

THE ECHO

Created by incarcerated people

NEWS
FROM
THE
INSIDE

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EASTERN OREGON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

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PonyXpress Shares Music and Writing

Written by Kurtis Thompson
with contributions from Jamil Chavis and Brian Daniel Bement



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

PonyXpress participant Jacob Harper, left, plays bass to accompany Danny Wilson during a concert on Oct. 6, 2025. Wilson, along with Tracy Schlapp, leads writing workshops in Oregon prisons and occasionally Wilson performs music.

About 30 people sat in a basketball gym on the evening of Oct. 6., waiting for a two-man band to begin playing. Bass player Jacob Harper studied sheet music while Danny Wilson tuned his guitar. “This is very unprofessional of me not to tune ahead of time – I’m sorry,” Wilson joked.

Many in the audience chuckled

while others chattered quietly. Some seemed not to notice at all, silently reading over their own creative pieces prepared for the night. A few moments later, Wilson strummed an intro to Folsom Prison Blues by Johnny Cash. Hearing the song inside the prison walls of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution – where trains with boxcars lumber past every day – gives the notes

See MUSIC AND PROSE page 4

PRICES STUN RESIDENTS

Coffee Consumers React to Price Increases

Written by Phillip Luna
with contributions from Logan Gimbel and Brian Daniel Bement

Some of Oregon’s incarcerated residents were stunned the week of Oct. 20 when commissary prices increased significantly.

The most notable price increase was Folgers ground coffee, which went from \$9.81 to \$14.09, up by 43%, and Folgers instant coffee which went from \$13.23 to \$17.04, a 29% increase.

Jeff Marks, the commissary supervisor for products shipped to EOCI and Two Rivers Correctional Institution, said that vendor prices have been increasing in the past six months.

Marks said commissary has been absorbing some of the price increases. He expects prices to continue going up.

“Vendors are letting us know we have increases coming in the next few months,” Marks said in an email to The Echo in September.

“The price of Folgers is crazy,” said Charles Edmonds, an E2 resident. “I hope the other coffee doesn’t go up.”

All coffee prices have increased in

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The Echo - Mission Statement

To serve the incarcerated community by providing monthly news and other important information, while highlighting the human experience in the carceral setting.

Direct questions and comments to EOCI Institution Work Programs (IWP). All views and opinions expressed are those of the contributing writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Corrections.

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IN THE NEWS

MEDICAID EXPANSION PROGRAM CUT

Shifting Federal Policies Ends Reentry Benefits Program Before it Begins

Written by Phillip Luna

A new **Medicaid initiative** that would assist adults in custody as they release from prison was nixed after more than two years of planning.

Oregon Health Authority will no longer implement the \$64 million expansion program, which would have helped people exiting prison gain access to prescription drugs, such as diabetes and asthma medications, mental health and addiction treatment, and doctor's visits in the first few weeks of their release.

Federal laws prevent incarcerated people from enrolling in Oregon Health Plan and health care is provided at the facility where they are incarcerated. But people transitioning back into the community are often uninsured and experience disruptions in care.

Formerly incarcerated people have to enroll in OHP after release and benefits can take up to 30 days to start.

The initiative, called the reentry benefits program, would have provided targeted healthcare through Medicaid for qualifying individuals to bridge the gap during reentry.

The program was on track to start in late 2026. Gov. Tina Kotek's two-year budget proposal, released in December, set aside state funds for the program.

However, the program was delayed in the summer as Oregon health officials expected the Republican-led tax cuts, commonly referred to as the "Big Beautiful Bill," to shrink federal Medicaid funding.

By October the reentry benefits program was cut.

Advocates for the program believe it would have played a crucial role in

addressing opioid overdoses. A 2023 study by the Oregon Health and Science University, Oregon State University and the Department of Corrections found that people exiting prison are 10 times more likely than the general public to experience an opioid overdose in the first two weeks after release. The increase is due to lack of access to healthcare, the study said.

"Almost every single person in Oregon's prison system is going to get out at some point," said Aliza Kaplan, a Lewis and Clark Law School professor who specializes in prison law. "If they don't have the services they need ... they're not going to be successful."

According to the Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment, "Two-thirds [of incarcerated people] had a documented substance use disorder treatment need and 20 % demonstrated mental health treatment need."

In 2024, the Oregon Department of Corrections contracted Chicago-based prison health care consulting firm Falcon Correctional and Community Services Inc. to review the prison's health care system. In June, Falcon's 190-page report was finalized.

In total, Falcon provided 67 findings and key recommendations, one of which was to prioritize Medicaid as a reentry service.

"Enrollment in Medicaid should be prioritized prior to release," the report said, "AICs reentering the community should have full access to eligible benefits immediately upon release."

The report also said, "Any steps that can be taken to enhance benefit eligibility upon release and address gaps in care for individuals reentering the community should be maximized."

| ECHO

PHONE STATIONS ADDED TO REC YARDS

Federal Communications Commission Increased Rate Caps on Phone Calls

Written by Phillip Luna



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

On Oct. 27, 2025, Michael Ledbetter, left, and Andrew Slover set concrete for 10 new phone stations on the east yard. The stations were meant to accommodate an uptick in phone calls when rates dropped, but the FCC recently increased the rate cap on prison phone calls.

The Federal Communications Commission increased the maximum rates that prison telecom providers can charge incarcerated people in October.

The FCC had previously set a \$0.06 rate cap on prison phone calls in July 2024. After pressure from jails and telecom companies, the commission increased the rate caps to \$0.11 per minute, an 83% increase.

