of full-time equivalent employees from 311 to 324.

Commissioner George Murdock said while it took only a few moments to adopt the fiscal document, county staff put in

two full days of work in April to parse through it all. The total budget document spans 280 pages.

The county board also gave the public works department the OK to buy a new tractor-trailer for almost \$125,000, a new dump truck with a snow plow for \$162,000 and a new dump truck with a snow plow and sander for about \$183,000. Tom Fellows, public works director, explained the vehicles were on the equipment replacement list for 2019-20 and the county road department receives all of its money from the state highway fund.



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