

Officials hope consolidated child abuse call centers fix flaws

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Oregon Capital Bureau

The caller told Hannah Lene about a child disciplined at school for spraying water who begged school employees not to send a note home because he feared his mother would then punch him.

Another caller reported a child whose nose was bloodied from her mother slapping her face.

Lene starts the chain that might rescue such children from abuse. She is a call screener for the state child welfare office. In her first year on the job, she has answered hundreds of phone reports of suspected child abuse.

"The hardest thing for being a screener is we don't know what happens after the

call," said Lene. "We don't get to know the outcome" after the report is passed on to a state caseworker.

Those who call a hotline to report child abuse can find themselves talking to one of 15 call centers around Oregon, a fragmentation that leads to uneven results and gaps.

Flaws in the hotline system have been known to state officials for a decade. By April, state officials finally expect to have a single call center with carefully trained employees who will see that every abused child gets prompt and useful attention.

The dispersed call centers are being consolidated at one location in North Portland, which runs around the clock. Some call centers scattered around the state



Portland Tribune/Jaime Valdez/East Oregonian
Laura McGinnis, a spokeswoman for the Oregon Child Welfare Division, and Jennifer Sorenson, a hotline manager.

function only during business hours. About half of the call centers have already been consolidated.

"There really has been a consensus for some time that this is what is needed," said state Sen. Sara Gelser, chairwoman of the Senate Human Services Committee.

By spring, the statewide 24-hour hotline number — 1-855-503-SAFE — will be emblazoned on buses, popping up in social media feeds and flashing on the screen at movie theaters, an effort to publicize the new hotline and generate even more reports.

For years, national child welfare organizations, including the Children's Bureau, have recommended that Oregon adopt a state-wide hotline and screening system to address inconsistencies in how the reports are handled at branch offices.

"The way training was done for all of our hotlines when they were separate was each location was responsible for making sure that each of their screeners were trained," said Jennifer Sorenson, a hotline manager. Now, screeners will go through the same academy with the same training, she said.

Centralized training and screening reduces the risk of information falling through the cracks, Sorenson said.

Call volumes can reach as high as 350 calls a day at

the central hotline with half of the 15 branch offices still to shift their operations to Portland, said Laura McGinnis, a spokeswoman for the state child welfare system.

In 2016, the hotlines received nearly 77,000 reports of abuse. About 38,000 were sent to the field, resulting in 8,000 investigations by state Child Protective Services.

For the yearlong period ending in September 2017, the state determined 11,077 children were abused or neglected. Nearly half were younger than 6.

After receiving a call, screeners and their supervisors decide whether to assign a case to a Child Protective Services worker or to close a case after searching agency history relating to the family, Lene said.

Federal shutdown impacts projects locally and statewide

By **KATY NESBITT**
EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — As the partial federal government shutdown continues into its fourth week some rural Northwest communities are feeling the pinch.

In western Oregon wolves are under federal protection, but federal employees assigned to monitoring them with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and USDA Wildlife Services are on furlough. Steve Niemela, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife district fish biologist in Central Point, said his office is feeling the added pressure.

"It has an impact on us," Niemela said. "We can't coordinate effectively — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency in wolf management."

He said state and federal biologists follow a "good set of guidelines," but the furlough makes it challenging.

Niemela said much of the habitat restoration planning for Oregon's fish and wildlife is also on hold as many of the projects are on land managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

"Just about everything we do, there is some sort of federal nexus," Niemela said.

In northeastern Oregon, federal funding to pay employees of the Tri-County Weed Management Area hasn't been received, according to Susan Roberts, Wallowa County Commission chairwoman, so Baker, Union and Wallowa County leaders are looking for supplemental money, possibly in the form of a bridge loan.

"We are finding a way around the federal reimbursements to keep our folks paid," Roberts said. "They still have bills to pay, but we can't get reimbursed."

Ongoing talks regarding the Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision with Glenn Casamassa, U.S. For-

est Service Pacific Northwest Regional forester, are also on hold. Roberts had hoped to talk to him during the Association of Oregon Counties meeting Monday in Salem regarding the plan's progress, but he was unable to attend because of the furlough.

While most Forest Service grazing allotment permits are not running cattle on public land in January, Rod Childers, who ranches in northern Wallowa County, said he normally has had his annual operating instruction meeting by now.

"I get mine done first part of January so I don't have to deal with it before calving, but that isn't going to happen," Childers said. "Now I'm concerned about getting it done in time for turnout in

the spring."

With calving season on his mind, Childers said he also worries about the Wildlife Services field agents who control predators being furloughed at his cattle's most vulnerable time.

As of today afternoon, there appeared to be no end in sight to the shutdown. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., said he agrees with the president's case for increased border security, but he didn't support shutting down natural resource agencies.

"I don't agree that it makes sense to furlough the people working on the biological opinion in the Klamath Basin, forest fuels reductions in central Oregon, or grazing permits in eastern Oregon," Walden said. "How does a nearly month-

long work stoppage benefit taxpayers who are waiting for decisions and plans and permits?"

Walden isn't the only Oregon representative concerned about the shutdown's effects on natural resource agencies. Oregon senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley were two of the signers on a letter sent to the president Jan. 14 urging him to fund the agencies responsible for wildfire suppression.

