



Cans and bottles sit ready to be sorted at Hermiston's BottleDrop center.

FILE PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

List of recyclables expands

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Oregonians now have more incentive to recycle their old Gatorade bottles and Red Bull cans.

Oregon's can and bottle deposit law has expanded in 2018 from soda, beer and water to include a long list of other beverages whose containers can now be redeemed for a 10 cent deposit.

"Generally, if you can pour it and drink it, it's covered," a notice on the Oregon Liquor Control Commission's website says.

There are still exceptions for wine, distilled spirits, infant formula, milk and meal-replacement beverages. But an updated list of containers now includes sealed containers between 4

ounces and 1.5 liters for coffee, tea, juice, energy drinks, sports drinks, protein shakes, kombucha and several other beverages.

The Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative, which runs the BottleDrop center in Hermiston and works with beverage distributors throughout the state to coordinate recycling of more than 1.2 billion containers per year, wrote in a news release that it had invested more than \$3 million in new machinery, including \$2 million in BottleDrop centers and \$1.1 million in new sorting machines at grocery stores to prepare for the change. It also added 16 new employees, several new trucks and trailers and expanded capacity at a plastic recycling facility in St.

Helens.

"The expansion of the bottle bill that starts on Jan. 1 is an important step toward bringing the success of the bottle bill in line with the kinds of products that are out there today, keeping more litter out of Oregon's beautiful natural areas, and making sure that those containers are getting recycled," wrote Jules Bailey, chief stewardship officer of the OBRC.

Many recyclers have stopped accepting plastic containers due to new restrictions from China that have stopped overseas exports of mixed plastics. But according to the OBRC news release, 100 percent of the plastic collected by the cooperative at grocery stores and BottleDrop centers is processed in Oregon.

That means plastic containers such as juice bottles that have been headed to landfills in recent weeks can go back to being recycled.

"The inclusion of new beverage products in the bottle bill is a testament to the enduring success of Oregon's bottle deposit system," John Anderson, president of the OBRC, said in a statement. "We've worked hard to prepare so that Oregonians will experience a smooth, hassle-free transition."

According to the OLCC website, in 2016 a total of 64 percent of beverage containers eligible for a deposit refund were returned for a refund in 2016.

A full list of included and excluded beverage containers can be found online at www.oregon.gov/OLCC/



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

This Hermiston toddler, shown wearing a helmet to protect an opening in his skull, is back home after being accidentally shot by a sibling on Nov. 10. The family agreed to the photograph on the condition that his name not be attached.

Toddler who was shot is home from hospital

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

A Hermiston toddler shot in the head on Nov. 10 is home with his family and walking around.

Based on interviews and forensic evidence, Hermiston Police Department believe the boy, 2, was accidentally shot in the head by his seven-year-old sibling with a Beretta handgun that their mother kept in a vehicle. No criminal charges have been filed in connection with the case.

The family is not being identified in order to protect the identities of the two minors involved. But the boys' mother said the toddler has been home from Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland for two weeks and is walking around and interacting normally with family.

He has another surgery scheduled and has to wear a helmet for the time being to cover the opening in his skull. His mother said she has noticed his reflexes have seemed "a little slow" and doctors have said it is too soon to tell what lingering effects he may have

in the future, but they told her the area of the brain that was injured is "pretty forgiving" at such a young age. The family considers his recovery a miracle.

On the day of the incident, the boy's mother was having trouble starting her car and was outside the vehicle trying to figure out what was wrong when the seven-year-old got out to join her.

In a moment she said she will always regret, she told him to get in the car and stay there. Sometime after, she heard a bang and her son's shouts of "Mommy, mommy, the baby is bleeding!"

Seeing her son covered in blood and rushing him to the hospital was terrifying, she said. She hopes other parents learn from the horrifying experience her family went through and never leave a loaded gun where young children can access it, like the unlocked case she used.

"Don't leave things like that in the reach of your children," she said. "I'm thankful my son made it, but if it had been off by just a little bit he wouldn't be here."

EOTEC tasks VenuWorks for longterm planning

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

VenuWorks took over management of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center Tuesday, but as the transition happens there are still unresolved questions about the project's relationship with its anchor tenants.

During a meeting Friday, EOTEC board members disagreed on policy decisions regarding the Umatilla County Fair, including who would own improvements made to EOTEC property on behalf of the fair and what responsibility EOTEC had to provide office space for fair staff.

Nate Rivera, who has been acting as interim manager of EOTEC, said fair staff had been told they needed to vacate one of the two offices they have been using in order to make room for VenuWorks. The company plans to have three staff on-site — an administrative assistant at the front desk, a general manager in Rivera's former office and an operations manager in a second office. The fair employee who had been occupying that office was asked to move into the building's ticket booth, also located in the administrative area of the event center.

Board chair Byron Smith said the longterm lease signed by the Umatilla County Fair only specified that EOTEC would provide two office spaces, but not where those spaces would be. But board member Dan Dorran said the fair board's understanding of the

lease had been that the two offices that were used by the fair this year were being reserved for their exclusive use in the future, too.

