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From small town boy to SPACE ENGINEER



Retired NASA engineer Jim McBarron models an astronaut's glove after a presentation to students Monday morning at Pendleton High School. Staff photo by Kathy Aney

NASA veteran started as test subject at Wright-Patterson AFB in 1958

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDELTON — Before introducing retired NASA engineer Jim McBarron to the students assembled in the Pendleton High School auditorium Monday, organizer James Loftus said there were two types of people in life — those who looked at the sky and those that looked at the ground.

It was meant as a metaphor, but McBarron did spend a chunk of his life looking at the ground.

McBarron spent his career working on equipment for some of the country's most important space missions, culminating in a Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Richard Nixon in 1971, but his undergraduate degree isn't in aeronautics or engineering, but geology.

The son of a restaurant owner and a nurse, McBarron grew up in Lima, a small town in Northwest Ohio.

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James Loftus holds out a thrust engine like ones used in command and lunar modules. Loftus spoke to students Monday morning at Pendleton High School and is the son of a former NASA engineer. He runs a micro space museum at his cafe and bed-and-breakfast in Stayton. Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Morrow County ready to crack down on code violations

Planning department envisions a full-time employee dedicated to code enforcement

By JESSICA POLLARD
East Oregonian

MORROW COUNTY — Morrow County is planning to ramp up on code enforcement in coming years, but planners and law enforcement aren't sure exactly how yet.

County commissioners approved the creation of a Code Enforcement Task Force in June, and since then, the group — comprised of members of the planning department, health and environmental agencies as well as the sheriff's office — has met three times to smooth out the details.



Matlack

"We're trying to create a fast way of contacting everyone who may play a part during a particular (code enforcement) issue," said Morrow County Sheriff Kenneth Matlack.

He said this will likely mean the implementation of a phone tree-type system to connect different agencies — from local health departments to the Department of Environmental Quality — in order to assure that code violations, such as overgrown weeds and abandoned vehicles, are addressed efficiently.

"We want to have a program that is applied consistently. Our core objective is livability," said Carla McLane, director of the county's planning department.

Matlack said the county has seen a rise in code violations relating to people living in fifth wheels and recreational vehicles. In Morrow County, living in an RV outside of a designated park is not allowed except under special circumstances with county approval.

According to last week's meeting agenda, the task force is also interested in determining who should be accountable for violations — landowners or renters — and addressing issues of animal density.

Currently, code enforcement is handled through the sheriff's office in Morrow County. One sheriff's deputy devotes around 20 hours to the cause each week, while cities within the county put extra monetary resources into more code enforcement.

"The big catalyst for the task force was that our system is more complaint-driven," Matlack said. "We'd have a complaint, we'd go out and the violator would feel picked on because the neighbor across the street was doing the same thing. That's not the way that we should do things."

Instead, Matlack and others on the

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Record number of Oregonians participate in earthquake drill

Nearly one-fifth of state's total population takes part in 'The Great Oregon Shakeout'

By SAM STITES
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — At 10:17 a.m. on a recent day, 396,834 students, teachers, administrators and at more than 400 schools across Oregon dropped to the floor, clambering under their desks.

The same thing was happening for 65,286 state and local government officials from Portland to Medford.

And then there were the 59,000

or so business employees who took a few minutes out of their day to participate in the record-breaking state-wide earthquake drill.

The widespread practice established that Oregonians are not scoffing at the threat of natural disaster.

In total, it's estimated that 739,785 Oregonians — or about one-fifth of the state's population — participated in The Great Oregon Shakeout last Thursday, an annual event at bringing awareness to the real danger that earthquakes pose and training people how to prepare.

For Oregonians, the numbers indicate that the reports of a potentially catastrophic Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake happening in the near future have galvanized the residents of this state to foster what

the Oregon Military Department's Office of Emergency Management calls a "culture of preparedness."

According to state geologists, there's a 37% chance that a 7.1 magnitude earthquake or higher will occur in our region within the next 50 years that would destroy homes and buildings, and upend infrastructure, such as sewers, electricity and roadways.

"It's one thing for FEMA or the state, or counties to prepare like this, but we say 'culture of preparedness' because it really takes the entire community," said Cory Grogan, Emergency Management spokesman. "Everybody has to be doing their part for us to effectively be prepared."

Grogan said "the drill was a

huge win."

And the more people that sign up for it, the more awareness we can create and to help foster that culture of preparedness the state is trying to build.

The Office of Emergency Management is one of several state agencies that joins with the Southern California Earthquake Center and U.S. Geological Survey to put on the event each year.

In Oregon, participation has increased dramatically since the first state drill in 2012, when just 164,909 people participated. Participation in 2019 was up 10% from 668,914 last year, according to the earthquake center.

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