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WINNER OF THE 2019 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

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B2H power line costs hover near \$100 million

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The massive Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line has cost around \$100 million without the installation of a single utility pole.

The 300-plus-mile, 500-kilovolt line will be ready to carry juice as early as 2026 at a cost of \$1 billion or more.

Idaho Power, PacificCorp and Bonneville Power Administration teamed up on the project, and Idaho Power is spearheading the local, state and federal permitting work. Sven Berg, Idaho Power spokesperson, explained that is because the company identified the need for a big transmission line in its 2006 Integrated Resource Plan — or IRP — which projects for future electrical needs and how to meet those needs.

Idaho Power, however, has the smallest share of the line capacity and thus the project costs at 21%, while the BPA has a 24% share and PacificCorp the remaining 55%.

In other words, Berg said, if the line costs an even \$1 billion, Idaho Power's portion of the tab is \$210 million.

The \$100 million the 13-year-old project has cost so far is for staff time, attorneys and the reams of paperwork to wade through the lengthy permitting processes. That includes with the Oregon Department of Energy, which on Thursday closed the public comment period on its "draft proposed order" recommending the state Energy Facility Siting Council approve Idaho Power's application for a site certificate for the line.

Berg said the company's team is reviewing the comments.

"We're anticipating a contested case," he said.

That is, opponents to the project, namely the La Grande-based Stop B2H Coalition, who spoke out in a series of public hearings in early summer and provided additional comments in writing by the Thursday 5 p.m. deadline. Anyone who met either of those requirements has the standing to challenge or contest the proposal.

Berg said Idaho Power has until Sept. 23 to respond to those comments, then would come the "quasi-judicial" appeals process.

See B2H, Page A11

EO SPOTLIGHT

OPIOID OVERLOAD

From 2006 to 2012 Oregon received more than 1.3 billion prescription pain pills



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Hydrocodone pills are laid out on a counting tray to be counted at Murray's Drug in Heppner on Friday afternoon.

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — In the year 2006, the world was mourning the death of Crocodile Hunter Steve Irwin, arguing about Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" and buying their first Blu-ray discs.

In the medical industry, doctors were being told that too many patients were in pain after being denied their "right" to prescription painkillers known as opioids.

"In 2006 there was a lot more focus on pain control," pharmacist Ann Murray said, calling it a "push" in the early 2000s.

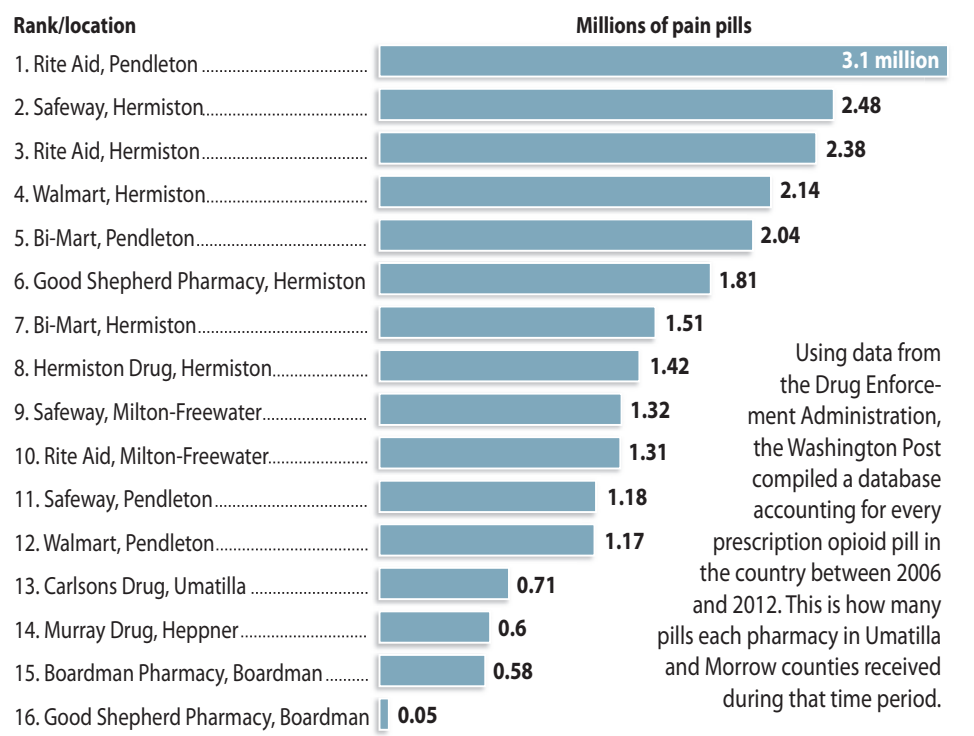
Murray, who runs Murray's Drug in Heppner, Boardman and Condon with her husband, John Murray, said there wasn't the same level of awareness around opioid addiction back then.

Opioid overdose deaths in Oregon peaked that year, at 238.

After waging a yearlong legal battle, the *Washington Post* recently obtained

See Pain pills, Page A11

Where the drugs went (Opioids in Umatilla, Morrow counties, 2006-12)



Using data from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Washington Post compiled a database accounting for every prescription opioid pill in the country between 2006 and 2012. This is how many pills each pharmacy in Umatilla and Morrow counties received during that time period.

Source: Washington Post

EO Media Group graphic

Dems back off threat to fine Republicans for walkout

Democrats will push bills to change the quorum requirements to a simple majority

By AUBREY WIEBER AND
CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — More than two months after voting to fine protesting Republican senators \$500 per day for walking off the job, Senate Democrat leaders announced Friday they will not make good on the threat.

Instead, leaders said they are pursuing a constitutional amendment to change Oregon's quorum requirement from two-thirds to a simple

majority. That would allow the Senate to convene with 16 instead of 20 senators out of the body of 30. Forty-six states use the simple majority requirement, according to a Senate Democrat news release.

Twice during the 2019 Legislature, Republicans brought the Senate to a halt by walking out in protest.

They were able to claim political victories both times.

During the first walkout, Gov. Kate Brown killed bills regulating guns and vaccinations to bring them back, and during the second walkout, Democrats announced they would no longer pursue a controversial carbon pricing bill, though they said that died because they didn't

See Walkout, Page A11



AP Photo/Andrew Selsky, File

Lawmakers convene at the Oregon Senate in Salem on June 29, 2019, after the minority Republicans ended a walkout they had begun on June 20 over a carbon-emissions bill they said would harm their rural constituents.



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