The letter, signed by 12 senators said, "The failure to reopen the government puts peoples' lives at risk by undermining their ability to respond to wildfires and will only serve to delay critical forest restoration and safety projects. These young men and women put their lives on the line to protect the nation's natural resources and other public and private property, and they deserve to have the best training possible in preparation for increasingly difficult fire seasons."

THE BOOKLOFT AND SKYLIGHT GALLERY

Finding books is our specialty

541.426.3351 • 107 E. Main • Enterprise • www.bookloftoregon.com

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13			14			
15				16			17			
			18	19			20			
21	22	23		24			25			
26			27			28		29	30	31
32						33				
34				35		36				
			37			38		39		
40	41	42		43			44			
45				46			47	48	49	50
51				52			53			
54				55			56			

CLUES ACROSS

1. Take a sharp breath
5. Spat
8. Farewells
12. Sector
13. Woolly mama
14. Cameo, e.g.
15. Skin
16. Feeling rotten
17. Eye
18. Moved sideways
20. Yellow jacket
21. ___ of luxury
24. Participates in
26. Little green men
28. Further down
32. Shopping places
33. Small orchard
34. Snoozing
36. Talked back
37. Beginner's book
39. Curvy shape
40. Persian king
43. Social zeros
45. Mama's fellow
46. Fearful admiration
47. On the crest
51. Roasting chamber
52. Bowling frames
53. Morse
54. "___ Pilot"
55. Grape drink
56. Recognized

CLUES DOWN

1. Mountain pass
2. "You ___ Sixteen"
3. Look
4. Lacking color
5. Rules
6. Young bird
7. Fused
8. Scanners
9. Type of exercise
10. Room extensions
11. Trickle
19. Thicker
21. Tibetan priest
22. Cry of dismay
23. Medicinal tablet
25. Esteem
27. Babar, for one
29. Model
30. Nights before
31. Scarlet and crimson
35. Fiesta decor
36. Peaceful
38. Cried like a kitten
40. Dirt stain
41. Possess
42. Mimics
44. Paper bag
48. Unit of weight
49. Lyric verse
50. Chapel bench

Church Directory

Church of Christ
502 W. 2nd Street • Wallowa
541-398-2509
Worship at 11 a.m.
Mid-week Bible Study 7 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church
409 West Main -Enterprise
SUNDAY WORSHIP at 9 AM
12:30 Guest Pastor Colin Brown
phone (message): 541-426-4633
web: gracelutheranenterprise.com

St. Katherine's Catholic Church
Fr. Thomas Puduppulliparamban
301 E. Garfield Enterprise
Mass Schedule
Sundays: St. Pius X, Wallowa - 8:00 am
St. Katherine of Siena, Enterprise 10:30am
Saturdays: St. Katherine of Siena, Enterprise 5:30am
Weekday: St. Katherine of Siena, Enterprise - 8:00am (Monday - Thursday and First Friday)
All are welcome

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church
100 NE 3rd St, Enterprise
NE 3rd & Main St
541-426-3439
Worship Service Sunday 9:30am

Joseph United Methodist Church
3rd & Lake St. • Joseph
Pastor Cherie Dearth
Phone: 541-432-3102
Sunday Worship Service 10:00 am
JosephUMC.org

Summit Church
Gospel Centered Community
Service time: 10:30 am
Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise
541-426-2150
Interim Pastor: Rich Hagenbaugh
www.summitchurchoregon.org

Enterprise Christian Church
85035 Joseph Hwy • (541) 426-3449
Worship at 9 a.m.
Sunday School at 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship at 6 p.m. (nursery at A.M. services)
"Loving God & One Another"
David Bruce, Sr. - Minister

Christ Covenant Church
Pastor Terry Tollefson
Church Office: 541-263-0505
Family Prayer: 9:30 AM
Sunday School: 10 AM
Worship Service: 11 AM
723 College Street
Lostine

Lostine Presbyterian Church
Discussion Group 9:30 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Childrens program during service
Blog: dancingforth.blogspot.com
541.398.0597
Hwy 82, Lostine
Stephen Kliever, Minister

Enterprise Community Congregational Church
The Big Brown Church with an open door
Pastor Archie Hook
Sunday Worship 11am
Bible Study 9:30am
Ark Angels Children's Program
Ages 4-6th grade, 11am
Nursery for children 3 & under
301 NE First St. • Enterprise, OR
Find us on Facebook! 541.426.3044

Wallowa Assembly of God
606 West Hwy 82
Wallowa, Oregon
541-886-8445
Sunday School • 9:am
Worship Service • 10:am
Pastor Tim Barton
wallowaassemblyofgod.com

Seventh-Day Adventist Church & School
305 Wagner (near the Cemetery)
P.O. Box N, Enterprise, OR 97828
541-426-3751 Church
541-426-8339 School
Worship Services
Sabbath School 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.
Worship Hour 11:00 a.m. - Noon
Pastor Jonathan DeWeber

Time for a Computer Tuneup?
JPLICE
Spyware Removal • 541-426-0108
103 SW 1st St., Enterprise

Winding Waters
A Non-Profit Community Health Center

OHSU Resident
John Mitchell
January 1 - February 7

Hours:
Monday-Friday 7:00am to 7:00pm
Saturday 9:00am to 1:00pm
603 Medical Parkway
Enterprise, OR 97828

MEDICARE?

still I'm here!

Call **Kathleen**

Mutual of Omaha

HILLOCK INSURANCE LLC
616 W. North Street, Enterprise, Oregon
541-426-4208