

EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022

146th Year, No. 37

WINNER OF 16 ONPA AWARDS IN 2021

\$1.50

COVID-19

National Guard returns to area hospitals

By ALEX WITTWER
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon will see a return of National Guard members to beleaguered hospitals as yet another wave of the COVID-19 virus sweeps through the nation.

Gov. Kate Brown ordered a second relief mission earlier this month in support of Oregon's hospitals. Nearly 1,200 service members across 40 hospitals were requested by the Oregon Health Authority. The expected deployment date is no later than Tuesday, Jan. 18, and is expected to continue until mid-April.

"(Hospitals) were reporting that they were understaffed," said Maj. Chris Clyne with the Oregon National Guard. "The nurses and doctors — you know, the clinical care providers — were having to take out the trash and do these menial tasks, and it was getting in the way of them providing the care to patients. That way they're streamlined and they can just focus 100% on caring for the patients."

Hospitals set to receive aid from the National Guard include Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande; Good Shepherd Health Care System, Hermiston; Blue Mountain Hospital District, John Day; and Wallowa Memorial Hospital, Enterprise.

As before, the soldiers will be serving in nonclinical support roles, such as material handlers, equipment runners, COVID-19 testing support, custodial services and other logistical services. According to Clyne, each hospital in Eastern Oregon would receive an average of five citizen-soldiers.

"We have been told that Blue Mountain Hospital District is set to receive five members of the Oregon National Guard next week," Derek Daly, chief executive officer of Blue Mountain Hospital District, said. "We are thankful for these staffing resources and the support from the National Guard. We plan to utilize these team members to help in non-clinical positions, such as environmental services, across our campuses."

Caitlin Cozad, marketing

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Plowing through the night

State police issued 32 violations and warnings Jan. 1-6 for unchained commercial vehicles

By ALEX WITTWER
EO Media Group

UNION COUNTY — Tesmond Hurd likens the view he sees plowing the roads at night to that of "Star Wars."

Hurd is part of the maintenance crew with the Oregon Department of Transportation in La Grande. In summer months, he works on road improvement and repair projects such as chip seals.

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Photos by Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

Tesmond Hurd with the Oregon Department of Transportation drives a snowplow through a snowstorm Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022, on Interstate 84 in Union County.



Tesmond Hurd's Oregon Department of Transportation snowplow is filled with sand — an additive and dispersing agent to help increase traction on the freeways — before beginning his plowing route along Interstate 84 in Union County on Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022.

New proposal for BackFire Station funding

Pendleton Development Commission also to look at contest for new business

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — At its first meeting of the year, the Pendleton Development Commission will try to resolve an issue from its past and present before considering the next steps for its future.

On Tuesday, Jan. 18, the commission meets to discuss the latest funding proposal for Moto Stuff, the motorcycle parts company that owns BackFire Station, a business at 911 S.W. Court Ave.

The Pendleton City



Phil Wright/East Oregonian

BackFire Station, 911 S.W. Court Ave., Pendleton, is open for business Sunday, Jan. 16, 2022. The Pendleton Development Commission meets Jan. 18 to discuss the latest funding proposal for Moto Stuff, the motorcycle parts company that owns BackFire Station.

Council handpicked Moto Stuff to buy the old fire station and then, acting as the development commis-

sion, granted owners Scott Hart and Erin Bennett \$494,819 to get the business started through the urban


renewal district. Moto Stuff began renovating the building, moving their motorcycle parts operations from

Hillsboro and opening BackFire Station, a restaurant and lounge.

But in December, Hart and Bennett returned to the development commission with a status update. In order to complete the renovation project, which includes space for vacation rentals and a motorcycle service shop, Moto Stuff would need an additional \$470,721, as well as an expedition on the reimbursements. The couple attributed the request to several unexpected factors, including raising material costs and a labor shortage that extended the timeline of the project.

The commission didn't come to a decision at the December meeting and when members were scheduled to consider the proposal

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ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL & OREGON HEALTH AUTHORITY

NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED.

ESTIMATED RESULTS IN 3-5 DAYS

EVERY WEDNESDAY IN JANUARY 2022
11AM-1PM

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