Adding Phones, Prices May Not Drop

In February, The Echo reported on the FCC issuing rate caps on prison phone companies. Phone calls with the Oregon Department of Corrections cost \$0.09 per minute, but the ruling would have dropped the rate cap from \$0.14 to \$0.06 per minute. Oregon's incarcerated population would experience a 33% decrease in the cost of calls.

According to ODOC, however, the new rates would not be implemented until 2026.

"The current contract for the tablets and phones is up for re-negotiations this year," said Stephen Cook, ODOC project manager.

Cook said a new telecom contract must be implemented by January 2026.

In preparation for the price drop, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution added phone stations to housing units and planned to install 10 more phones on each recreation yard.

Then Assistant Superintendent Ryan LeGore told The Echo, "It's reasonable to expect that a decrease in prices could lead to an increase in phone usage. The addition of these new phones will put us that much ahead."

Over the summer, several housing units added phone stations, increasing from four to six stations, or on some units eight stations. Each housing unit has between 80 and 115 residents.

On Oct. 20, construction began to add 10 phone stations to the east and west recreation yards, for a total of 20 per location.

But the phone stations might not be used as much as expected, as prison residents may not see the decrease they hoped for.

Less than 10 days after construction started, the FCC voted to increase the maximum allowable cost of phone calls to \$0.11, which is \$0.02 over the current cost in Oregon.

What to Expect

According to Prison Policy Initiative, phone companies and sheriffs challenged the 2024 ruling on the grounds that it would be unprofitable for phone companies to operate in very small jails, or to offer call monitoring.

The FCC adjusted the rate caps and incorporated a safety and security cost meant to pay for call monitoring. They also added a \$0.02 "facility fee." The facility fee allows prison operators to receive \$0.02 per minute for phone calls.

Additionally, the FCC added a 6.7% inflation factor which could increase the cost of calls above the maximum.

It is not a foregone conclusion that the cost of phone calls will increase in 2026, but it is unlikely the cost will decrease without the FCC's directive.

| ECHO

AROUND EOCI

MUSIC AND PROSE continued from page 1

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Tracy Schlapp, from PonyXpress, prepares her program participants for the Oct. 6, 2025 concert and reading. Schlapp and Danny Wilson lead PonyXpress, visiting prisons across Oregon and holding monthly writing workshops.

a carceral air; bound in concrete and hard – like prison-steel bars.

Harper, a facility resident, had never played with Wilson before, but he seemed to keep up just fine. Some in the crowd bobbed their heads or tapped their feet in time with the beat. Despite their difference in appearance, Wilson's black jeans and plaid shirt to Harper's prison blues, their notes mixed well.

Every few songs, the musicians would take a break while members of the audience read creative writing.

It was a small production – just a gathering of people who like to share their works at PonyXpress events.

PonyXpress is a creative writing group started by Tracy Schlapp and Wilson in 2023 at EOCI. Schlapp said they meet about once per month, sometimes more.

Youth Outreach

Schlapp and Wilson started an outreach for at-risk youth – kids who have had or are likely to have contact with law enforcement. They call the project “Letter to Your Younger Self,” where PonyXpress writers pen letters to their past. Those words of encouragement and advice will be shared with youth at detention centers and high schools.

“Maybe one kid will hear something tender about love and compassion and

it will feed them,” Schlapp said. “We can’t solve intergenerational incarceration with our letters, but maybe there’s one kid we can reach where your vulnerability, your tenderness, means something to them.”

Resident Ian Lohrman read his letter over the microphone. He focused on three words.

“Words themselves have the power to transform us,” he said. “But only when we embody them by becoming the truth that they represent. The three words that taught me this wisdom are actually very ordinary – love, gratitude and compassion.”

Schlapp said the letters take another

angle on the “scared straight” method. Instead of using fear of incarceration, PonyXpress hopes to use positive admonitions to reach kids.

“Danny and I are just the conduits to bring these things out in the open,” Schlapp said.

Resident Wallace Moreland, voice firm with hardly a pause, read his letter like a brother trying to keep a sibling out of trouble.

“Stay away from people who use drugs, even weed. It’s not harmless. Don’t even start it. It will change your life, thought process and your drive,” he read. “Once you start realizing and delve into that world, you will lose who you thought were friends behind women, drugs and money ... Hopefully you’ll get this letter before it’s too late.”

Family Bonds

Wilson said PonyXpress is working on another outreach about parenting and family bonds. This was inspired by a song written by resident Luis Rodriguez. Near the end of the event, Rodriguez performed his song while playing the electric piano.

He sang:

We’re miles apart / No one can turn the hands of time / No one can wipe away your tears when that first boy breaks your heart / But I promise I’ll make a visit, every birthday and every Christmas / I’ll always listen

Rodriguez had his kids in mind when writing the song, along with his feelings of inadequacy as a parent in prison. But also in the song are lyrics inspired by his children’s love.

The song gave Wilson and Schlapp the idea to get recordings of various people completing two statements: “I feel far from my family when,” and “I

(continued on next page...)



Top: EOCI resident Jacob Harper, left, and Danny Wilson play music at the Oct. 6, 2025 PonyXpress event.

Center: Tracy Schlapp talks to four PonyXpress writers and prepares for the event.

Bottom: One of the writing workshop’s newest participants, Ian Lohrman, reads at the rostrum.

Photos by Phillip Luna/The Echo



AROUND EOCI

(... continued from previous page)

feel close to my family when.” Once gathered, they plan on using the song and question responses in a recording to raise awareness of the challenges facing incarcerated people and families.

