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Judge tosses most claims in Finicum death lawsuit

LaVoy Finicum joined armed occupation at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

The Associated Press

PORTLAND — A federal judge has tossed most of the civil claims brought in a wrongful death lawsuit by the family of an Arizona rancher who served as spokesperson for the armed takeover of Oregon's Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in early 2016.

Robert "LaVoy" Finicum, 54, was fatally shot by Oregon state troopers after he crashed his truck near a roadblock as state police and FBI agents arrested key people in the anti-government occupation.

U.S. District Judge Michael W. Mosman on Thursday, Aug. 14, dismissed the lawsuit's claims against the Oregon State Police, the former state police superintendent and the two state troopers who fired at Finicum. The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

Mosman additionally dismissed their claims filed against the federal government, the FBI, Harney County and former Harney County Sheriff Dave Ward. Some were thrown out he said because the Finicum family didn't properly serve notice to the defendants.

"After all this time, Plaintiffs have yet to identify any facts or theories that, properly pled, would support a finding that any negligence or wrongdoing on behalf of the United States was not grounded in policy judgments," Mosman wrote in his opinion. His ruling accepted most recommendations that U.S. Magistrate Judge Patricia Sullivan made in 2020.

Mosman retained a single civil rights claim against Gov. Kate Brown, noting that the state didn't move to challenge it, and gave the plaintiffs until Sept. 15 to amend a conspiracy claim against the governor, the state of Oregon and state police.

Finicum's family alleged he was shot "assassination style" as he was trying to drive to the safety of another county on Jan. 26, 2016.

The lawsuit contended FBI agent W. Joseph Astarita fired at Finicum after he crashed and stepped out of his Dodge pickup

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2021 FAIR WRAPS UP



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian
Buyers check in Saturday, Aug. 14, 2021, at the 2021 Umatilla County Fair Youth Livestock Auction in Hermiston.

Emotions run high at livestock auction

Area youth pack annual livestock auction with some 200 animals

By NICK ROSENBERGER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Hundreds of attendees of all ages and from all corners of the Northwest gathered Saturday, Aug. 14, for the final day of the Umatilla County Fair and its annual Youth Livestock Auction at the Eastern Oregon Trade & Events Center.

Emotions ran high throughout the auction as youths said goodbye to their animals, while adults shouted bids trying to snag the prized animals. For many of the children involved, it was a bittersweet moment. After months of hard work, patience and dedication, it was time to say goodbye to those they'd formed a strong bond and connection with.

"I'm sad but I'm happy that I'll get more sheep and it'll happen again," said Elsie Bowman, a sixth grader from Echo who sold her lamb. "We've had struggles and good times."

After receiving awards earlier in the day, the children and teens spent their day receiving bids on the lambs, goats, steers, rabbits, turkeys and hogs that they have spent the last couple of months raising. Ford Bonney, Nick Nelson and Jack Seavert presided as the auctioneers who whipped the crowd into a buying frenzy and helped the day see the sale of more than 200 livestock.

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Latino Night strums up tunes for Umatilla County Fair



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Hermiston's Fortaleza De Tierra Caliente performs Friday, Aug. 13, 2021, during Latino Night at the Umatilla County Fair in Hermiston. The local band is part of the array of music the fair seeks to bring to the stage for the evening.

Four Mexican bands jam the night away as the fair returns

By NICK ROSENBERGER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Music almost is synonymous with the Umatilla County Fair and, after COVID-19 forced the cancellation of the event last year, music was back on the table as the fair roared back to life Wednesday, Aug. 11, and finished Aug. 14.

Starting at 9 p.m. the first day back, fans were welcomed with a free concert featuring Stone in Love, a Journey tribute band, then Everclear on Aug. 12 and Frankie Ballard on Aug. 14. The widest mix of the music events, however, was the county fair's

Latino Night on Aug. 13, which saw a slew of Spanish-speaking musicians and bands perform.

Running from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m., and headlined by Tierra Cali, attendees had the opportunity to listen, dance and sing along with Diana Reyes, Alfa 7 and Fortaleza De Tierra Caliente — a Hermiston band.

"We try to hit all the major genres," said Andy Wagner, the fair's music director, but mentioned the fair tries to get classic and upcoming country, rock and Latino music.

The organizers have their work cut out for them.

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Relay for Life offers opportunity to find support



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Chains of paper rings, one ring for each year a cancer survivor has been in remission, hang on a clothesline Saturday, Aug. 14, 2021, for a "One Step, One Year, One Dollar" fundraiser at Relay for Life at Roy Raley Park in Pendleton.

By BEN LONERGAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — When Kellie Sims was diagnosed with colorectal cancer Dec. 22, 2014, she knew there had to be a purpose behind her diagnosis.

"You always wonder — why do I have to go through this? Why am I doing this?" she said.

Sims, who had previously faced cervical cancer in her late 20s and is now 18 months into remission for thyroid cancer, found her purpose several years later when she met Georgia Marshall at a Relay for Life event.

"Sometimes your story really does help someone," said Sims as she paused to collect herself. "You don't know what you say — how it

can affect somebody else."

Marshall and Sims connected over their similarities, Marshall had become too weak to continue chemotherapy, a step Sims had faced in the course of her treatment as well.

"You become a family," Marshall said. "None of us are blood related, but it is a bond that you can't beat."

As a 10-year-old, Marshall had seen her grandmother die of cancer, an event that encouraged her to pursue work in hospice care and help others the same way her grandmother had been cared for. She said the years of working with cancer patients on hospice had shown her the importance of a support system but, after facing a diagnosis herself, its importance became even more prevalent.

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