"We're losing office space that was dedicated to us," he said.

"This can be worked out, but I don't want us to forget the two main reasons for this facility were for the fair and the rodeo."

Larry Givens,
board member

Rivera said asking the fair staff to move into the ticket booth wasn't a slight on the fair, but merely an acknowledgment that everyone using EOTEC didn't have all of the resources and space they need and compromise had to be made. While he and Smith emphasized the need for EOTEC to operate successfully year-round and not just during fair week, board member Larry Givens said the "real purpose" of the project was to provide a new home for the fair and the Farm City Pro-Rodeo.

"This can be worked out, but I don't want us to forget the two main reasons for this facility were for the fair

and the rodeo," he said. "I don't want to shortchange them because a lot of donations were made with the fair and rodeo in mind."

At the behest of the fair board, John Eckhardt of Knerr Construction presented an option to turn the small first aid station inside the event center into another office by moving its doorway from the lobby to the office area. He said a remodel would likely cost about \$15,000. During the fair, first aid could then be moved to the building near the barns used by law enforcement. Rivera said security personnel for events at EOTEC use the first aid station as their base, so they would also have to be moved somewhere else.

Givens said the ideal solution would be to have a separate building for the fair, similar to the mercantile building the Farm-City Pro Rodeo built on their own dime next to the rodeo arena. Then the fair staff could have office space year-round, especially during the weeks surrounding the fair when they ramp up to eight staff. They could also have storage and a conference room they could use without being charged.

Eckhardt roughly estimated such a building would cost about \$700,000.

Rivera said the EOTEC board hired VenuWorks to provide professional expertise in running the venue, including creation of a business plan and longterm strategic plan. It made sense, he said, to let them come in, get to know the project and its

tenants, and make recommendations before the board made decisions about things like remodeling. In the end, the board agreed to hold off on making the fair vacate an office and revisit the issue during their January meeting after VenuWorks came on board.

They also held off on making a decision on who would own and/or control improvements made to EOTEC on behalf of the fair or other organizations. The livestock auction committee got permission Friday to install a system of panels around the animal-weighting stations to increase "safety and animal-control," and last week the fair received permission to install some roofing structures over storage containers on the property.

"People who have donated things are asking are they ours? Are they the fair's? Are they EOTEC's?" Givens said.

The board's next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 26, although Smith said there may be a special joint meeting with the Umatilla County commission and Hermiston city council on Jan. 22. Rivera also requested that board members attend the city's Jan. 10 planning commission meeting. EOTEC obtained a variance from the planning commission for parking during the fair and rodeo, but conditions set for that variance were not met, and Rivera said the planning commission has requested testimony as to why they were not met.

Gunshot victim discharged from hospital

BOARDMAN — A man found with a gunshot wound last week in Morrow County has been released from the hospital.

Kyle Ulrich, 47, was discharged from Good Shepherd Medical Center on Thursday. Oregon State Police responded to Love's Travel Stop near exit 159 on Interstate 84 on the morning of Dec. 21 after a caller reported that Ulrich,

with a gunshot wound, had flagged them down.

Ulrich told police that he had been kidnapped in another part of the state and held captive in an unknown location for several days before being taken to Morrow County and shot. According to OSP, detectives are still investigating the case and trying to substantiate those claims.

HERMISTON'S STAND UP COMEDY EVENT COMING SOON!
Melonville Comedy Festival
Saturday, January 27
Hermiston community Center

The 25th edition of the Melonville Comedy Festival will feature three headline stand up comedians. These comics are in demand corporate show entertainers.

CORY MICHAELIS

A comic who appears in clubs in Las Vegas, Seattle, New York and Los Angeles. Cory has been on the stage of several Comedy Festivals



KERMET APIO

A Hawaiian native, Kermit has been working in standup comedy since 1990. His credits include Las Vegas, Seattle and Aspen Comedy Festivals and everyday life. Gabriel is based in Olympia.

DEREK RICHARDS

Derek is a comic who has worked USO Tours, the Bob and Tom Show and you can hear him on Sirius/XM Satellite Radio.



Tickets \$35 per person
Doors open at 7pm, Show starts at 8:00
Tickets available at Hermiston Chamber of Commerce at the Cornerstone Plaza
Reserve Tickets at: 541-561-7488



NO REFUNDS • 21 & OVER

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Stop by and see what's new!

Collage Flowers
541-567-4305 • Hwy 395, Hermiston
www.thecottageonline.com
Mon-Sat 8am-8pm • Sun 12pm-5pm

Winter Sale!
10% off any shade!

Need to Protect Your Patio? We can help!

Patio Covers
Pergolas • Sunrooms
Retractable Awnings
Screen Rooms
Sun/Solar Shades & More!

Backyard By Design, LLC
541-720-0772
FREE estimates!
www.mybackyardbydesign.com

FOUR SEASONS BUILDING PRODUCTS | SUN CONTROL | Sunesta | BUILD THE BEEF FOUR SEASONS SUNROOMS