Good Timing

Brent Bissett, previous resident of G3 housing unit, said he normally attends the PonyXpress meetings, but considered skipping this one.

“I almost didn’t come down here,” he said. “I’m just really stressed out about my court stuff coming up – it could literally be any day.”

Bissett is returning to county jail because his direct appeal was accepted.

“I’m glad I came down,” he said. “It’s pretty cool I get to take what everybody has learned with me back to the streets.”

Bissett was transferred less than a week later.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Luis Rodriguez performs a song for the PonyXpress participants and staff during the Oct. 6, 2025 event. Rodriguez is a regular participant in PonyXpress Writing Workshops.

“It’s worth your time to hear what other people have done with their time to be productive and what they’ve learned,” Bissett said before he left.

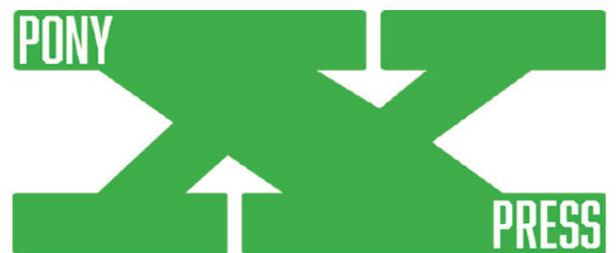
To attend PonyXpress events, residents can contact Leslie Halbert, ESS1 for the superintendent’s office. Workshops are held monthly in the IWP building. | **ECHO**

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UPGRADE TO PAID FUNDS THE PROGRAM

FOOD INSECURITIES GROW AS GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN CONTINUES

SNAP Benefits Half Funded for November, Contingency Funds Depleted

Written by Kurtis Thompson

Formerly incarcerated people are twice as likely to experience food insecurity, according to a 2019 study.

The risk of food insecurity is higher now that food stamp payments are interrupted due to the government shutdown. However, two federal judges ordered the Trump administration to continue funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The administration said they would pay half.

According to a news report from CNBC's website, \$4.65 billion will be taken from a contingency fund to pay 50% of SNAP benefits.

For some people, particularly single-households without dependents, 100% of food stamp benefits are just enough to feed one person for a month. While there are food banks, charities and other non-profits available, their re-

sources are already stretched in areas where now-unpaid federal workers are also in need.

But many food banks say they will not be able to fill the gap.

"For every one meal that the charitable food system can provide, SNAP has been providing nine," Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America, told CNN.

The order to pay was a celebrated victory for the approximately 42 million SNAP-dependent U.S. citizens. However, there may still be delays in distribution.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture warned that people could be waiting weeks or longer to receive food stamps. USDA official Patrick Penn said part of the reason is some states use decades-old systems to process SNAP payments.

For the contingency funds to be used,

partial payments must be calculated for all 42 million people on food stamps.

In a report by CNN, previous disaster response worker Nina Savransky said she was shocked by the food insecurities happening in the United States.

"I used to work in the disaster response bureau, and this is the disaster response now," she said to CNN. "It's shocking to see this happen in the United States. This was support that we gave out to other countries that were unstable, and to feel that instability internally is ... surprising."

As the government shutdown drags on, politicians continue to argue over spending. Until a resolution is reached, no new SNAP benefits will be issued from standard federal funding.

Penn added that the partial payments – while needed – will deplete the SNAP contingency funds completely.

| ECHO

AROUND EOCI

PRICES STUN RESIDENTS continued from page 1

the last year, usually by dimes and quarters. However, Folgers brand coffee is the only one to increase by dollars overnight.

While a few dollars may not seem like much, for an adult in custody it's a significant expenditure.

The average AIC earns \$50-\$60 per month for their prison work assignment. For many, a \$4 increase on a 9.6 oz container of coffee, if purchased every two weeks, represents more than 10% of their monthly income.

William Barnes, an E3 resident, expressed frustration over coffee prices. He believes the pricing is predatory, but ultimately outside of his control.

"This is the price you have got to pay if you want good coffee," he said.

Swelling prices are not isolated to the correctional setting, however. Coffee drinkers across the United States have experienced rising prices at their local coffee shops and grocery stores.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, coffee prices surged 14.5% in July year over year – and tariff-sensitive items like coffee beans are at a high risk for inflation.

In July, President Trump announced plans to levy a 50% tariff on all goods from Brazil — the world's largest coffee producer. Most coffee shops in the U.S. source internationally.

Tariffs have added strain to an already inflated coffee market, and coffee drinkers are left footing the bill as businesses pass on the increase to consumers.

But not all coffee shops and brands have experienced price jump yet.

Prison Brews, EOCI's in-house coffee shop that primarily serves prison employees, has yet to experience the effects of rising prices.

"We haven't had any increases from our vendor yet," said Liza Emory, food service manager for EOCI.

"We are going to see how this plays out," she said. **| ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Event Receives Mixed Reviews

Written by Chris Ainsworth



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Kase Krumwiede spends time before the Sept. 29, 2025 event drawing a memorial for a friend he recently lost. Participants are given chalk to memorialize their loved ones.

On Sept. 29, about 130 adults in custody at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution participated in an event to raise awareness for suicide prevention. In the Out of the Darkness walk, residents participated by writing names or groups on bibs they wore while walking the track.

The walk allows incarcerated people an opportunity to acknowledge those lost to suicide and those who struggle with thoughts of self-harm.

Depression, along with other mental illnesses, is fairly common in prison. At EOCI up to 70% of people access mental health services.

Last year's event had volunteers from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and EOCI staff gave speeches before the awareness walk started. This year, however, volunteers were not in attendance, leaving some

AICs feeling the walk was incomplete.

