

Former Union County sheriff done with law enforcement

Boyd Rasmussen surrendered all of his police certifications

By PHIL WRIGHT
La Grande Observer

UNION COUNTY — Boyd Rasmussen no longer can be a law enforcement officer in Oregon.

And from the account he provided to the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, he no longer wants to.

The former sheriff of Union County surrendered all of his police certifications in January to the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, according to public records.

Rasmussen, who did not respond to requests for comments, signed a stipulation with the DPSST on Jan. 6 and stated his days in policing were over.

“I am retiring from law enforcement,” he stated per the agreement, “and have been offered a position with (a) company which will not require a law enforcement certification.”

He also was critical of the Oregon Department of Justice’s investigation into him for allegations of public corruption and misuse of



Former Union County Sheriff Boyd Rasmussen, left, surrendered all of his police certifications in January to the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, according to public records.

public funds. The justice department investigated Rasmussen based on allegations he misused his office, including for creating an informal contract in 2011 to provide the town of Elgin with police services and accepting more than \$7,000 in that deal while he received his sheriff’s salary.

“The DOJ investigation was based upon many false statements made by former disgruntled employees during my reelection campaign. I was hopeful they would conduct a speedy and fair investigation which in my humble opinion did not occur,” Rasmussen stated in the agreement. “The investigation started in the

early spring of 2019 and concluded, unfortunately, approximately one-and-a-half years later during my reelection campaign.”

Rasmussen blamed the justice department for releasing their “findings” to the public the week before ballots went to Union County voters.

“DOJ did not release the report to me nor did they

inform me of their accusations prior to releasing the information to the public. I simply was not able to refute the allegations before the citizens voted,” according to Rasmussen.

The justice department released the report on April 28, 2020, ahead of the May primary election. Rasmussen at the time claimed “the DOJ cleared me.”

Redacted and unredacted versions of the report — obtained both through public records requests — stated the statutes of limitations had run out on any criminal charges Rasmussen may have faced.

Rasmussen in the stipulation also stated, “DPSST was in the process of conducting a fair and objective review of the facts which I believe would benefit me in retaining certification. They appear to be interested in seeking information from full-time current county employees to offset DOJ’s lack of interviews with that group of witnesses. However, given what my family and I have been through with an almost-a-year-and-a-half investigation during a campaign, and also that I have started a new career path, I have elected to surrender my certification.”

He also remained firm in his stance that he had done nothing wrong.

“I do not believe I have done anything to warrant decertification,” he stated in the document. “I am disappointed I can’t fully vet out the facts for the policy committee to review.”

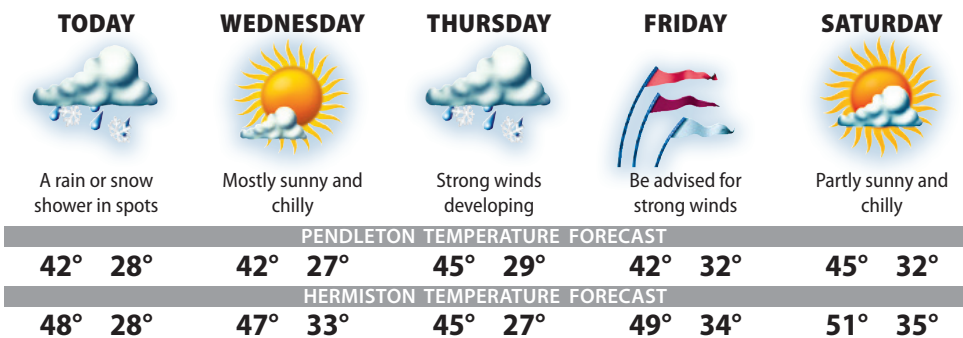
Rasmussen also stated he was blessed to have worked with tremendous people at the sheriff’s office, partner agencies and “the good citizens of Union County.” He said he was proud “of the professional office that has been structured the past four terms and the employees we have hired. I know they will continue to serve the citizens well.”

In signing the stipulation to hand over his certifications, he waved his right to a hearing or appeal.

Les Hallman, the interim director of the department of public safety standards in training in Oregon, signed the stipulation on Jan. 12, and DPSST then revoked the former sheriff’s certifications.

