

# Judge nixes deal in Uber attack

By GARRETT ANDREWS  
The Bulletin

BEND — Charged with attacking his female Uber driver in 2020, Mark Mastalir came to his sentencing hearing in Bend having agreed to a plea deal involving community service and probation.

But judges aren't bound by negotiated settlements, and on Thursday, Deschutes County Circuit Judge Ray Crutchley told a courtroom "it's difficult for me to contemplate" a sentence for attacking a transportation provider that doesn't involve incarceration.

"This has got to be one of the more egregious things that could happen to someone in the transportation services industry," Crutchley said. "And what a scary and traumatic event this must have been for her."

In the end, Crutchley gave Mastalir, a former running phenom and tech executive, a 10-day jail sentence, to begin in February, and increased his community service obligation to 48 hours.

A \$3-million lawsuit Mastalir filed against the driver, Rhonda Bowlin, remains pending, with both maintaining they were victims on the night of March 21, 2020.

Bowlin, who is seeking a half-million dollars in a counterclaim, did not attend the hearing.

"It is my understanding that due to the serious nature of this incident and the impact on her, she is not in agreement with the resolution that was reached between the parties," prosecutor Mary Anderson told the judge. "There were some legal and factual issues with the case that ultimately led the state not to proceed with certain charges."

Reached after the sentencing, Bowlin's Portland-based civil attorney Greg Kafoury said, "We'll see him at his next hearing."

"Mastalir is a bully, a drunk and now a convicted criminal," Kafoury said. "He tried to use his wealth and power to intimidate my client by suing her for millions of dollars. She stood tall, refused to buckle, and we will meet Mr. Mastalir before a jury in our civil case."

A 10-minute dashcam clip taken from Bowlin's vehicle providing partial view of the incident was published by The Bulletin in November.

Bowlin, a former Bend firefighter and mother of six, picked up Mastalir around midnight, bound for Mastalir's home in

Tetherow on the west side of Bend. Three of his friends had to "place" him in the vehicle when it arrived, according to Anderson.

As a female Uber driver concerned for her safety at night, Bowlin took several precautions, including carrying a stun gun, pepper spray, a police baton and mounting a dash camera.

In the dash cam footage, Mastalir repeatedly calls Bowlin "baby," and he tells her, "I want you. I want to have you," to which she replies, "I'm just your Uber driver. I'm taking you home."

When Mastalir believed Bowlin had missed his turn, he allegedly leaned forward over the center console and grabbed her arm, causing her to swerve. She pulled over and used her stun gun on Mastalir and also attempted to use her pepper spray, but struck only the seat.

Outside the car, Mastalir again grabbed Bowlin, according to prosecutors. She allegedly struck him with the baton repeatedly in the head, falling to the ground along with Mastalir during the struggle.

Bowlin got back in her car, drove off and called 911. Both police and paramedics noted in their reports Bowlin was "clearly" traumatized by the incident, Anderson said.

Mastalir was arrested and taken to St. Charles Bend, where several large lacerations on his scalp were closed with staples. In January, with his criminal case still pending, Mastalir hired a civil attorney to sue Bowlin for assault and defamation, seeking nearly \$3 million for "extreme violence" and allegedly lying about the incident to police and media.

Bowlin tried to get Uber to help cover the costs of fighting the lawsuit, but the ride-hailing company refused, according to Kafoury.

A spokeswoman for Uber declined to comment on the incident but said Mastalir was deactivated as an Uber rider since shortly after the incident. Uber has added several safety features to its app, including an emergency button riders and drivers can use to call 911, according to spokeswoman Navideh Forghani.

Mastalir was sanctioned by the court in November after a woman spotted him drinking alcohol at an establishment in San Francisco, where he lives most of the year and worked, until his arrest, for "neurotechnology" firm Halo Neuroscience.



Mastalir



Deschutes County Sheriff's Office

A member of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office search and rescue team.

# Snowmobilers rescued near Bend

By BRENN A VISSER  
The Bulletin

BEND — Two lost snowmobile riders were rescued by a Deschutes County Sheriff's Office search and rescue team late Thursday, Dec. 16.

