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HANGING UP HIS WINGS

Former forester retires handmade plane

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Dave Feiger was just beginning to fly over the Ochoco Mountain Range when he heard a bang. The propeller on his homemade plane stopped, leaving him 7,500 feet in the air, moving at 135 mph. Thankfully, his instructor had been a World War II fighter pilot. Feiger kept his wits about him and was able to glide six miles to a nearby airstrip on a ranch. The malfunction that crippled the plane also left his windshield covered in oil, meaning he had to roll the plane onto its side to see the airstrip out of the side window. He successfully landed the plane and lived to fly another day. That was in 2015. Feiger rebuilt the plane's engine last winter and took it out for a test flight in the spring. However, he could tell something was wrong. He decided he was done pushing his luck, and retired the plane.

See WINGS, Page A18

The Eagle/Rylan Boggs
Dave Feiger, 80, stands in front of his retired plane, which now hangs in JD Rents. Feiger built the plane, seen flying in the photo below, in his garage and recently decided it was time to give up flying.



Contributed photo/Dave Feiger

Rep. Walden promises change under Trump

Lawmaker discusses land management, education at Mt. Vernon town hall

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden addressed a wide range of issues during a community meeting at the Mt. Vernon Community Center on Thursday, Feb. 9.

The Republican representing Eastern Oregon assured citizens he would take their concerns, voiced on issues ranging

from education to forest management, back to congress. He said his office has been regularly occupied by protesters as well as inundated with phone calls, emails and letters from those he represents.

A reoccurring concern brought up throughout the meeting was land management by the federal government. Many citizens at the meeting showed distaste for current management plans on forest and grazing lands, which they said had led to catastrophic fires. John Day resident Mark Rogers said many federal agencies were heavily litigated

See WALDEN, Page A18



The Eagle/Rylan Boggs
U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.) addresses concerns on issues ranging from forest management to education during a town hall meeting in the Mt. Vernon Community Center Thursday, Feb. 9.

Have gun, can't travel

Debate emerges on rule for Oregon employees

By Jayati Ramakrishnan and Phil Wright
EO Media Group

Jan. 6 marked the last day most state employees could bring personal guns and weapons to work.

The Oregon Department of Administrative Services that day unveiled its new policy on "weapons in the workplace." Gun rights advocates consider the policy unconstitutional and a danger to state worker safety. Supporters of the ban view it as a reasonable safety measure. The state says it brings clarity to murky waters.

Policy No. 50-010-05 "prohibits weapons in the workplace unless an employee is permitted to carry, handle, operate or transport a weapon as part of the employee's assigned duties in the course and scope of the employee's employment. A permit to carry a concealed handgun does not give an employee the authority to use or carry a handgun into the workplace."

Firing back

Kevin Starrett is the director of the gun-rights nonprofit the Oregon Firearms Federation and alerted state lawmakers about the policy. He said it infringes on the constitutional rights of state workers to carry guns like other Oregonians and in effect relegates state workers to second-class citizens.

"Clearly, the infringements are pretty severe," he said. "Now those people are being told they're sitting ducks. This is not crazy speculation on my part, this has happened."

Starrett referred to the December 2015 San Bernardino attack, in which a San Bernardino County Department of Public Health employee and his wife shot and killed 14 people and wounded 22 others at an office Christmas party.

He said the federation heard from people concerned how the policy affects them. The spouse of one state employee, Starrett said, is worried about his wife



EO Media Group/E.J. Harris

having to walk three blocks to work in the dark without a weapon to protect herself.

Still, Starrett said he believes the governor has the authority to make lack of weapons a condition of employment, based on court rulings from two cases the federation brought: the 2007 lawsuit to support a Medford teacher's ability to bring a gun to work to protect herself from an abusive ex-husband; and a 2009 lawsuit challenging the Oregon University System's rules banning guns on campus.

The federation lost the Medford case but prevailed against the state universities. Starrett said the two decisions "form a fairly bright line" governing guns in Oregon, but the new policy raises questions.

State legislators, for example, determine the rules for the Capitol in Salem, not the governor or Department of Administrative Services. The department, however, oversees the parking garage under the Capitol. Can a legislative staffer with a gun and concealed carry permit have a weapon in the garage or another state building?

"Frankly, I don't know what happens," Starrett said. "I don't think anybody does."

James Leuenberger was the attorney in the Medford case, representing Shirley Katz, the high school teacher who wanted to carry a gun to campus for self defense.

Leuenberger said he hasn't handled any cases related to gun rights recently, but takes issue with the state's ban.

See GUN, Page A3

New forest commission petition fails requirements

Petitioners plan to try again

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

A new petition to establish a new Grant County Public Forest Commission was struck down for failing to meet state constitutional requirements.

Grant County Clerk Brenda Percy made the determination Feb. 10 after she and county counsel Ron Yockim reviewed a prospective initiative filed by chief petitioners Jim Sproul and Dave Traylor Feb. 7.

When a prospective petition for a local initiative is filed, the

county clerk has five days to make a determination if the petition meets requirements of the Oregon Constitution and state statutes to concern only one subject, to include the full text and to be legislative, not administrative, in nature.

"After thorough review, I have determined that the prospective petition does not include the full text ...," Percy said in her determination. "Further, with the information that is included in the prospective petition, I have determined that the measure is administrative in nature and is therefore not a matter that can

See FOREST, Page A18