Counselor Joe Byrnes organized the 2025 walk. He said the lack of volunteers was due to other suicide prevention events happening outside EOCI.

Facility resident and participant Luis Del Rio said he missed the volunteers and hoped for improvements next year. He was walking with "Uncle Chuck" written on his bib.

"I would love for this thing to be something where people can give testimonies or perform songs," Del Rio said. "Just make it an actual event that brings people in."

Resident James Paulk said he wished more than three staff attended the event.

"It didn't look like an event. It was a bit emotional for me that such a sensitive subject was not taken more seriously," Paulk said. "I would love to have

“It is a strong reminder that people have pain. I hope that me bringing awareness can open people’s eyes.”

- Kase Krumwiede

seen volunteers and speakers – people that suicide has impacted.”

The U.S. Department of Justice released findings in 2021 that showed the U.S. prison system had the highest number of suicides by country over a 20-year period. American prisons had almost five times more suicides, with 10,453, than the second highest country, Russia, who had 2,408.

A national survey of drug use and health in 2023 reported an estimated 12.8 million adults over the age of 18 had thoughts of suicide. Additionally, 1.5 million attempted suicide and almost 50,000 Americans ended their lives – suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States.

“We are hoping to have folks from the AFSP here next year as well as open up the microphone for AIC testimonials,” said Byrnes. “We are always

looking for new ideas to incorporate into our events, so please share them.”

Similar to last year, staff partnered with GOGI to sponsor the walk. The volunteers handed out sidewalk chalk. Participants were able to write names or create art dedicated to those they wanted to memorialize.

“It is a strong reminder that people have pain. I hope that me bringing awareness can open people’s eyes,” said Kase Krumwiede who walked for his lost friend, Kyle Robinson. “I miss him. It’s sad because now his kids are struggling because they lost their father. I just miss him. It’s hard to talk about.”

Krumwiede spent the first 20 minutes of the event with chalk in hand, drawing the names of loved ones who have since passed. | **ECHO**



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

A GOGI worker hands out markers and bibs while Larry Williams writes who he is walking for on a bib. Williams dedicated the Sept. 29, 2025 Out of The Darkness walk to himself and his mother.

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AWARD WINNER

OREGON CORRECTIONS ENTERPRISE WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Written by Phillip Luna

The National Correctional Industries Association recently selected Oregon Corrections Enterprises as the recipient of the 2026 Performance Excellence Award. The national award acknowledges outstanding achievements in reentry-focused practices and setting the standard of excellence.

“[It] is a significant honor,” said Jennifer Starbuck, OCE Communications and Contract Manager. “It recognizes a correctional industry program that has made measurable progress in advancing reentry-focused best practices over the past three years.”

By contracting with the Oregon Department of Corrections, OCE offers incarcerated people employment in the OCE-operated garment factory, print shop and call center, to name a few. The incarcerated workers develop job skills while earning a wage.

In the past three years, OCE has expanded its certification programs and launched a reen-

try program that has resulted in 58 pre-release job offers. OCE’s reentry program helps their incarcerated workers receive job offers before they exit prison.

“This award is not given lightly,” she said. “It reflects a program’s commitment to innovation, measurable impact and meaningful partnerships that support rehabilitation and reduce recidivism.”

Starbuck said to be eligible a program must demonstrate excellence in at least two of 10 core areas, which include things such as strategic planning, financial sustainability, certified training programs, and employment readiness.

This is OCE’s second Performance Excellence Award – their last award was in 2018.

“It’s a testament to the hard work of both staff and adults in custody, and to the strength of collaboration with community and industry partners,” Starbuck said. | **ECHO**

Job Highlight — Warehouse

Written by Logan Gimbel

Roger Williams is a garment factory warehouse worker. He is one of two people who process and ship around 200 to 300 Prison Blues pants to stores across the nation.

His main responsibility is to collect and prepare the pants for shipment. Williams checks for and removes production stickers and ensures measurements of the pants match the orders. He is also responsible for receiving material orders for the garment factory.

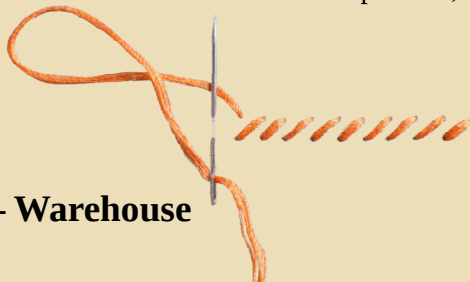
Williams was required to complete a 12-month T-shirt program prior to working in the garment factory’s warehouse. He received a sewing certificate after passing each monthly exam. Once he moved to the warehouse section, Williams was required to pass a safety exam to become forklift certified.

Williams said participating in programming increases hiring chances in the garment factory because OCE likes to see people better themselves. They

also want workers to have good communication skills, patience and empathy, he said.

While working in the garment factory, Williams said workers can make around \$250 to \$300 a month. A portion of the money, called a team goal award, goes into a worker’s protected funds account.

“It makes me feel like I’m almost on the streets doing real work,” said Williams. | **ECHO**





Donny Pitchforth working in the OCE Garment Factory on Oct. 27, 2025.

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Job Highlight — Quality Assurance

Written by Chris Ainsworth

The OCE garment factory has three inspectors who act as the business' last line of defense. They ensure product quality before items are shipped.

The primary job skill is attention to detail. Sewers check their own work, but sometimes mistakes are missed. Products undergo a final inspection as they are completed. Inspectors make sure nothing is shipped that would negatively impact the Prison Blues name.