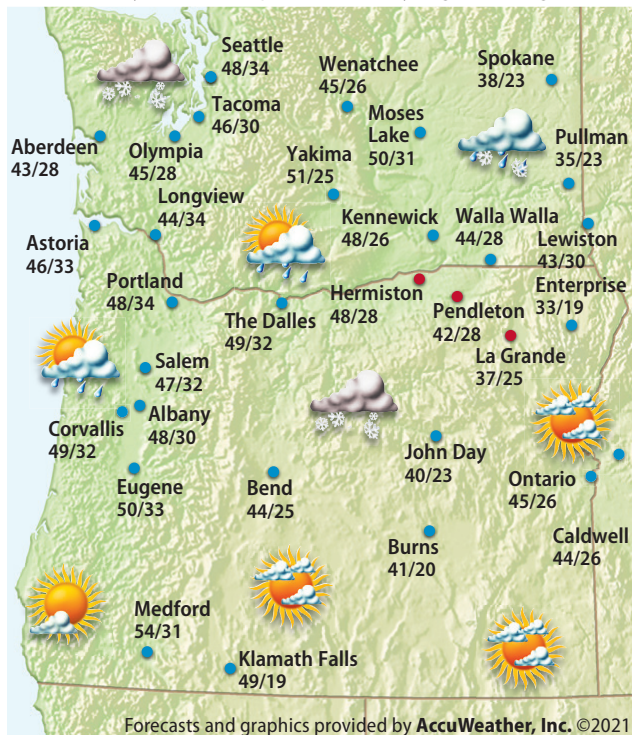
Cody Bowen succeeded Rasmussen as sheriff and has been in the office since early January. Bowen had no comment about his former boss and said he is focused on the future of the sheriff’s office and improving it and reestablishing trust, if need be, with the community. He also said he remains committed to greater transparency.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



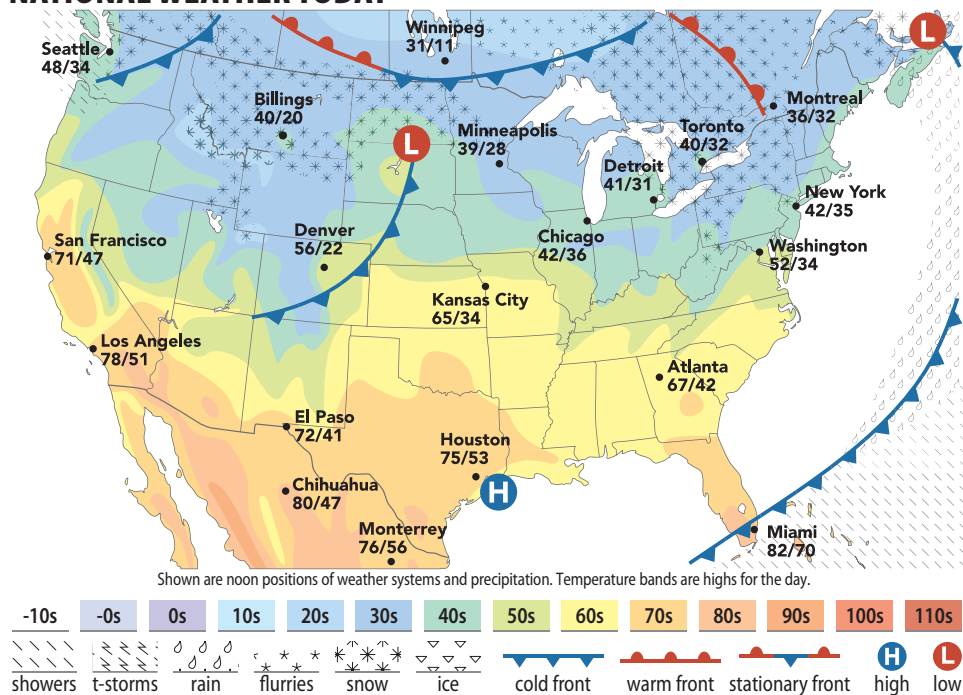
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	53°	40°
Normals	49°	30°
Records	68° (2002)	5° (1894)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	2.01"	
Normal month to date	0.90"	
Year to date	2.92"	
Last year to date	4.03"	
Normal year to date	2.28"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	59°	45°
Normals	50°	30°
Records	71° (1988)	13° (1993)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.49"	
Normal month to date	0.75"	
Year to date	1.08"	
Last year to date	0.36"	
Normal year to date	2.03"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	WSW 10-20	Wed. SW 3-6
Pendleton	WSW 12-25	WNW 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:44 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	5:34 p.m.	
Moonrise today	1:26 p.m.	
Moonset today	4:50 a.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 86° in Immokalee, Fla. Low -13° in Estcourt Station, Maine

