



New wage zones causing confusion

BUSINESS OWNERS FINDING COMPLIANCE WITH NEW MINIMUM WAGE RATES CAN BE TRICKY

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Oregon’s Bureau of Labor and Industries finalized new minimum wage rules June 15, requiring employers to pay a regional rate based on where the employee works more than 50 percent of the time.

As of July 1, the minimum wage in Wallowa County is going up by a 25 cents per hour.
State Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena) seconded the opinion of some other small-business advocates when he accused BOLI of ignoring the original bill that created the change.
“What BOLI has adopted is a com-

plete overreach and is totally unacceptable,” Hansell said. “The author of the bill and my friend, Sen. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), carried the legislation on the floor of the Senate. In his floor speech he said, and I quote: ‘Imagine a worker who works for Les Schwab — they’re willing to go anywhere. They go out and answer

a call out in an area that’s within the Portland UGB, right? So they have a worker, if we would imagine they would make such a roadside call, if they go into the UGB, are they now to be paid at the Portland metro rate, or do they remain as their Salem rate — their Marion County rate? Or, the corporate headquarters for Les Schwab

in Bend — are they paid that rate? Well, the answer is that they would be paid at the Salem rate, the Marion County rate, because that’s where they’re based, even if they leave to perform some sort of service outside of that area.”

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ODOT seeks halt on oil trains

By Paris Achen
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon Department of Transportation has asked the federal government to put a moratorium on oil trains in the Columbia Gorge and certain other parts of the state over concerns about inadequate inspections.
The request follows the oil train derailment in Mosier on June 3 that sparked a fire, forced the evacuation of 100 people and spilled oil into the ground and the city’s sewer system.
Union Pacific officials have concluded that the metal fastener system that connects the railroad tie to the rail failed, causing the railway to break apart and derailing 16 oil tanker cars. The federal railroad administration is conducting its own investigation into the cause.
Inspections and tests by the state and Union Pacific in the days leading up to the derailment failed to reveal the defects.
“Until the underlying cause of the bolt failures is understood and, a means of detecting this defect is developed, we request a moratorium on running unit oil trains over sections of track that contain track fasteners of this material within the state of Oregon,” Hal Gard, administrator of the state’s Rail and Public Transit Division, wrote in a June 8 letter to the Federal Railroad Administration.
Despite hiring four additional inspectors last year, the state has no effective way to inspect and test the integrity of those bolts.

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J.D. Brock of Imnaha rides again for another 75 points at the 2016 Mt. High Broncs and Bulls event.
Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

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Wallowa County Chieftain

‘BEST LITTLE RODEO’ DOESN’T DISAPPOINT

A favorite to claim the bronc riding title at the 13th Annual Mountain High Broncs and Bulls on Saturday suffered from too much talent in the end.
After turning in the top ride with 76 points in the first go-round, Miles Binger of Heppner came back for a high-scoring ride on a low-scoring horse in the second round but had to watch as Barry O’Leary of Silver Lake, Ore., took the title and signed those Corvette papers.
O’Leary rode at the Enterprise event last year, too, and confirmed it was the car that tempted him both times. He and a lot of other fellows — O’Leary’s friends were lining up to drive the ’94 Corvette provided by Main Street Motors home for him.

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Silver Lake cowboy wins Mountain High Broncs and Bulls Corvette

THE HEAT OF BATTLE

Veterans team up to take on NE Oregon wildfires

By George Plaven
East Oregonian

The military veterans marched single file toward a plume of white smoke, dressed in full gear and ready for their first taste of action on the front lines.
Armed with pulaskis, shovels and chainsaws, they quickly surrounded the slow-moving forest fire and dug a ring of dirt to stop it from spreading. Taking cues from their squad boss, the team worked in lockstep and called out every move in order to stay together.
It’s not exactly the same as the military, but Ben Barnett said there’s a structure and discipline to wildland firefighting that reminds him of his four years in the Navy. He missed that brotherhood while



The Umatilla National Forest veterans crew, facilitated by the VetsWork GreenCorps program, heads to a practice fire Friday near the Marcus Whitman Trail off Summit Road.

attending college in Georgia, and decided to make his way west to Oregon to embark on a new career.

Barnett, 31, is one of several young veterans participating in this year’s VetsWork GreenCorps program on the

Umatilla National Forest. VetsWork provides environmental internships and hands-on training for veterans ages



Kathy Aney/EO Media Group
Two members of the Umatilla National Forest veterans crew, facilitated by the VetsWork GreenCorps program, cut line around a practice fire Friday near the Marcus Whitman Trail off Summit Road.

19-35 interested in pursuing a job in forest and natural resources management.

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