



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Raindrops coat a pile of leaves floating in the Umatilla River following rainfall in Pendleton on Tuesday morning. According to the National Weather Service, the last measurable rainfall in Pendleton prior to Tuesday fell on Oct. 19, 2019.

Oregon prison nurse accused of starving inmate faces discipline

Linda Gruenwald of Hermiston accused of starving patient at TRCI

By NOELLE CROMBIE
The Oregonian

SALEM — The Oregon State Board of Nursing has proposed suspending the license of a nurse practitioner accused of essentially starving an inmate who then collapsed and later won a \$1.5 million settlement from the state over his care.

The agency plans to impose a 90-day suspension for Linda Gruenwald, of Hermiston, for her treatment of Steven Fox, a 54-year-old former inmate at Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla.

Gruenwald, 48, was hired by the Oregon Department of Corrections in 2001 and continues to work at Two Rivers, corrections officials said. Her annual salary is \$120,264.

Barbara Holtry, a spokeswoman for the nursing board, said this week that Gruenwald has requested a hearing, which is scheduled to take place next April. A hearing offi-

cer will then issue a proposed order for the board to consider.

Gruenwald declined to comment through a corrections department spokeswoman.

Last year, the state settled a 2016 lawsuit filed by Fox. He alleged he had been essentially starved with an improper liquid diet and fell down, which resulted in a critical spinal injury.

Fox's lawsuit alleged the corrections agency violated the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act in denying medical care and a nutritional diet. He named the medical director, Dr. Steve Shelton, who has since retired, and Gruenwald.

Fox, whose lawsuit said he had been in and out of prison since the 1980s, claimed his fall resulted in "full or partial paralysis" and that he was confined to a wheelchair and requires round-the-clock care as a result.

The nursing board noted a malpractice claim had been filed against Gruenwald, alleging that she ordered a liquid diet for an unidentified patient, failed to monitor his weight and blood pressure and that he

fell and injured himself.

Fox's lawsuit alleges he entered prison in 2010 with medical conditions that at times made it difficult to swallow. When his conditions flared up, the prison provided him with soft or pureed foods with a protein drink to prevent weight loss.

In May 2015, he was placed in a disciplinary unit and requested a liquid diet. He was placed on a "full liquid diet" for 48 hours but, the lawsuit alleges, was not given a nutritional supplement. Gruenwald, the lawsuit says, then placed him on a "clear liquid diet" with milk for six months.

In July, Fox experienced lightheadedness and fainting spells, then passed out "due to being malnourished," according to the suit. He was taken by Life Flight helicopter to OHSU Hospital. The lawsuit alleges he spent nearly three weeks in the Portland hospital and a month at a rehabilitation center. The suit alleges he had lost 60 pounds since the previous April.

His lawsuit says he requires a wheelchair, lives in a handicap-accessible home and requires extensive care.

Helicopter drops rodent poison in Milton-Freewater yards

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

MILTON-FREEWATER — The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office received a report on Friday morning from a woman who lives on Triangle Station Road in Milton-Freewater that a helicopter had flown over her property and dumped an unknown substance.

Sheriff's Lt. Sterrin Holcomb wrote in an email that a deputy responded and the woman gave information on the helicopter company.

"Blue Mountain Helicopter company was contacted by the deputy and

it was explained the property was not targeted ... however perhaps a hopper was not shut properly and mouse bait fell out," Holcomb wrote in an email.

Laura Pumphrey told the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin* that the helicopter flew directly above her house and she felt small pellets fall on her and on her deck, hot tub cover and kids' trampoline.

"I called to report this to the Umatilla County Sheriff's department on Friday. They made some phone calls and advised me it was Blue Mountain Helicopter that was out flying and

they were dropping Zp Ag bait, a potent rodenticide.... poison," Pumphrey wrote to the *U-B*.

She said one of her chickens died and her neighbor lost seven chickens and two turkeys.

"There have been no reports on the matter," said Andrea Cantu-Schomus, director of communications for the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

But the department has heard of this issue and is working with an investigator. They will have more information of what happened and the potential environmental risks.

Morrow County planning director resigns

Carla McLane unexpectedly resigned early November

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

MORROW COUNTY — Longtime Morrow County Planning Director Carla McLane has resigned.

McLane worked for the county's planning department for about 18 years before unexpectedly turn-

ing in her resignation at the beginning of the month.

County Administrator Darrell Green said the county had already been planning on creating a new community development director position that would take on some of the duties previously handled by McLane, such as economic development, transportation planning and the Morrow County Fair.

He said the added position will allow for more time to be dedicated to those functions.

"I think these will be positive changes in the county, to have more resources to do those things," he said.

The position, being advertised on the county's website now, states that it could include a wide range of duties from grant writing to code enforcement. The salary is listed at \$6,861 to \$9,654 a month with "excellent" benefits.

Green said the county will fill McLane's planning duties with a job title, such as senior planner or planning manager.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Stagnant air hangs over the downtown blocks of Southwest Court Avenue on Nov. 7 in Pendleton. The National Weather Service lifted an air stagnation advisory Tuesday that had been in place since Nov. 1.

NWS ends air stagnation warning for Northeast Oregon

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — A relatively smoke-free summer couldn't prevent worsening air quality in Eastern Oregon during the cold weather months.

Following more than a week of low winds and worsening air quality, the National Weather Service lifted its air stagnation advisory Tuesday for much of northeast Oregon.

Weather service meteorologist Mary Wister said the advisory has been in effect since Nov. 1, only lifting once a cold front and precipitation helped dilute some

of the sitting air. Wister said another system that's set to roll through the region later in the week should prevent the air from stagnating again.