"You have to stay alert and present so you don't miss anything," the newest inspector, Donny Pitchforth, said. "I like making sure we provide a quality product."

After completing the T-shirt certification program, he worked in other departments before the inspection line. Pitchforth said he struggled with sewing, but his honesty encouraged staff to find a position matching his skills.

"When you have been down as long as I have, you have to find purpose in life," said Pitchforth, who started his incarceration in 1995. "Being around like-minded people at work helps my days go by and gives me purpose."

OCE works to provide incarcerated individuals with employment skills they can use following release or throughout their incarceration. | **ECHO**

(continued on next page...)

AWARD WINNER

Job Highlight — Embroidery Graphic Designer

Written by Kurtis Thompson

Jesus Dominguez is an embroidery graphic designer for OCE's garment factory. He takes images created by digitizers and creates production instructions for automated embroidery machines. Then, Dominguez loads the instructions and material for embroidery to the machines and creates custom products for customers.

OCE makes custom shirts, hats, bags and other products.

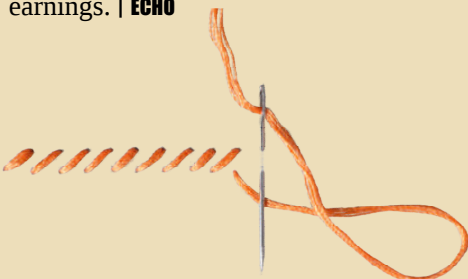
"My family on the streets can pick up something I helped make and actually see my work," he said. "It's a good feeling knowing they're out there saying, 'My son made this.'"

When he first started the job, Dominguez was overwhelmed with the training, he said. He had to quickly learn the complexities of sewing, along with digital and physical aspects of embroidery machines. But once he understood the job, he enjoyed it.

He starts work at about 7 a.m. and ends at 2:35 p.m. Dominguez checks orders and works with image files to perfect the automated sewing process.

"When I'm setting up the images, I'm trying to create the cleanest production," he said. "There's more than one way to do the same thing, and you want the most crisp."

Dominguez said he was making \$60 a month when he started, but he can promote to over \$90 just in base pay. A garment factory worker's base pay is then matched by OCE, doubling their earnings. | **ECHO**



Job Highlight — Digitizer

Written by Brian Daniel Bement

OCE's garment factory provides custom-embroidered products for customers in and outside the prison setting. To accomplish this, workers called digitizers use computer software to create usable images for embroidery machines. Sometimes, though, customers only have concepts of what they want, and it is the digitizer's job to make those ideas a reality.

Richard Hibbert is an OCE worker, promoted to digitizer in October.

"I get to create things using my talent and get paid well," said Hibbert. "I didn't think I would find a job doing this type of work in the prison."

Hibbert has a bachelor's in graphic design. He started in the garment fac-

tory over three years ago in the embroiderer training program. Hibbert creates logos while referencing customer-supplied images.

Since all communication with customers is done through OCE supervisors, asking clarifying questions is time consuming. Hibbert creates proofs along with quotes and sends them to customers for their review.

Once the logos are approved, he sends the images to embroiderers who set up the digitizer's work in the automated machines for production.

Hibbert said he plans on spending every moment left of his eight-year prison sentence doing what he loves to do – creating art. | **ECHO**



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Left: Sewing machines stand ready in the OCE Garment Factory at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution on Oct. 27, 2025.

Above: Danny Huerta, a mechanic with OCE, works on a sewing machine on Oct. 27, 2025. Huerta hopes to teach sewing operators to work with on their machines when needed.

Job Highlight — Mechanic

Written by Jamil Chavis

Seated with a screwdriver in hand and tool bag to the left, Danny Huerta repaired a malfunctioning sewing machine.

Huerta is a mechanic and electrician for OCE, helping sewing operators and other workers by maintaining their equipment to produce the Prison Blues jeans, OCE's clothing line.

Huerta said his job is busy, but rewarding.

"The knowledge is worth it," said Huerta. "I will pass it down to the workers behind me."

With a work background as an electrician, he was offered the job in 2015.

Huerta learned to be a sewing ma-

chine mechanic. Five days a week, he hones his craft.

Huerta hopes to pay some of his experiences forward. He plans to put in a proposal for a new work program that teaches sewing operators to make minor repairs and perform maintenance on their own machines.

He said some machines are more complicated than others, but he wants to teach operators to change out sewing needles, grab a screw driver and repair their machine. He wants to teach them that they are in charge of the machine, not the other way around.

"I like the pay we get, but at 67 years old I feel it is my duty to leave behind something for the next generation," said Huerta. | **ECHO**



Oregon Corrections Enterprise offers adults in custody employment in the garment factory, call center and laundry. Outside of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution OCE has other areas of employment, such as the print shop at Oregon State Correctional Institution.

To apply for an OCE work assignment, AICs should complete a work application form and send it to Institution Work Programs, IWP.



AROUND EOCI

OPPORTUNITY OREGON VISITS EOCI

Co-Founder Nancy Pance Holds Workshop with Residents

Written by Kurtis Thompson



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Opportunity Oregon Co-Founder Nancy Pance talks with prison residents during a Sept. 29, 2025 workshop at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

Opportunity Oregon held a workshop on Sept. 29 for about 30 residents of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

Nancy Pance, co-founder and executive director of Opportunity Oregon, was the key speaker at the workshop. Pance shared the most updated information on employment and resource opportunities through their program with the audience.

