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Central Oregon voters voice opinions for change



Carson Janssen, owner of Janssen Metalworks in La Pine, was one of several Central Oregonians who spoke to reporters for the Voter Voices project. He talked about the changes he'd like to see in his rural town and the region.

BY HANNAH SEIBOLD AND ZACHARY JONES NEURAY • EO Media Group

Oregon voter voices often go unamplified because the state is not a major player on the national stage due to its strong democratic tilt driven by the metropolitan areas. To capture the least heard voter voices — youth and those living in rural areas — EO Media Group partnered with students from the University of Oregon’s Catalyst Journalism Project to provide a platform for their views in all regions of the state.

The Voter Voices project started in Central Oregon. The tri-county area is comprised of one metro area, Bend, and several rural cities. People were asked about their concerns and hopes rather than their political affiliation or particular candidates in an effort to have an open dialogue. Voters from Madras

to Bend to La Pine spoke to reporters about what their friends, family and neighbors feel would make Oregon and the U.S. a better place for all. “If we just met over the fence and had a conversation then things could actually change,” said Prineville resident Diane Belnavis. *See Voters / A7*

“We have different beliefs, but we all love the same thing. This community is forced to interact with each other, and I just love it. I’ve always lived rurally. I like to farm.”
— Diane Belnavis, Prineville resident

ST. CHARLES HEALTH SYSTEM

Employer overpays staffers, asks for \$2M back

BY BRYCE DOLE

The Bulletin
Employees with St. Charles Health System are being asked to repay roughly \$2 million after a ransomware attack on a global workforce management provider kept health system staff from accessing timecard data for months. In December, an attack on Ultimate Kronos Group, a company that holds time-keeping and scheduling data for workplaces nationwide, prevented St. Charles Health System from accessing employee timecard data from Nov. 28 to Jan. 22. After spending weeks repaying regional health care staff who had been underpaid, St. Charles is now asking for money back from 2,358 staffers who were overpaid, St. Charles spokeswoman Lisa Goodman said in an email to The Bulletin on Friday. That’s an average of about \$780 per person, Goodman said.

See St. Charles / A4

River near Bend too risky to get kayaker’s remains

BY JOE SIESS

The Bulletin
The general location of the body of Alex Kollar, the kayaker who went missing on the Deschutes River last fall, is known, but conditions on the river make it far too dangerous to safely retrieve his remains. Kollar was reported missing on the Deschutes River on Oct. 1 after he was last seen by friends upstream from Meadow Camp near Lava Island Falls.

See Kayaker / A3

Submarine ballots sent; Betsy Brigades race to beat deadlines

BY GARY A. WARNER

Oregon Capital Bureau
The Nov. 8 general election is more than 12 weeks away, but Wednesday was the deadline to mail “submarine ballots” to some voters. That’s the name of ballots that go to military and overseas voters who won’t be able to get a ballot, cast their votes and get it back to their county clerks in time to be counted. Like those on the USS Oregon attack submarine submerged somewhere in the seven seas. The deadline, which is covered in Oregon Revised Statute 253.565, is just one of many

coming and going as the election draws closer. One of the key dates next week will decide if a top candidate for governor goes on the Nov. 8 ballot.

Deadline looms for ‘Run, Betsy, Run’

The Oregon Secretary of State’s Office has said it needs to have petitions seeking to put former state Sen. Betsy Johnson on the Nov. 8 ballot submitted no later than Tuesday. That will give officials two weeks to make sure the petitions add up.

See Election / A4

Illegal marijuana grow in Madras linked to international drug group

BY GARRETT ANDREWS

The Bulletin
Drug police searched a Madras property Friday morning, seizing 60 pounds of unprocessed marijuana and 807 plants tied to an international drug organization operating around Central Oregon, according to police. The alleged illicit grow site at 637 NE 10th St. also contained evidence the outfit

allegedly stole tens of thousands of gallons of water, according to Sgt. Kent Vander Kamp of the multiagency Central Oregon Drug Enforcement team. The search began around 7:30 a.m. The home was unoccupied and no arrests were made, though evidence collected will aid in ongoing investigations, according to Vander Kamp.

“We are probably going to announce some more arrests next week,” he told The Bulletin. The 10th Street property consists of a home and large detached storage shed. The home, a rental, was largely vacant. The outbuilding contained three grow rooms with plants in different stages of maturity, Vander Kamp said.

See Madras / A3

TODAY'S WEATHER



Plenty of sun
High 85, Low 51
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Vol. 117, No. 329, 16 pages, 2 sections



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