

## Not skating by



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan  
**Tate Burke, 12, skates laps around the ice rink at Roy Raley Park in Pendleton on Thursday afternoon.**

## Unemployment rates flat for Umatilla, Morrow counties

*East Oregonian*

UMATILLA COUNTY — In mid-December, the state of Oregon trumpeted that its unemployment rate had fallen to 3.9% in November, the lowest recorded rate since 1976.

In the meantime, the local unemployment rates in Umatilla and Morrow counties remained stagnant.

According to an Oregon Employment Department report, Umatilla County's nonfarm employment had a net loss of 10 jobs.

While the private sector, bolstered by a 50-job increase in retail trade, held steady, the public sector shrank slightly as it experienced losses in federal, state, and local government.

Over the past year, total employment has increased by 70 jobs in Umatilla County. During that time period, information, mining, logging, construction, and retail were all growth industries, while transportation, warehousing, utilities, and manufacturing saw the most net loss.

Ultimately, Umatilla County's unemployment rate fell slightly to 5% in November. That figure means Umatilla County is tied with Baker, Coos and Jefferson counties for 19th place in the state.

Morrow County fared slightly better, its 4.2% unemployment rate tying Lane County for the 13th best in the state.

The county lost 10 jobs in December, with slight gains in manufacturing and construction outweighed by comparatively larger losses in government, including a net loss of 30 jobs in local government.

Despite the late-year loss, local government actually gained a net of 50 jobs over the past year. The private sector also grew by 50 jobs. The biggest beneficiary was the manufacturing industry, which gained 110 jobs over that time period.

## Boardman man accused of reckless burning, arson

By JESSICA POLLARD  
*East Oregonian*

BOARDMAN — A Boardman man is accused of reckless burning and first-degree arson — a Class A felony — following a possible suicide attempt last week.

Osvaldo Landeros Navarro, 35, was living with his mother in her trailer on Paul Smith Road when he reportedly set fire to the home. Landeros Navarro reportedly remained inside after he spotted police.

According to a charging document from the Boardman Police Department, Landeros Navarro admitted he tried to start the fire and told an officer that he wanted to “let go” and was lonely.

“It’s still arson, no matter the intent,” said Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson. “It’s an important factor that his mother is the victim.”

Circuit Court Judge Daniel Hill recommended on Dec. 27 that Landeros Navarro undergo a mental health evaluation if released, but he remains in custody, according to the Umatilla County Jail roster.

It is unclear what mental health support if any Landeros Navarro may have received at this point.

Nelson said Senate Bill 24, which became effective in July after the 2019 legislative session, could play a factor in the case.

The bill amends the process for ordering defendants to the state hospital to determine if they can “aid and assist” in their own defense. It prohibits defendants facing misdemeanor charges, who are not fit to aid and assist in their cases, out of the state hospital for treatment and released into localized care for treatment instead.

Legislative documents state the daily fitness to proceed population at the Oregon State Hospital had increased in January by over 100 defendants compared with 2012.

“My concern would be releasing (Landeros Navarro) into the community for the treatment, not the treatment itself,” Nelson said.

Landeros Navarro was assigned an attorney on Tuesday. A probable cause preliminary hearing of the case will take place on Monday.

### BRIEFLY

#### Inmate dies at EOCI on Tuesday

#### Oregon woman appears on multiple charges

PENDLETON — An inmate at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton died Tuesday, though the cause has not been released.

Oregon State Police is investigating the death of James Allen Smith, 77, which happened in the EOCI infirmary, according to a press release. A medical examiner will determine the cause of death.

Smith's family was notified Tuesday. Smith entered DOC custody on June 14, 2012, from Columbia County with an earliest release date of Oct. 1, 2027.

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — A 31-year-old Pendleton woman appeared Monday in Walla Walla County Superior Court on multiple fraud and theft charges totaling tens of thousands of dollars in multiple states.

Alea D. Henderson was charged with second-degree theft, second-degree organized retail theft, first-degree attempted theft, three counts of third-degree theft, two counts of attempted vehicle theft, and second-degree attempted theft.

Henderson was linked to using or trying to use her deactivated Blaze credit card earlier this year at Walla Walla stores, including Marla June's Clothing Co., Vape 'N Goods, Lost Boardroom, Apex Food & Deli, Macy's, Walla Walla Saw LLC, Tommy's 9th Street Auto Sales Inc., and Inland Octopus, records stated.

She allegedly purchased or attempted purchasing, in about 65 instances, \$66,542 worth of items in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, records stated. In the cases, she allegedly entered a code to override the card being declined at stores, which initially worked, but later it stopped working.

On Monday, defense attorney Jesse Montagnino was appointed to represent her, and she was allowed to remain out of jail on conditions. Her arraignment wasn't scheduled.

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THIS WEEKEND'S  
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**Angela Jones**  
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