

Fire crews respond to grass fire near I-84



Staff photos by Ben Lonergan

Pendleton Fire Department and Oregon Department of Forestry fire crews responded to a grass fire on a hillside along Interstate 84 near Exit 209 in Pendleton late Wednesday afternoon. The cause of the fire is still under investigation at this time.

Breast implant recalled after link to more rare cancer cases

By **MATTHEW PERRONE**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Breast implant maker Allergan Inc. issued a worldwide recall Wednesday for certain textured models after regulators alerted the company to a heightened cancer risk with the devices.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said it called for the removal after new information showed Allergan's Biocell breast implants with a textured surface were tied to the vast majority of cases of a rare form of lymphoma. The move follows similar action in France, Australia, Canada and other nations.

The FDA is not recommending women with the implants have them removed because the cancer is so rare, but say they should check with their doctor if they have symptoms, which include pain and swelling.

Biocell implants feature a textured surface designed to prevent slippage and to minimize scar tissue. Those models account for just 5% of the U.S. market. The vast majority of breast implants used in the U.S. have a smooth surface.

Wednesday's recall does not affect Allergan's smooth implants or a different Allergan textured implant sold under the Microcell brand.

Health authorities first linked breast implants to cancer in 2011. The disease is not breast cancer but

lymphoma that grows in the scar tissue surrounding the breasts. It grows slowly and can usually be successfully treated by surgically removing the implants.

As recently as May, the FDA said that the danger did not warrant a national ban on textured devices. But the FDA said Wednesday that new data show a direct link to cancer with Allergan's implants not seen with other textured implants.

"Once the evidence indicated that a specific manufacturer's product appeared to be directly linked to significant patient harm, including death, the FDA took action," said FDA deputy commissioner Amy Abernethy, on a call with reporters.

The FDA said the latest figures show more than 80% of the 570 confirmed cases of the lymphoma worldwide have been linked to Allergan implants. Regulators estimate that the risk of the disease is six times higher with Allergan's implants than other textured implants sold in the U.S.

FDA officials said they decided to act after receiving 116 new reports of the cancer. Those reports increased the number of deaths tied to the disease from 9 to 33, including at least 12 cases in women with Allergan breast implants.

FDA's device director Jeffrey Shuren said the death increase played a significant role in their decision to seek a recall.

"Our team concluded

action was necessary to protect the public health," he said.

The new numbers still reflect a rare disease considering an estimated 10 million women globally have breast implants. The FDA estimates that hundreds of thousands of U.S. women have the Biocell implants.

There is no firm agreement on the exact frequency of the disease, known as breast implant-associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma. Published estimates range from 1 in 3,000 patients to 1 in 30,000 patients.

Dr. Mark Clemens of Houston's MD Anderson Cancer Center said Biocell's surface differs from other textured implants, producing a large amount of particles that shed into the body.

"But what key factor is most important, we don't know at this time," said Clemens, a plastic surgeon who has published extensively on the disease.

Allergan said in a statement it would no longer sell or distribute Biocell implants and tissue expanders, which are used to prepare patients for breast reconstruction. The company said it would direct surgeons to return unused implants.

Roughly 400,000 U.S. women get breast implants each year. The devices have a silicone outer shell and are filled with either saline or silicone. Silicone-filled implants are more popular in the U.S. because they are considered more natural.

Shelter: City councilor starts talks on addressing the homeless

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As the council mulls changes to the way it deals with homelessness, Innes said the city hasn't committed to one of the potential solutions.

"It's a big issue," she said. "We have not said as a council, 'We want to build a homeless shelter.'"

If the council does go that route, Innes said there are grants available to help with funding it.

The rest of the council's response was mixed.

Councilor Paul Chalmers said the top homelessness complaints are from pedestrians who aren't comfortable walking on the Pendleton River Parkway because of the presence of nearby homeless camps, and from business owners who say homeless are trespassing onto their property to sleep in their doorways or rifle through their dumpsters.

Councilor McKennon McDonald said she's encountered more homeless people in downtown Pendleton in recent months than in her daily walks on the parkway.

Mayor John Turner said he's unsure if the city should change its approach, which he called "benign" and "friendly."

Turner said Pendleton

already experiences higher rates of homelessness because of services offered by organizations like the Community Action Program of East Central Oregon and the Salvation Army.

While he thought the council and police department weren't interested in "persecuting homeless people," he also added that there have been some "very disturbing scenes" in Portland and Seattle when they provided more services.

Chalmers said the problem was compounded by the state's shrinking number of mental hospital beds, but the city's primary responsibility should be to the city's taxpayers.

"There's just a boatload of folks, that's the lifestyle they choose," he said. "I don't think we need to validate that at any cost because there's services that are being provided for people who choose that."

Innes said locals who want to stay permanently homeless is a minority, but mental health is an issue.

While the longterm housing situation for the homeless remains unsolved, the council is moving ahead with an ordinance that will change the way homelessness is enforced.

The council will soon

consider a proposed law that would repeal the city's ban on loitering but would also add new prohibitions on public camping and sleeping on public benches.