The workshops prepare incarcerated people to enter communities after their time is served. The organization helps residents complete resumes, cover letters, connect them with employers before release, direct them to reentry specialists and more. Pance said since 2022, her organization has reached more than 2,865 adults in custody through workshops and career fairs held inside Oregon's state prisons.

Pance's organization has been building a database of employers willing to hire people with criminal records. She

reported a total of 384 businesses and 10 unions have joined her, along with multiple organizations aiding with vocational rehab, veteran services, housing, mental health care, peer mentorship,

clothing, rental assistance, record expungement resources and more.

"I want to emphasize that it's never too early to apply for our workshops," Pance said. "I have folks who don't have a release date that are still applying to our services. You never know when things are going to change if you turn your life around inside prison."

Work assignments and other programs can be added to an incarcerated person's resume, she said. Pance encouraged everyone to apply.

"We have people who don't do background checks at all," she said. "That's why we're able to find somewhere for everybody."

While there are limitations, she said there are still opportunities out there where "people can thrive." Having these conversations early helps incarcerated people set realistic goals while in prison, she said.

Opportunity Oregon will have another workshop in December. Residents interested can contact Transition Services Coordinator Sue Robson.

| ECHO



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Program Co-Founder Nancy Pance takes notes during a workshop in 2025. The organization has connected 2,865 people exiting prison with employment services since 2022.

AROUND EOCI

SPRINKLER SYSTEM UNDER REPAIR

Roofing Project Equipment Breaks Sprinkler Lines

Written by Brian Bement and Chris Ainsworth



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

A grounds crew worker adjusts the sprinkler system at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution on Oct. 23, 2025.

Water bubbled up as the grounds crew workers removed dirt and rock to begin repairing broken sprinkler lines on Oct. 24, 2025.

In early 2024, EOCI contracted with a roofing company to repair and replace the terracotta tile roof. The project was completed in July 2025, but the company's heavy equipment damaged sprinklers and sprinkler lines around the compound during construction.

One-hundred feet of PVC pipe, 30 sprinklers heads, links and other materials were used by the grounds crew to repair the water system around the roofing work areas. The repairs cost \$5,747 in materials.

"We tried to fix the system," said Larry Sahm, grounds crew worker. "When we did fix it, they would run over [lines] again."

The grounds crew often repairs the

watering system around EOCI, but the roofing company's equipment increased the amount of repairs needed for cracked or broken watering systems.

"We had a gusher a week ago," said grounds crew worker Arlie Thompson. "There was a good one bubbling by the property office from a cracked line."

The grounds had patches of dead grass from where the leaks sprung from broken lines. In other areas, the earth had large divots of dirt missing.

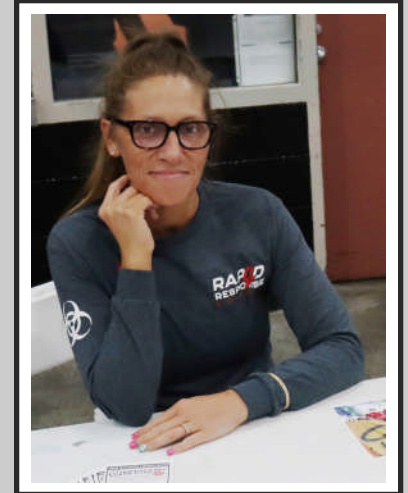
The grounds crew's staff supervisor, officer J. Morfin, said the crew couldn't have kept up repairs if it wasn't for the help of the Physical Plant, specifically 89-year-old welder Jerry Miller.

Morfin said Miller, who is incarcerated at EOCI, was constantly repairing their tools.

"It was a lot of work and he keeps our tools in the best of shape," he said. **|ECHO**

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AROUND EOCI

EQUIPMENT, CARTS AND A SINK: WELDING SHOP DOES IT ALL

The Welding Shop Completes Projects in October

Written by Chris Ainsworth



Photo by provided by ODOC

Welders Benjamin Jones, left, and Trevor Trollope pose for a photo on Oct. 16, 2025 after installing new equipment they created in their shop.



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Welding shop workers Ernesto Casas, left, and Charlie Haggard pose next to a new kitchen cart they made on Oct. 13, 2025. Casas and Haggard put almost 150-labor hours into making five, stainless steel carts.

Two projects were completed by the welding shop in October for EOCI.

Plans were drafted, then approved in September, to replace a few pieces of workout equipment on each recreation yard.

Residents Ben Jones, Jake Whitman and Trevor Trollope worked on two back extension and glute or hamstring raise stations. Whitman, who transported to a different facility in September, was unable to see the project through to completion. Trollope helped Jones complete the equipment.

“There were a few parts of the project that required some trial and error, like cutting the right angles,” Jones said. “That took about two or three days, but after that it was cookie cutter.”

Multiple shops at EOCI helped complete the project. After metal fabrication, the paint shop gave the equipment a fresh coat of paint. Upholstered cushions, made by Work Force Development, were installed on wooden platforms provided by the facility’s carpentry shop.

The replacement equipment is a different style with adjustment options for use by a wider range of adults in custody. The first stations were installed on Oct. 16. The anchors holding in the

old equipment were cut away and replaced.

The second project was for EOCI’s kitchen. Five new stainless-steel carts were fabricated to replace the older, run-down carts currently in use.

Residents Douglas Haggard, Ernesto Casas and Charlie Huffman put in almost 150-labor hours on the carts.

“We priced out kitchen carts at \$1,700, which was outrageous because they were only rated for 400 pounds,” Haggard said. “We were able to build these ones for about \$1,000 and you could park a truck on them. They can take some abuse.”

The metal shop is already working on their next project.