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Effort to help a colony of feral cats is underway in rural Baker County

Nearly 80 cats found on property of Richland resident

By SAMANTHA O'CONNOR
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A group effort is underway to help a colony of feral cats in rural Baker County.

Best Friends of Baker Inc. is working with other organizations after a call from a Richland resident who lives next door to the property where an estimated 80 cats are living.

Phoenix Dawn wanted to help her neighbors, so she reached out to Best Friends and created a Go Fund Me account.

“There were about 30 cats inside and maybe 50 cats outside,” said Farrell Riley-Hassmiller, the volunteer cat coordinator with Best Friends.

Groups working with Best

Friends to help the cats and kittens are: New Hope for Eastern Oregon Animals, Blue Mountain Humane Society in La Grande, Pendleton Paws in Pendleton, Fuzzball Rescue and Cat Utopia in Hermiston, Humane Society in Portland, and Cat Adoption Team in Sherwood.

“It’s amazing,” Riley-Hassmiller said.

In addition to providing medical care to the cats that need it, Best Friends is seeking to spay and neuter the animals as quickly as possible to prevent further breeding and an increase in colony’s population.

Baker County is at a disadvantage since there is no shelter for cats locally.

“That’s why most of these cats are going elsewhere,” Riley-Hassmiller said. “We’re very fortunate to have that network and to be able to help.”

Riley-Hassmiller said Best Friends is using vouchers from the Mollie Atwater Spay and

Neuter Fund to help Dawn.

“We are providing vouchers, helping her (Dawn) with the trap effort,” Riley-Hassmiller said.

New Hope had made a donation to an account in Dawn’s name at the Animal Clinic of Baker.

Blue Mountain Humane Society was willing to take on all indoor cats at their facility as a holding space before sending them to the other rescue homes. The Humane Society will process the cats, check them for ringworm and pneumonia, and assess how social the cats are.

From there, a majority of the kittens were sent to Fuzzball Rescue. Several cats and kittens with ringworm were sent to Pendleton Paws and Cat Utopia.

The Cat Adoption Team in Sherwood, south of Portland, had agreed to take the cats and kittens who were positive for Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and immunodeficiency (FIV), Riley-Hassmiller said.

IN BRIEF

Two new academic programs approved at EOU

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University’s Board of Trustees approved new academic programs in agriculture entrepreneurship and special education at its regular meeting on Thursday, Feb. 18.

Provost Sarah Witte introduced both programs to the board. Students who major in agriculture entrepreneurship through the College of Business can choose to earn a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Applied Science, either online or on campus. The degree is designed to be transfer-friendly and equip farmers and ranchers with skills to leverage modern tools.

“Agriculture entrepreneurs must rely upon planning and decision-making processes that coordinate and balance the social, economic and environmental demands on the natural resources of their community and region

along with the unique challenges and issues in agriculture production and supply chains,” Witte said. “Degree programs addressing this emerging field must operate in the nexus of business management, public policy, science and technology, and agriculture.”

Meanwhile, the College of Education seeks to address a high demand for special education professionals in rural areas. The new undergraduate program offers a highly efficient curriculum that will allow graduates to enter the workforce with their initial licensure to teach special education in just four years.

The 75-credit, comprehensive program combines coursework in core study areas with structured in-person and online student teaching experiences. Currently, the only other program of this type in the state is located at Portland State University, hundreds of miles from the high-need counties on the east side of the state.

—EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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