Around 4 p.m. on Thursday, the Deschutes County dispatch center received a call from a snowmobile rider who reported being lost in the area of Moon Mountain, southwest of Bend, the sheriff's office said in a release.

The lost riders were only identified as a 56-year-old man from Winnemucca, Nevada, and a 38-year-old Bend resident.

The two riders became disoriented due to weather and snow conditions, as well

as being unfamiliar with the trail system, according to the sheriff's office. The two riders tried to navigate out of the area for an hour and a half until they lost daylight and became more disoriented.

A search and rescue snowmobile team was sent to the Dutchman Flat Sno-park following the rider's phone call.

When the search and rescue team reached the area by snowmobile, poor visibility from weather conditions made reaching the riders too dangerous, according to the sheriff's office.

So the team snowshoed until locating the riders by roughly 8 p.m. The riders were uninjured and brought back to their vehicles at the sno-park, according to the sheriff's office.

# Grain co-op eyes the end

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It's the end of an era.

Pendleton Grain Growers announced Thursday, Dec. 16, it had distributed more than \$12 million to its more than 1,000 members as it fully winds down operations. PGG members who didn't pick up a check in person at the Dec. 15 meeting will get their checks in the mail.

Members were paid in "patronage."

PGG Board President Tim Hawkins explained that before the grain cooperative shut down most of its operations, a portion of its proceeds were put into a patronage account that was paid out to members on a revolving basis every 10-12 years. But instead of members getting a cut of operational profits, PGG was distributing money from the co-op's methodical sale of all its assets and properties.

It's been five years since Pendleton Grain Growers members voted to dissolve the once-venerable co-op, but PGG remained in operation as the organization looked to pay back debts and find buyers to fill in its vast footprint.

According to "PGG — The Story of a Cooperative," a 1979 history by Virgil Rupp, PGG was conceived on Dec. 21, 1929, by a group of local farmers looking to address cratering wheat prices brought about by the Great Depression. PGG was officially incorporated the following year.

"The farmers had more faith and hope than money, as they signed up 500,000 bushels of production to take part in the new cooperative," Rupp wrote.

PGG turned a profit in its first year and only grew from there.

At its height, the co-op had thousands of members and not only offered services in grain, seed, agronomy, energy and irrigation but also retail stores and vehicle service centers. The PGG logo could be found on buildings across Eastern Oregon and was a sponsor and contributor to scores of community organizations, businesses and events.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

The Pendleton Grain Growers logo sits illuminated Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, on the agricultural cooperative's former headquarters in Pendleton. PGG announced that morning it paid more than \$12 million to its more than 1,000 members as it heads to dissolution.

But by 2016, the co-op found itself in a much more precarious financial situation.

PGG overstated its earnings in 2010 and 2011, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture temporarily suspended the co-op's warehouse license in 2012 because of discrepancies in its audits. PGG ran in the red in 2013 and 2014 and soon found itself millions of dollars in debt.

By the time members voted to dissolve the cooperative, Pendleton Grain Growers already was in the process of selling off its retail property and agronomy division. The vote opened up the door for PGG to sell off the rest of its divisions.

PGG sold its grain division to United Grain Corp. and then swiftly sold many of its non-Pendleton retail buildings to businesses and nonprofits. But some of PGG's most prominent Pendleton properties stayed with PGG until the dominos began to fall in 2020 and 2021.

La Grande-based Hines Meat Co. acquired the former PGG Energy building, The MacGregor Co. took on the McKennon Station and Eastern Oregon Rentals, in an auction, bought the old PGG headquarters.

Hawkins said it's been a long road from the dissolution vote until now, but he feels good about PGG's position. The co-op avoided bankruptcy, paid off all of its debt and has now sold most of its properties. Hawkins said he expects PGG to dissolve completely in mid 2022



East Oregonian, File/East Oregonian

Vern Nelson works on a sign on the newly constructed Pendleton Grain Growers headquarters in early 1951 in Pendleton.

after it finishes selling its final three properties and resolves some patronages it has with other companies that should lead to more payments to members.

