

Echo Corn Maze open for business

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Fall has officially arrived in Echo with the opening of the Echo Corn Maze & Pumpkin Patch.

Forty-five minutes into Saturday's opening day no one had shown up yet, but organizers weren't that worried.

"The first day's always quieter," Gina Tyhuis said. "It's Saturday and people like to sleep in."

She was working with Val Anctil and Jeff Lorton to arrange hay bales and corn stalks into a photo backdrop for visiting groups as they waited for the first visitors to arrive.

The Tyhuis family started the corn maze three years ago, with the help of some friends. The maze at 100 N. Dupont St., across from Echo Ridge Cellars, takes about an hour to get through. The site also features a zipline, pumpkins



Gina Tyhuis, left, Jeff Lorton and Sierra Hermesen create a photo backdrop at the Echo Corn Maze & Pumpkin Patch on opening day.

STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

for sale, fire pits for groups to rent, a hay bale maze for young children and a

haunted scare path on select evenings.

Melissa Lambert and

her husband were putting together the hay bale maze Saturday morning, sur-

rounded by pumpkins and sunflowers.

"I planted 3,500 pumpkins in my back yard by seed," Lambert said. "We hand-planted every single pumpkin."

She said she had also gone over every part of the maze with caution tape, looking for any dangerous spots.

Lambert said she became friends with Tyhuis while babysitting her kids and began helping out with the maze that way. One of her favorite things about living in Echo is how community-oriented and family friendly it is, she said. The corn maze is a good example of those qualities.

"We got a few sponsors this year," she said. "Every year is getting bigger and bigger. It's exciting."

Tyhuis said the hay bales were donated by Jeff Spike, and the maze itself was designed and cut by Barton Laser Leveling.

"We definitely wouldn't have a corn maze without Barton," she said.

Admission is \$10 for a day pass or \$12 for the haunted path. Regular hours for the corn maze are Tuesday through Thursday 2-6 p.m., Friday 2-10 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. The haunted path, known as the Field of Screams, is open Oct. 13, 20, 27 and 31 from 7-9 p.m. The normal corn maze isn't haunted.

"We don't scare the whole thing," Tyhuis said. "A lot of people don't like to go if they don't like to get scared, so this way they have a choice."

She said it's mostly local FFA students who do the scaring, but she has gotten out there herself on occasion and it was fun.

For more information about special events, group rentals, field trips and rules visit echocornmaze.com or find them on Facebook.

EOTEC hosts 'Walktober,' equestrian opportunities

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Fair season is over, but the public is still encouraged to visit the grounds of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The center is hosting a "Walktober" by encouraging people to come and walk the paths around the property every Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Those who stop by the office on their way in can enter their name into a drawing for prizes that will happen at the end of each week.

Three loops around the flat, paved trails at EOTEC equal a mile.

EOTEC general manager Al Davis said the event is

scheduled for October, but could run longer depending on conditions.

"We'll keep going as long as the weather holds out," he said.

Davis is also opening the rodeo arena at EOTEC to public horseback riding from 3 p.m. until dark every Wednesday in October.

"Bring your colts, Western pleasure, seasoned barrel horses or ponies," the flier for the event advertises, and enjoy "the 2017 best footing in the PRCA." The charge is \$10 per horse or \$20 per trailer.

Davis said he is always looking for new ways to get people out to EOTEC to see what the center has to offer.

"I'm just trying to get

the facility used," he said. "The more people come up here, the more ideas people will have on how to use the facility."

EOTEC's indoor facilities continue to be booked for private and public events, including Junk Barn Girls, which runs Friday from 4-7 p.m. (tickets available for \$20 at junkbarn-girls.com) and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (tickets available for \$5). The show will include multiple vendors of antiques, vintage finds, jewelry and home goods. The Friday event includes live music and food.

For more information about EOTEC, located at 1705 E. Airport Road, call 541-289-9800.

State cuts courts' customer service hours on Fridays

The state courts in Umatilla and Morrow counties are cutting back customer service hours on Fridays starting Oct. 5.

Roy Blaine, the trial court administrator for the circuit courts in the two counties, said public counters and phone service will close at 3 p.m. rather than 4:30 p.m. on Fridays at the Umatilla County Circuit Court offices in the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton, the Stafford Hansell Government Center, Hermiston, and Morrow County Circuit Court, Heppner.

"This is due to short staffing and bud-

get limitations at all three of our locations," Blaine stated in an email.

Courtrooms at each location will remain open during all business hours and drop boxes are available at each location weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Blaine stated a filing or payment in a drop box before the buildings close will be counted as received that day.

For more information about court business hours and for emergency closure information, particularly during winter, visit www.courts.oregon.gov/courts/umatilla/Pages/default.aspx.

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RSVP 541.667.3509
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