

Oregon FFA convention offers students view to future

By Eric Mortenson
EO Media Group

CORVALLIS — If the 1,400 students attending the Oregon FFA state convention had some questions about career prospects, Alexzandra “Alex” Murphy was offering some answers.

Murphy teaches a new precision irrigated agriculture program at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, and she said ag employers are clamoring to hire people trained in new technology.

“People have been asking me for students,” she said while stationed at a college information booth. “There is a huge demand for workers. Everywhere I go, they say, ‘We want more good workers.’”

Students with FFA experience are particularly attractive to employers, she



Alex Murphy



Shea Booster



Hailee Patterson



Liberty Greenlund



Bryson Price



Raymond Seal



Zanden Unger



Kelly Barnes

said, because they’re already tuned into multiple facets of agriculture. And it hasn’t been difficult recruiting students to study precision ag applications, Murphy added.

“I don’t know too many kids who don’t get excited about technology,” she said with a laugh. “Turning off your (irrigation) pivot with a cell phone is awesome.”

Blue Mountain Community College was among the career vendors participating in the convention, held March 18-21 at Oregon State University. Students from Future Farmers of America chapters

across the state attended. Among many activities, they took part in public speaking and parliamentary procedure competitions, heard from guest speakers and had a little fun on the side, such as a session on western dancing.

State officers for 2016-17 were selected as well. They are: President Shea Booster, of Bend; Vice President Hailee Patterson, of Imbler; Secretary Liberty Greenlund, of Yamhill-Carlton; Treasurer Raymond Seal, of Joseph; Reporter Zanden Unger, of Dallas; and Sentinel Bryson Price, of Sutherlin.

While advisers such as Murphy of BMCC were available to offer career advice, other convention speakers had something to say about life in general.

Kelly Barnes, a motivational speaker from Oklahoma, used a fast-paced presentation to suggest students should examine their lives and make changes.

Barnes, who grew up on family dairy and beef operations, said he found his calling during an FFA leadership conference and now spends his time talking to corporate and educational groups.

To the Oregon FFA students, Barnes listed three areas for consideration.

He asked them to realize they have ingrained habits or daily routines, things they do without thinking that may be wasting time or even holding them back.

“When we do things a certain way, what happens when someone asks you to change?” he asked. “The answer is no.”

Barnes said students should review what he called their “inputs,” the music, movies, books or organizations such as FFA that influence their

lives. While many students will say they don’t act badly because of coarse entertainment, for example, they will acknowledge that other inputs make them feel sad, happy, excited or inspired.

“You put good things in, good things come out,” Barnes said.

Last, Barnes talked about the “rule of five.” He asked students to think of their interactions with five friends. Of that group, he said, who is the smartest, has the most goals, makes the best decisions and is looked at as a leader.

“The rule of five says you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with,” he said. “If you’re the smartest, who’s pushing you to be smarter?”

“Find people who are going to push you,” Barnes concluded. “Surround yourself with people who are better than you.”

Sharp disagreements mark path as Oregon begins wolf plan review

By Eric Mortenson
EO Media Group

SALEM — Opposing sides in Oregon’s continuing wolf argument both believe some aspects of the state’s management plan should be reviewed by independent parties.

Speaking March 18 to the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Commission, conservationists repeated their view that an external scientific review should have been done before the commission took wolves off the state endangered species list last November.

Livestock, hunting and farming interests, meanwhile, suggested a third-party should make the call on whether livestock attacks are listed as confirmed wolf depredation or only “probable,” which don’t count toward lethal control decisions.

On just about every other aspect of wolves in Oregon, however, the two sides disagree. Panelists representing both sides were invited to meet with the ODFW Commission and stake out their positions as the state begins what is expected to be a nine-month review of the wolf management plan.

The review begins as cattle and sheep producers, hunters and the Oregon Farm Bureau have scored a couple of key victories. First was the commission’s delisting decision



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Michael Finley, right, chair of the ODFW Commission, discusses wolf management with Rob Klavins, left, of Oregon Wild and Amaroq Weiss, second from left, of the Center for Biological Diversity.

in November, and the Oregon Legislature followed that up by passing a bill that protects the decision from legal challenge. Since then, the state’s annual wolf survey showed the state population grew 36 percent in 2015. Wildlife biologist Russ Morgan, ODFW’s wolf recovery manager, said the numbers represent a continuing success story as wolves expand in number and range.

Panelists from Oregon Wild, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife and Cascadia Wildlands repeated their view that delisting was premature and not supported by independent scientific review. Representatives said they oppose a state population cap or range limits on wolves. They also oppose sport hunting of wolves, which some think could be an

eventual result of delisting and plan revision.

Amaroq Weiss, of the Center for Biological Diversity, said some Oregon actions undermine wolf protection. The Legislature passed a bill increasing the fines for poaching, she said, but excused “unintentional take.”

“The law provides an absolute defense for someone who shoots a wolf and claims he thought it was a coyote,” she said, noting the case of an Oregon hunter who was prosecuted for a 2015 incident. “The state is saying, claim it was an accident and we’ll turn our back.”

Rob Klavins, Northeast Oregon field coordinator for Oregon Wild, said wolf poaching has increased, the delisting and legislative action was “unfair and unethical” and discussions

are marked by “renewed conflict and controversy” even as a majority of Oregonians favor wolf protections.

“We’re skeptical, but we are here again,” he told the commission.

The other side had points to make as well.

Mary Anne Nash, an attorney with the Oregon Farm Bureau, said conservationists’ complaints about transparency and scientific review are “in the eye of the beholder.”

“They mean their preferred outcomes, and their science,” she said.

Dave Wiley, with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, said ODFW must protect Oregon’s deer and elk herds as wolf packs expand.


Jim Akenson, conservation director for the Oregon Hunters Association, said it’s “wonderful” to restore wolves to the ecosystem, “But at some point there needs to be management. We’ve reached that point,” he said.

Wallowa County rancher


Todd Nash, head of the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association wolf task force, said ODFW has too high a bar for confirming wolf attacks and an outside party

ought to do it instead. He and others also favor establishing geographic management zones in which wolves could be controlled on a more local basis.

Recognizing our
Local Dentists on



Virginia McMillan, DDS, PC
150 Ogilvie Dr.
John Day
541-575-0550



We cater to cowards!
www.johndaysmiles.com



Happy Smiles...Start Here
Maintaining Smiles in Grant County Since 1979



NEW PATIENTS and EMERGENCIES welcome


Offering Complete Preventive and Restorative Care, Crown and Bridge, Dentures and Partial Dentures

Dr. Norm DeJong, DDS, MPH, PC | 132 Front St., Prairie City
Melanie DeJong, RDH | www.prairiecityoregon.com


541-820-4369 • 888-820-4369

03648


Celebrate our Local Nurse Practitioners this



Grant County Health Department
Make an appointment to see Karen Triplett, FNP for all of your Family’s health care needs.
528 E. Main, John Day
541-575-0429 or
888-443-9104
Open Mon. - Fri. 8am-5pm



NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY MARCH 30



We help painful feet become beautiful pain-free feet!

Treatment and Surgery of the Foot and Ankle
In-grown nails • Bunions
Warts, Gout, Corns and Calluses
Diabetic Foot Screening
Foot Odor
Athletes Foot Treatment for pain in feet, shins, heels, knees and lower back.
All insurances accepted

MICHAEL RUSHTON, DPM
Podiatric Physician and Surgeon

Blue Mountain Hospital 170 Ford Rd, John Day • 541-575-1311
Please Call 866-315-FEET (3338) today for your appointment