If PGG sticks to its anticipated timeline, it will go out of existence eight years shy of its 100th anniversary.

For Hawkins, having the end in sight is a bittersweet experience. His father was once on the PGG board, and Hawkins never liked the idea of PGG closing for good. But he said the board worked hard to match the properties it sold with strong organizations, and PGG is ending its life by putting money back into the pockets of farmers.

"It makes you feel like what you did the last six to seven years was worth it," he said.

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## Committee Volunteers Needed

**Grant County is now Recruiting Volunteers to Serve on Active Boards and Committees**  
Applications are Due by **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2022**

Obtain an Application to Volunteer from the County Court, 201 S. Humbolt, No. 280, Canyon City, OR 97820  
Online at [Committee Volunteer Application](#) or contact (541-575-0059) [GCCourtAdmin@grantcounty-or.gov](mailto:GCCourtAdmin@grantcounty-or.gov)  
**Committees are formal public bodies required to comply with Oregon Public Meetings Law ORS 192.610.**

### College Advisory Board

Seven members plus three ex-officio members serve a three year term and meet monthly to promote local educational opportunities and identify educational needs within the community.

### Extension & 4-H Service District Advisory Council

Eleven members serve three year terms and meet semi-annually to provide guidance and assistance to local OSU Extension staff in planning, developing, and evaluating balanced educational programs directed to high priority needs of county residents. Membership is limited to one re-appointment.

### Extension & 4H Service District Budget Committee

Members include two advisory members and a member-at-large serving three year terms. Annual meetings include the County Court and are held to receive, deliberate, revise and approve the annual budget as provided by the District Budget Officer. Any proposed programs are discussed and considered.

### Mental Health Advisory Board

Seven members (including two consumer representatives) serve three year terms and meet no less than quarterly to facilitate the provision of quality mental health services to county residents and enhance community knowledge of available programs and services. Acts as the Local Alcohol and Drug Planning Commission and Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board. The board is a formal public body required to comply with Oregon Public Meetings Law ORS 192.610.

### Planning Commission

Nine members serve a four year term and two alternates serve a two year term, meeting as needed to review land use and zoning applications and discuss city and county growth issues and siting new facilities. Members must be residents of various geographic areas within the county and no more than two voting members shall be engaged in the same kind of business, occupation, trade or profession with agriculture designations of livestock / forage crop production and horticulture / specialty crop production. Commissioners serving in this capacity must file an Annual Verified Statement of Economic Interest with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. Members must re-apply to the County Court before their term ends if they wish to be re-appointed. The commission is a formal public body required to comply with Oregon Public Meetings Law ORS 192.610.

### Senior Citizens Advisory Council

ORS 410.210. Five members serve three year terms and meet semi-annually to define the needs of older adults, promote special interests and local community involvement, and represent senior citizens as an advocate to the local, state and federal government and other organizations.

### Sera

The alliance provides a forum for local government agencies and the private sector to discuss, understand and coordinate long range transportation issues affecting the south east Oregon region including Grant, Harney and Malheur counties. The alliance acts as the Area Commission on Transportation. It reviews the process for determining transportation infrastructure and capital investments in the south east region, recommends priorities, and advises Oregon Transportation Commission on state and regional policies affecting the region's transportation system. Five members, plus one alternate, serve three year terms as Grant County representatives. Daytime meetings are held monthly, or as needed, at locations rotating among the three counties.

### Wildlife Advisory Board

Created by Resolution 1993-29. Nine members serve three year terms and meet as needed to discuss issues regarding big game management and make recommendations to Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, including tag allocation and hunting season structure as they relate to population and damage of property.

### Wolf Depredation Advisory Committee

OAR 603-019-0015. Members include one County Commissioner, two members who own or manage livestock and two members who support wolf conservation or coexistence with wolves. These members agree upon two business representatives to serve as additional members. The committee oversees the procedure established by Grant County for its Wolf Depredation Compensation Program. The current vacancy is for a business representative.