The shop is in the early stages of adding single sink stainless steel counters on housing units that need replacements. Four units on the west side need replacements sooner than others.

Projects designed and completed by AICs in the metal shop often count towards work hours for certifications. Jones, who hopes to complete his certification in January, plans to use his skills immediately following his release from prison.

“After attending the career fair and speaking with Nancy Pance from Opportunity Oregon, I found there is a huge boom with Union Pacific Railroad right now,” said Jones. “I am hoping it will be there when I release.” | **ECHO**

FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT HELPS WORKERS AT HOLIDAYS

Kitchen Workers Given Complimentary Hygiene Package

Written by Phillip Luna with contributions from Brian Daniel Bement

“As a token of appreciation,” said Food Services Manager Liza Emory, “[We] are compiling a hygiene package for kitchen and dining room workers.”

The complimentary package, which will be handed out in December, was a welcome surprise to many kitchen workers at EOCI.

The package includes Olay moisture soap, Colgate toothpaste, Crest pro mouthwash, a toothbrush, floss, Old Spice deodorant, VO5 shampoo and conditioner, a soap dish, Palmolive dish soap and cotton swaps.

The items would cost an adult in custody \$27.14, based on commissary’s prices on Oct. 31.

To be eligible, kitchen workers must work during the holiday season, starting Oct. 26, and meet certain parameters.

But not all the workers are satisfied with the acknowledgment.

“I would prefer more PRAS points for my position,” said kitchen worker Jason Menerey. “It’s like a person working really hard at their job and instead of them getting a raise, they get a pizza.”

PRAS points, the mechanism that provides incarcerated workers with monthly monetary awards for work assignments, is set by Department of Corrections headquarters in Salem, Oregon.

“PRAS is set statewide for consis-

tency,” said Emory. “A kitchen worker can increase their award after 90 days of work, but the points awarded are standardized. There is no person at EOCI that can increase a PRAS award beyond what has been set.”

Emory said she understands the challenge adults in custody face with rising prices at commissary.

“We thought the hygiene package would help offset costs so they could spend money on different items during the holidays,” said Emory.

The food service department is always looking for ways to recognize their workers while maintaining the budget, Emory said. | **ECHO**

AT SFFC

SOUNDS FISHY

Adults in Custody Learn to Manage a Fish-Rearing Pond

Written by Phillip Luna

While it may sound unusual, a few incarcerated Oregonians manage a fish-rearing pond in Tillamook State Forest, accounting for tens of thousands of Steelhead, Coho and Chinook salmon. The men develop valuable job skills along the way – skills that will help them when they exit prison.

South Fork Forest Camp’s fish-rearing pond allows workers to learn to work in fisheries. The program is a partnership between the Oregon Department of Corrections, Department of Forestry, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

“[They] provide hands-on care, maintenance and accounting of up to 60,000 fish at a time,” said Chad Powell, work programs coordinator at



Photo provided by ODOC

The fish-rearing pond at South Fork Fire Camp where adults in custody learn job skills. The prison works with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Trask Hatchery.

South Fork Fire Camp.

Powell said the AICs work directly with Trask Hatchery and ODFW. Twice a year, the rearing pond receives fingerlings that the AICs will care for

and prepare for release into the wild.

“AICs can then enter into ODFW work force as seasonal until their minimum qualifications are met for full time jobs,” said Powell. | **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

PARENTING INSIDE OUT

Prison Residents Learn to Parent by Caring for Stuffed Teddy Bears

Written by Chris Ainsworth with Kurtis Thompson



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

At the Oct. 13, 2025 graduation ceremony for the Pathfinders parenting program, students gather with their teddy bears to take a group photo. The bears act as stand-ins to help teach lessons about raising a child. The students have to keep the bear with them every day while they are enrolled in the parenting class, caring for the bear as if it were their child.

Six residents at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution were recognized by Pathfinders on Oct. 13. The graduation, held in the visiting room, was the culmination of a 12-week Parenting Inside Out class. Attendees included staff facilitators from EOCI and Two Rivers Correctional Institution, the graduates and their loved ones.

Pathfinders offers two separate evidence-based courses: Free Your Mind Core and Parenting Inside Out.

Parenting Inside Out is a parenting skills course based on Oregon Social

Learning Center's Parent Management Training.

The program does not just operate inside prisons — They work with communities outside prisons as well. Pathfinders has partnered with schools and community resources. Their focus is on parenting children, communicating with those parenting children — such as spouses, exes, family members and DHS workers — and successful reentry.

Staff member Brittany Bergh is the facilitator for EOCI's Pathfinders group. She gave a graduation speech, then passed out completion certificates and

journals to teddy-toting graduates.

"The purpose of the bears is like having your toddler or 5-year-old with you," said Bergh. "You have to properly care for it, find a sitter if needed or take the bear with you. You can't just leave them at home when you go to the gym or yard."

Pathfinders students with bears in carriers slung over their shoulders stood out in the prison's general population. They went about their daily lives while caring for their "children." The bears were passed on to the students' actual children at the end.

“I’m a big fan of second chances ... their success is my success if I’m helping them get there.”

- Brittany Bergh,
Parenting Inside Out Facilitator

“I’ve never been able to give my son a physical gift. I was able to hand him the bear,” Keaton Stephens said, who had not seen his son in almost three years. “He is 9 and I didn’t think he would really like a teddy bear, but he got mad at his mom because she left it in the car [after the event].”

The 12-week class met three days a week. The group discussed parenting techniques, homework and personal experiences. They also practiced course skills in role playing exercises where one AIC acts as parent and another as child.