Wister explained how air stagnation works: During periods of low wind and stable weather, air pollutants like dust and vehicle exhaust hang in the atmosphere rather than cycle out of the area. Frigid temperatures tend to intensify air stagnation, Wister said, meaning the condition tends to be more prevalent during the fall and winter.

Combined with natural fog, air stagnation can create the hazy effect seen throughout the region. Besides low visibility, air stagnation also

lowers air quality. Worsening air quality can lead to respiratory problems, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information.

Air circulation isn't the only new development expected this week.

In Pendleton and Hermiston, the weather service is forecasting high temperatures ranging from the high 40s to the mid-50s. While chilly temperatures are expected to remain, most evenings should see the low temperature stay just above freezing.

Friday could also bring more rain, although, as of Tuesday afternoon, the forecast states that the chance of showers is slight.

BRIEFLY

Regional real estate magazine relaunched this month

PENDLETON — EO Media Group has relaunched its monthly real estate magazine to include all of its markets in northeast Oregon.

Beginning with the November issue publishing this week, *East Oregon Real Estate* will now be inserted into all six Eastern Oregon publications owned and operated by EOMG: *The East Oregonian* in Pendleton, *Hermiston Herald*, *The Observer* in La Grande, *The Baker City Herald*, *The Walla Walla County Chieftain* and *The Blue Mountain Eagle* in John Day.

"With this co-publishing among our six publications, our Real Estate magazine is now a truly regional product with extensive reach and readership in Morrow, Umatilla, Wallowa, Union, Baker, and Grant counties," said EOMG Regional Publisher Chris Rush. "In addition to our combined newspaper circulation, thousands more copies of the expanded magazine will also be distributed at advertiser and rack locations throughout Eastern Oregon."

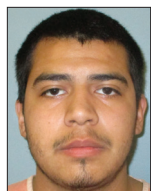
The company will distribute 25,000 copies on a monthly basis and is also supported with an online component, eastoregonrealestate.com, which can be accessed from any of the six member newspapers' websites.

Two arrested for home invasion with a weapon

IRRIGON — Two Irri-



Rodriguez



Barajas

gon men face multiple charges stemming from a home invasion.

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office reported its communications center received a call Sunday at 7:01 p.m. from an Irri-

gon, then both left.

Seven minutes after that call, Sgt. Todd Siex and deputy Tanner Cooney conducted a high-risk traffic stop on the vehicle the suspects were in on Depot Lane, Irrigon.

After investigating, the sheriff's office arrested Abraham Barajas, 20, and Juan Rodriguez, 24, both of Irrigon, and booked each into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on the following charges: first-degree burglary, second-degree criminal trespass, carrying a concealed weapon (firearm) and unlawful use of a firearm.

Barajas faces an additional count of unlawful possession of a firearm. He remains in the jail in lieu of \$78,500 bail.

Rodriguez faces a count of felon in possession of a firearm. The sheriff's office also reported Rodriguez is a parole and probation client with Morrow County Community Corrections, which placed a no-bail detainer on him.

The sheriff's office also stated the Boardman Police Department and Oregon State Police assisted with this case.

Biggs Junction man dies in collision with semi

BIGGS JUNCTION — Oregon State Police reported an instance of misidentification on Interstate 84 at Biggs Junction that led to the death of a pedestrian.

Oregon State Police troopers and other emergency personnel Monday at 5:45 p.m. responded to the report of a single vehicle crash involving a pedestrian on I-84 near milepost 104.

The preliminary investigation revealed Keith Allen Hille, 31, of Moscow Mills, Missouri, was driving a red and white 2016 Peterbilt semi westbound in the slow lane when he noticed a reflective vest moving around in the lane of travel.

"He initially thought the vest was blowing around," according to state police, "then realized the vest was being worn by a pedestrian."

That was Alejandro Lozano Rivas, 33, of Biggs Junction, according to state police. Hille swerved to avoid Lozano Rivas but was unable

to avoid striking him.

Lozano Rivas suffered fatal injuries and died at the scene. State police also reported Hille stopped immediately after the collision and is cooperating with the investigation.

The Sherman County Sheriff's Office, the Sherman County District Attorney's Office and personnel with the Oregon Department of Transportation assisted state police.

Woman arrested for attempted murder in Hermiston

HERMISTON — The

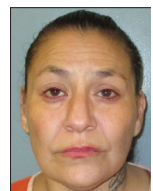
Umatilla County Sheriff's Office arrested Cristine Luzette Mendoza, 46, on charges of attempted murder, assault, menacing and unlawful use of a weapon.

Sheriff's Lt. Sterrin Holcomb said deputies at about 5 p.m. Sunday responded to 31092 N. Baggett Lane, Hermiston, for a domestic violence call.

"There's a history of domestic violence at the residence, and she has some reported mental health issues," Holcomb said.

The lieutenant also reported there was one victim. Mendoza remains in the county jail in Pendleton in lieu of \$520,000 bail.

— EO Media Group



Mendoza

WILDHORSE
RESORT & CASINO
11/13
Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie
Showing Today @ 12p
Saving Private Ryan

Doctor Sleep (R)
3:20p* 6:30p 9:40p

Last Christmas (PG13)
4:40p 7:00p 9:30p

Midway (PG13)
3:50p* 6:50p 9:50p

Terminator: Dark Fate (R)
4:20p 7:10p 10:00p

Maleficent: Mistress of Evil (PG)
4:00p 6:40p 9:20p

* Matinee Pricing
wildhorseresort.com • 541-966-1850
Pendleton, OR I-84 - Exit 216