

The Bulletin

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

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Students dance and sing at the First Interstate Bank Center before the opening session of the Oregon FFA State Convention at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center on Thursday.

BARNSTORMING

THE FAIRGROUNDS

FFA participants flock to Redmond for state convention after 2 years of being online

The Oregon FFA state convention was an online-only affair the past two years — a casualty of COVID-19 restrictions.

So the 2022 version at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center this weekend was the first time in three years that FFA participants from across Oregon and the region have been together under one roof.

The 94th annual convention, under the theme “All In,” kicked off Thursday with speeches, cheers, skits and even some singing and dancing. Redmond’s Kylie Baldwin was honored as part of the 2021-22 Oregon FFA state officer team.

Rep. Vikki Breese-Iverson, R-Prineville, spoke to the gathering on Thursday. The fifth-generation rancher and Oregon House Republican leader said she can trace her success at the Oregon Legislature back to her high school FFA career, where she learned about

public speaking and parliamentary procedure.

“I encourage you to soak up some of what is before you in the next couple of days,” said Breese-Iverson. “It’s a sneak preview of how you can be engaged in whatever careers you find yourselves in down the road.”

The convention ran through Sunday. Events ranged from workshops on farm budgeting to extemporaneous speaking contests.

—Redmond Spokesman



LEFT: Students run through the doors to enter the First Interstate Bank Center for the opening session of the Oregon FFA State Convention at the Deschutes fairgrounds. RIGHT: Students dance and sing on the floor Thursday.



Feds allege huge fentanyl trafficking ring run out of Oregon salon

BY MAXINE BERNSTEIN
The Oregonian

One woman is accused of smuggling more than a pound of counterfeit oxycodone pills made with fentanyl and 2 kilograms of heroin in the luggage she carried on a passenger bus from California to Portland in early December.

Another person met up with a man outside a McDonald’s restaurant in Hillsboro at the end of December, allegedly handing over a stash of counterfeit oxycodone pills to sell.

In early January, a man known on the street as “Mugsy” went to a motel room in Wilsonville to pick up two bags full of counterfeit oxycodone pills from a couple and drop off cash from his earlier drug sales, according to court records.

The drug transfers, federal prosecutors allege, were all directed by a former Portland man leading a large-scale drug-trafficking organization that distributed more than 100,000 counterfeit prescription pills with fentanyl across

Oregon and Washington for at least three years.

The organization is accused of laundering millions of dollars of drug proceeds through the small Mazatlán Beauty Salon in Tualatin, even after the business had been officially dissolved.

It also concealed the drug profits through the outright purchases of nine residential properties valued at more than \$4.6 million in Portland, Beaverton, Vancouver, North Las Vegas and Henderson, Nevada, over eight months,

prosecutors say.

The alleged leader of the organization, Luis Antonio Beltran Arredondo, 32, who had recently moved to Las Vegas, and 10 others have been indicted, accused of conspiring to possess with intent to distribute fentanyl and heroin.

Beltran Arredondo and his girlfriend, Jacqueline Paola Rodriguez Barrientos, 41, also are accused of laundering millions in drug proceeds, the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Portland announced Friday.

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COLUMBIA BASIN

Unique water storage plan will benefit farms, fish

BY GEORGE PLAVERN
Capital Press

DUFUR — Underground water storage along Fifteenmile Creek in Oregon’s Dufur Valley could provide some much-needed relief for farms and imperiled fish, replenishing dangerously low streamflows during the region’s hot and dry summer months.

The Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District is evaluating a proposal that would divert surface water from the creek when flows are naturally higher in winter and spring. Water would be injected into a deep basalt well and later returned in-stream when needed.

Tech giant Google, which operates a massive data center in nearby The Dalles, recently donated \$100,000 to help build a small pilot project 6 miles upstream from Dufur.

Fifteenmile Creek is a 54-mile-long tributary of the Columbia River, flowing from the Cascade Range near Mount Hood to just below The Dalles Dam. It includes habitat for several fish species, including Mid-Columbia steelhead, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Nearly three-quarters of the 373-square-mile watershed is also used for agriculture, primarily dryland wheat, irrigated hay fields and tree fruit orchards.

Shilah Olson, Wasco SWCD manager, said that despite irrigators being within their water rights, surface flows in Fifteenmile Creek are overallocated during the summer, limiting allocations while also posing a threat to steelhead.

“The main thing is limiting their liability under the ESA,” Olson said, adding that violations of the law can quickly add up to hefty fines.

Since 2013, some irrigators have voluntarily agreed to reduce their surface water pumping from Fifteenmile Creek when streamflows drop critically low for fish. Salmonids, in particular, are vulnerable when the water temperature rises above 68 degrees.

One significant example saw thousands of juvenile steelhead perish in warm, shallow water in 2009.

That led to the creation of the Fifteenmile Action Plan to Stabilize Temperature, or FAST.

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TODAY’S WEATHER



Rain
High 54, Low 41
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