"If we are very strict about cleaning up the river parkway and under the edges of the bridge, those people are just going to float into our neighborhoods," she said. "They are going to have to find some place to stay."

She added that she recently spoke with a homeless man who had lost his camp and was now sleeping in a garage, and she was unsure if had secured permission to stay there.

This isn't the first time the city has put some thought on where to house the homeless.

In 2018, former Pendleton City Manager Larry Lehman said the city held internal discussions about establishing a regulated homeless camp.

Walla Walla actually started one in 2016, and after some trial-and-error, the city and a local nonprofit now maintain a cluster of huts that are open to the homeless year-round.

Before discussing the issue further, Turner said Innes should return with recommendations from the committee.

Jail: Hedman is facing 6 charges in Baker County before extradition

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Hedman to face first-degree murder charges.

Hedman is accused of killing Kyle Jordan Martz, 35, of Walla Walla.

Shirtcliff said it's uncertain how long the extradition process will take, although he said he doubts it would require more than a month.

"It's always hard to say," he said. "They've begun that process, but there is no time frame."

In Baker County, Hedman is charged with unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, attempting to elude, reckless driving, criminal trespassing, criminal mischief and property hit-and-run.

He was arrested near Baker City after trying to elude police. Hedman is accused of breaking into Bob and Robbie Borders' home on Taggart Lane, just north of Baker City.

Shirtcliff said the Walla Walla murder charges take priority over the Baker County case.

However, he said that if the extradition process is still pending when Hedman is scheduled to go to trial in Baker City, it's possible the trial here could happen before Hedman returns to Washington, Shirtcliff said.

Hedman has not waived his right to a speedy trial, and a trial date could be set during a hearing next week, Shirtcliff said.

According to police reports, when Hedman went to the Borders' property he initially moved items from a Toyota pickup truck he is accused of stealing from Martz into the Borders' Ford pickup truck.

Baker County Sheriff's Office deputies Gabe Maldonado and Craig Rilee confronted Hedman, who fled on foot.

He later returned to the Borders' property and drove away in the couple's 2000 Jeep Wrangler.

Hedman was arrested later after leading police on a chase during which the Borders' Jeep, valued at about \$10,000, was totaled, according to Bob Borders.

Charter: Review committee maintains Umatilla County needs a manager

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she said, the committee considers the county at some point would be better off with five part-time commissioners plus a full-time county manager.

"We did stick with — and have recommended very strongly — that a county manager be appointed," she said.

Grable also addressed Shafer telling the committee at the work session, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," referring to the county's system of administration with three commissioners.

"Well, in my opinion, this is a vision of the present," Grable said. "I submit it isn't a vision of the future, and it's certainly not a vision of the past."

The county has not functioned well under previous commissioners, she said, and continuity remains a chief problem in county government.

Citing Commissioner George Murdock, chair of the county board, Grable said 27 of Oregon's 36 counties have a manager. County tax assessor Paul Chalmers told the committee that previous commissioners and boards sunk employee morale and created a negative workplace. Chalmers also described Murdock as the de facto county manager, she said, which other county department heads echoed.

A county manager would come with a cost, Grable said, but Robert Pahl, the

county's chief finance officer, confirmed the money for such a position would be available in the budget.

The county adopted the charter in 1994, when the county population was about 59,000 and the county budget was \$18 million. Now, the county has more than 80,000 residents and the total budget is north of \$90 million. The very first charter review committee recommended a manager, she said, and that was 15 years ago. She added a manager also would allow the commissioners to be more responsive to the public and spend more time advocating in Salem and Washington, D.C., for the county.

Committee member Dan Dorran, building on that point, told the board the city of Bend received \$60.7 million in federal highway funds for an interchange. Achieving that grant took one city councilor and a county commissioner working in D.C. for 21 days. That advocacy work is critical, he said.

"It all has to start with somebody at the head of the table with consistency," Dorran said. "For that, I strongly advocate to put this on the ballot and let the people of Umatilla County make the choice."

The second proposal from the committee would simplify elections. If no more than two candidates seek the office, there would be no May primary election and the candidates would advance to the November general. If more than two run, the two who

win the most votes in the primary face off in the general.

And the third proposal would replace "Law Enforcement Department" with "Sheriff's Office" in the charter and reflect the sheriff's functions according to Oregon law.

Commissioner Elfering said he saw "very little disagreement" with the recommendations. Murdock said he was not excited about five part-time commissioners and appreciated the committee's change in direction. He also added the county in the past had a quasi-administrator.

"In many eyes that did not go well," he said, "but I don't know if that would be a basis for not having administration in the future."

Murdock also referenced his own prior career working for and with school districts: "When you have a superintendent that doesn't work out, you don't eliminate the position of superintendent. You get a new superintendent who will work out."

He concluded he remains committed to the integrity of the review committee's proposals and should consider at the Aug. 7 meeting whether or not to put them on the ballot.

"This has gone on for 18 months," he said. "I see no value in fussing around any longer."

Commissioner Shafer made the motion to that end, Elfering gave the second and the trio voted in favor of the plan.