

EAST OREGONIAN

JUNE 25 – 26, 2022

146th Year, No. 81

WINNER OF 16 ONPA AWARDS IN 2021

\$1.50

ROE V. WADE

Oregon will retain abortion rights

By GARY WARNER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — The governors of California, Oregon and Washington on Friday, June 24, pledged to maintain access to safe, legal abortions following the U.S. Supreme Court 5-4 decision radically revising the 49-year-old Roe v. Wade ruling.

“Abortion is health care, and no matter who you are or where you come from, Oregon doesn’t turn away anyone seeking health care. Period,” Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said soon after the ruling.

Brown said the decision in the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization means about 33.6 million women around the country now live in states that will outlaw abortion.

Brown, California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee pledged themselves to a new Multi-State Commitment to Reproductive Freedom. Details can be found here.

On the local front, Suni Danforth, Umatilla County Republican Party chair, said the overturning of Roe v. Wade does not mean abortion is not allowed anymore.

“It simply means the decision goes back to the states, and despite what the left may say, I believe it is still legal to get an abortion in Oregon,” she said. “It’s very important what the Supreme Court has done to follow the constitution. In the Constitution it guarantees life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and nowhere in it does it say abortion. Today is a good day for Umatilla County and for Oregon.”

Briana Spencer, founder, Pendleton Action Community Coalition, also stressed abortion remains legal in Oregon, but said the ruling affects more than half of the nation in states that already have overturned abortion protections.

“There are several potential risks that pregnant people face because of this,” Spencer said. “Forcing births is deadly. The maternal death rate in the U.S. has risen 37%.”

She said the decision especially affects the BIPOC — Black, Indigenous and people of color — community. And while some pro-life supporters imply adoptions or foster care should be used, that attitude lacks compassion.

“Over 420,000 children are in foster care,” she said. “Not everyone is adopting, and pro-lifers who support adoptions aren’t adopting

See Abortion, Page A8

BOARDMAN



Photos by Erick Peterson/East Oregonian
Patrick Keeley, left, of the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office, and Paul Grey, Morrow County emergency manager, unhitch a trailer Thursday, June 23, 2022, containing cases of bottled water.

Water emergency draws help

City of Boardman works to let its residents know their water is safe, not from tainted sources

BY ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — Morrow County Emergency Manager Paul Gray helped to move hundreds of cases of drinking water Thursday, June 23, for people dealing with nitrates contaminating their water.

“My muscles are hurting right now,” Gray said.

He was sweaty, red-faced, panting and shaking at the end of the day, but he said he was optimistic about his efforts. He expressed happiness that he soon would receive additional help, thanks in part to a decision Morrow County commissioners made one day prior.

Board of commissioners grant aid

In a 2-1 vote June 22, Morrow County Commissioners approved \$100,000 for an emergency effort to deal with groundwater contamination in Morrow County.

Commissioners Jim Doherty and Melissa Lindsay voted in favor of the aid. Commissioner Don Russell voted against it, and he brought up concerns about an emergency budget that was not as detailed as he would’ve preferred.

Doherty on June 23 said money would help in various ways, including sending workers to assist with water delivery. This would take much of the physical labor away from the emergency manager.

“He’s leaned in and is doing a great job,” Doherty said.

He credited the emergency manager as a “do-er,” someone who has moved water and transported pipes in this recent emergency. The commissioner said Gray, who has done his part getting his hands dirty, soon should transition to work that is less physically taxing, though.

Helpers emerge in emergencies

“Emergency management deals with a lot of stuff,” Gray said.

According to Gray, it is his responsibility to be on the front line of an emergency. In the past, he has set sand bags and has done other work to stave off disaster.

He said he is ready for other troubles, too, such as flooding, storms and nuclear accidents. In all these cases, he said, he would do anything he could to protect his community.

Fortunately, he added, other people have acted on the same feelings.

Patrick Keeley was one of the people assisting Gray. A work crew supervisor



Paul Grey, Morrow County emergency manager, shows a test strip Thursday, June 23, 2022, that shows nitrate levels in water.

and officer for the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office, he was dressed in a police uniform that included a heavy vest. He was onsite, accompanying another worker, a man who was doing community service.

Keely admitted this wasn’t his usual work, and he wasn’t exactly dressed for it, but he

Boardman, there is a “rapid test,” which can read nitrate levels up to 15 parts per million.

Meanwhile, the Boardman Foods tests can reveal if nitrate levels are even higher, though it takes a full week to get an answer about levels of nitrates. As such, Raddie said she does not yet have test results.

“WE WANT BOARDMAN CITY RESIDENTS TO KNOW THAT THE SAFETY OF FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY.”

— Karen Pettigrew, Boardman city manager

was glad to be lending a hand.

Gray said other people helped, too. Workers included people from the Morrow County Health Department, local businesses and other organizations.

Boardman Foods is one of the helpers, according to Debbie Raddie, Boardman Foods vice president of operations. She said the company is distributing drinking water and testing samples of well water at its facility, 71320 Columbia Blvd., Boardman.

She said the site has collected around 30 samples a day in this first week of testing.

The Boardman Foods site is one of three places where workers are testing well water for nitrate levels.

At the Irrigon site and at Sam Boardman Elementary School, 301 Wilson Road S.W.,

According to Raddie, Boardman Foods and other local companies are coming together to help, and they are working in the interest of the public.

“The primary reason we got together is because we care about our employees; we care about our community,” she said. “We always have. We’re always rising to the occasion of any kind of situation.”

City of Boardman responds

The city of Boardman on June 23 reported it is a number of communication tools to address the concerns Morrow County’s recent emergency declaration raised relating to contamination in rural drinking wells. The

See Water, Page A8



7 294671 10002 2