

Depot land transfer delayed until 2017

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

The Army's latest schedule has the former Umatilla Chemical Depot land in local control by May 2017.

The Columbia Development Authority was supposed to receive the land in 2015, but it has twice been delayed — first until Nov. 2016, and now until the May 2017 date.

On Monday, the authority's executive director and board agreed that progress was still being made, but also expressed frustration that it has taken so much longer than promised.

"The length of time in the transfer is costing us opportunities," board chair and Umatilla County commissioner Bill Elfiring said.

After the Army conveys the former depot land along Interstate 84 east of Boardman, part of it will be used as a National Guard training facility. But the rest will fall under the control of the development authority for a wildlife refuge and industrial development.

The authority has repeatedly stated that it is not taking the land off the Army's hands unless it is "free, clean and has water."



FILE PHOTO

Some structures involved in the destruction of chemical agents at the Umatilla Army Depot remain after the destruction of the incinerating facility.

In October executive director Greg Smith said that the Army's initial proposal to give the authority approximately 25 percent of the site's water was not nearly enough to support the scale of economic development needed to make the site worthwhile to acquire. On Monday he said water rights negotiations were slowly moving along, with the Army agreeing to give two wells to the Columbia Development Authority, three to the National Guard and have two wells split between entities.

"It comes down to well number one," Smith said.

He said the Pentagon insists it needs the water rights to that well, but has also said it is open

to leasing most of those rights to the authority if they worked together to put in infrastructure needed to get the defunct well working again.

"I genuinely think they want to reach a good resolution," Smith said. "But their dilemma — and I think they're sincere on this — is that they have a national security issue."

That issue is wanting to make sure they have the infrastructure in place, should the water be needed once again to support a war effort. They also want to have the water on hand for fire suppression.

Those issues were discussed when Smith and board members Kim Puzey (Port of Umatilla) and Gary Neal (Port of Morrow) met with De-

fense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) officials in Washington, D.C. in March. Puzey said the atmosphere of the meeting started off "bristly" and "prickly" but Smith did a good job of practicing the principle "seek first to understand, then to be understood" and the tension in the room lowered considerably as things went on.

Puzey said even though the water discussion was taking a long time, he believed that taking the time to negotiate was, in the end, going to be mutually

beneficial for both the development authority and the National Guard.

Smith said he felt that another trip to Washington, D.C., in the next couple of weeks while Congress is going through the appropriations process would be highly productive for moving things along. The board agreed.

At the beginning of the meeting the board heard from a potential client. Taylor Steele said her employer, One Energy Renewables, a Seattle-based company specializing in utility-scale solar farms, was inter-

ested in leasing a section of depot land for a solar panel installation.

Puzey said he thought One Energy Renewables would be a good example to take to the federal government and show them the types of projects that are being held up because the conveyance process was taking so long.

The Columbia Development Authority is a partnership between Umatilla County, Morrow County, Port of Umatilla, Port of Morrow and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

IN BRIEF

Two died Sunday in wrong-way crash

A Hermiston man driving the wrong way on Interstate 84 died along with the driver of another driver in a head-on crash.

Shane R. Ware, 48, and Mary A. Padilla, 47, of Homedale, Idaho, died in the collision Sunday about 1:30 a.m. near Pendleton, according to Oregon State Police.

Ware drove a 1999 Saturn SL westbound in the eastbound lanes of Interstate 84 several miles east of Pendleton, according to a report from state police. He struck the Chevrolet minivan near milepost 214. A 10-year-old passenger in Padilla's vehicle suffered non-life threatening injuries, and an ambulance took the child to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton.

Ware forced another vehicle off the road a few miles before the fatal crash. Sherry Marie Anderson, 24, of Rainier, Oregon, suffered non-life threatening injuries after she wrecked trying to avoid the wrong-way driver. An ambulance also took her to St. Anthony Hospital.

State police did not know yet if drugs or alcohol were a factor in the crashes.

The Oregon Department of Transportation, Umatilla Tribal Fire and Ambulance, Pendleton Fire and Ambulance, Umatilla County Sheriff's Department, Pendleton Police Department and the Umatilla Tribal Police Department responded to the scenes.

While officers were investigating the fatal crash, a 1994 Ford Ranger drove through the closed scene. Tribal police stopped the pickup and arrested Joshua Haynie, 32, of Pendleton, for driving under the influence of intoxicants. He later provided a breath sample with a blood-alcohol level of .16 percent, twice the legal limit.

Man charged with sexual contact with minor

A 19-year-old Hermiston man has been charged with sexual contact with a minor.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office arrested Kyle Naillon, 19, on charges of third-degree

sodomy, third-degree rape and contributing to the sexual delinquency of a minor. Naillon was arrested March 28.

Deputy James English began investigating the case on Feb. 29 after the 14-year-old victim's mother reported that she discovered suspicious content on her daughter's cell phone, which indicated alleged sexual activity between Naillon and the girl. Detective Kacey Ward gathered evidence from the victim who confirmed there was unlawful sexual activity. Deputy English interviewed Naillon, who admitted that he had sexual contact with the girl.

Naillon was arrested and lodged in the Umatilla County Jail. The case will be forwarded to the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office.

Third inmate in six weeks dies at TRCI

A 44-year-old inmate of Two Rivers Correctional Institution died unexpectedly Monday,

the Oregon Department of Corrections has announced.

Inmate Shawn McMillian, 44, was transported to a local hospital for medical care at 2:30 p.m. on April 3. He was pronounced dead on Monday, April 4, at 10:12 a.m.

McMillian entered DOC custody Aug. 25, 2015, on five counts of child sex abuse in the first degree out of Lane County. His earliest release date was 2020. Next of kin have been notified. No other details are available at this time.

McMillian is the third TRCI inmate to die within the past six weeks.

On March 20, inmate Ronald Marcus, 60, was found unresponsive in his cell. On Feb. 27, Joel Abbot, also 60, was found unresponsive in his cell and flown to a Portland hospital where he died.

Marcus was incarcerated out of Multnomah County on one count of first-degree manslaughter.

Abbot was serving a life sentence for first-degree murder.

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