

State lists most delinquent taxpayers

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

The Oregon Department of Revenue is trying a new tactic to collect delinquent taxes: publishing the names of the 50 individuals and 50 businesses that owe the state the most money.

Together the 100 individuals and businesses owe more than \$43 million.

The biggest bill for a corporation comes from Courtesy Staffing of Boardman. The temp agency — which appears to no longer be in business — owes the state \$509,457 in back taxes.

Phone numbers listed online for the business, and its affiliate in Rancho Cucamonga, California, are no longer in service or are

no longer connected to the business. According to the Secretary of State's business registry, the company dissolved in 2014 after registering with the state in 2011.

One of the top delinquent individuals listed on the Department of Revenue's website is Hermiston resident Donna K. Anderson. She comes in at number 42 with \$335,385

owed, according to the department's list. A message left for her on late last week has not been returned.

Anderson and Courtesy Staffing are the only Morrow County or Umatilla County addresses on the list, which can be accessed in full at www.oregon.gov/DOR/Pages/delinquent.

According to a Department of Revenue press re-

lease, the list reflects the amount of active tax warrants, which do not include recent payments made or interest owed.

Chris Wytoski, collections manager for the Personal Tax and Compliance Division, said in a news release that the public list is a pilot project of a "new tool" to encourage tax compliance.

"More than 30 states use public posting of delinquent taxpayer information, with positive results," he said.

Wytoski said inclusion in the list is a last resort after the state has tried repeatedly to collect the taxes. The top delinquent taxpayers were also given a warning and final opportunity to pay up to avoid having their name published.

DOJ: Stanfield police ignored policies, but didn't break laws

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
Staff Writer

Stanfield police chief Bryon Zumwalt and Lt. Troy LaMonte Toombs failed to log evidence and did not conduct a mandatory criminal background check on a reserve officer. But the Oregon Department of Justice found their ineptness was not criminal.

The town's top officers were subjected to a justice department investigation that began Nov. 9, 2015 into allegations of misconduct. The department Wednesday afternoon released digital copies of its seven-page report, an audio recording of investigators questioning Zumwalt and a Jan. 19 letter from senior assistant attorney general John Tseng to Stanfield City Manager Blair Larsen. That letter stated that while Zumwalt and Toombs failed to meet professional standards, they did not break the law.

The justice department began its investigation after Stanfield officer Daniel Poffenberger accused Zumwalt and Toombs of official misconduct and unethical behavior on Nov. 9, 2015. Before that, according to the



EO FILE PHOTO

Stanfield police chief Bryon Zumwalt (left) and Lt. Troy LaMonte Toombs (right).

report, Poffenberger emailed Zumwalt on Sept. 11, but got no response. Poffenberger emailed a letter on Oct. 20 to Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus, who also did not respond.

Michael Bethers, special agent with the Oregon Department of Justice, led the investigation. He and fellow special agent Todd Gray met with Poffenberger and former Stanfield officer Ryan McBride on Nov. 10. Poffenberger and McBride went through the state's po-

lice academy together and were friends and, according to the report, they also had "general animosity" toward Zumwalt and Toombs for firing McBride.

McBride was fired after he tried to help a Umatilla County sheriff's deputy cover up a drunk driving crash in August 2015.

Bethers stated most of the complaints against Zumwalt and Toombs "were personal and likely unethical behavior, but not necessarily criminal in nature."

But some allegations needed more scrutiny, including Toombs failing to document the seizure two marijuana plants from an Echo home; Zumwalt failing to follow through on a drunk driving arrest while taking the driver's revolver without documenting it; and Toombs failing to conduct a background check on reserve officer Jesse Newton, his friend.

The DOJ agents questioned Toombs and Zumwalt on Nov. 16.

Toombs said he took the pot plants on June 24, but did not give their owner a receipt and stuck them into an evidence locker, where they rotted. He claimed he buried them in the city's compost pit on Sept. 23. He never made any report about the case.

Zumwalt never pushed Toombs to complete that report and send it to the district attorney's office.

"How's that work?" Gray asked when questioning Zumwalt. "You're the chief, he's the lieutenant, you have expectations, you ask him questions and he doesn't really respond. How is that acceptable? How do you accept that?"

Bike racers gather in Echo trails event

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

The Echo Red 2 Red cross country mountain bike race is expected to more than double Echo's population this weekend as bikers from all over the country arrive for the annual race.

Organizers are expecting 400 to 450 participants, many of which will bring family or friends along for the weekend.

Organizer Stephanie Myers said the race, which is in its eighth year, has grown in popularity because of the unique terrain and the fact that it's the first OBRA-sanctioned race of the season in Oregon and most of the Pacific Northwest due to the mild, relatively dry climate.

"You just can't ride anywhere else this time of year," Myers said.

She said usually about 40 percent of riders come from out of state.

Myers said participants in the race, which offers a 13-mile beginner's course, a 25-mile course and a 32-mile course, should get a good work-out.

"People think it's flat because we live in a relatively flat area, but the course is definitely not flat," she said.

The trails for the race — including a new one this year — are on private property belonging to Sno Road Winery owners Lloyd and Lois Piercy.

Lloyd said hosting the race over the years has been "a lot of fun." The Piercys allow people to use the trails if they check in and ask permission, and he said they have also seen a lot of local children out there each weekend and gotten to know people from all over the country that way. Many of those people heard about the trails and about Echo from seeing videos and pictures posted by Red 2 Red participants.

He said described the terrain as left "in its native clothes."

"It's a true desert steppe, the way it's supposed to be," he said. "Even though it's desert, it's truly beautiful."

So far the cycling community has been considerate of the land, he said. Piercy and Myers both said they hope to see more trails in the area in the future.

"I think this is the first of several trails that could be built around here," Piercy said. "We could become a bicycle area. I think we already are."

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