“I’m not really a big person on doing stuff like [role playing]. It got me out of my comfort zone,” graduate Tyler Garrett said. “You had to act like a child or act like an adult applying what you learned in class that day.”

Pathfinders was originally introduced to Oregon Department of Corrections around 2000. It was absent from EOCI for a few years due to staffing shortages. Bergh, who has been the Pathfinders facilitator for a year, took the job because she has family who have been incarcerated.

“I could easily be in any one of those chairs. Everyone makes mistakes,” she said. “I’m a big fan of second chances and helping other people grow and learn. And their success is my success if I’m helping them get there.” | **ECHO**



Top: On Oct. 13, 2025, EOCI’s Pathfinders facilitator Brittany Bergh says a few words to Parenting Inside Out graduates as they celebrate the completion of the 12-week class.

Center: Ian Williams and his daughter play a game of Battleship together. After the graduation program participants had an opportunity to spend time with their loved ones who were in attendance.

Bottom: A Parenting Inside Out bear rests on an orange chair in the visiting room during the program graduation.



Photos by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

AROUND EOCI

ROBBERY IN PROGRESS

Oregon's Incarcerated Beekeepers Steal Honey From Honest Bees

Written by Brian Daniel Bement



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Beekeeping facilitator Brett Lloyd, left, leads students through the process of extracting honey from frames on Oct. 8, 2025. The extraction yielded 55.6 pounds of honey, about one-third of an average year.

Beehive burglaries went down at Eastern Oregon Correction Institution on Oct. 8.

“Welcome to honey extraction – it’s messy and it’s organized chaos,” said beekeeping facilitator Brett Lloyd.

Nine students from the beekeeping program made their first honey heist. The golden loot amounted to 55.6 pounds.

Lloyd said between the yellow jackets and losing hives to colony collapse disorder, EOCI honey production was on the low end of the spectrum in 2025.

“We normally get three times as much which is about 150 pounds,” said Lloyd.

Students seemed reluctant to use the electric heated knife to remove the wax capping from the frames.

When asked who wanted to help, the students hesitated, until Brian Hardegger volunteered to be the test dummy.

Facilitator Joseph Tuttle grabbed a honey filled frame out of a box called a super and handed it to him.

Hardegger used the hot knife and sliced the caps slowly, which brought the rest of the class around. The process was easy.

“It takes two students to do this process, one to cut caps and one to spin the frames in the extractor,” said Tuttle.

The frames holding the uncapped honey combs were placed in an extractor. The extractor has a hand crank which spins the frames, forcing the honey out of the comb.

Students finished with the uncapping, positioned the frames in cages inside the extractor and began the dance of extraction. The students cranked the handle and spun the cage gently at first, then increased the speed gradually. The steel container, when



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Facilitators Brett Lloyd, left, and Joe Tuttle bottle honey on Oct. 8, 2025.

cranked, pushes the honey out in to the reservoir. The students repeated the process until frames were emptied.

“Using the extractor was not difficult; it was fun and messy,” said student John Perry.

There is a spigot at the bottom of the steel cylinder. When Lloyd and Tuttle opened it, honey ran out through a tap into a strainer to remove bits of wax and other debris.

“The particles need to be removed by straining before bottling the honey,” said Tuttle.

Lloyd said most of the honey is donated to Food Services.

Bees make honey by mixing a sweet substance secreted by flowers, called nectar, with bee enzymes. Honey is made up of 35% protein, contains half of all essential amino acids and is a highly concentrated source of many essential nutrients, including large amounts of carbohydrates.

Honey is also used to promote energy and healing. It is a natural antiseptic and makes a good salve for burns and wounds. Bees pollinate vegetables grown around the compound, making them larger and healthier.

The beekeeping program started out with five hives this year. When the honey extraction was completed the beekeeping program had eight hives. Several have died since the extraction in unrelated causes.

Beekeepers often suffer about a 50% hive loss during the winter months due to exposure to cold temperatures, disease or lack of sufficient supplemental feed. EOCI’s beekeeping program only suffered 16.6% hive loss last winter.

“Extracting honey is bittersweet,” said Hardegger. “We uncap the combs and spin the honey out and take the honey the bees worked so hard for all



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo/File

In spring 2025, beekeepers collect a large swarm of the top of the powerhouse. The beekeepers had to use a lift to reach the swarm.



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo/File

Throughout the year, the beekeeping program facilitators and students manage the hives by inspecting frames, treating for disease and providing supplemental feed if necessary.

summer long. Poor little fellers!”

The beekeeping program is a six-week certified course of 26 classes held at IWP through the Washington State Beekeeping Association.

Applications for the beekeeping program are being accepted and the

participant selection process for 2026 is underway.

Criminal behavior is never appropriate, but the beekeeping program does appreciate those with experience in beehive burglary. Residents interested in learning to be a honey burglar will be offered insect immunity. | **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELD

How The Music Team Sets Up Open Mic Nights

Written by Brian Daniel Bement
with contribution from Jamil Chavis



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

At the end of the Sept. 29, 2025 open mic event, the music technicians perform while sound assistant Jacob Pomerleau mans the mixing board.

Under the bright overhead lights, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution's gym looked like any other – concrete floors with a glossy finish, basketball boundary lines and old scuff marks from cheap sneakers. During open mic nights, however, the music production team transforms the court into a concert stage.

On Sept. 29, EOCI held their latest open mic night in the multipurpose building from 6 to 8 p.m. The first open mic night occurred early in 2024, and each one required teamwork from the music production team to be successful. The team has one hour to turn a basketball court into a makeshift amphitheater, complete with audience chairs.

The production team is comprised of five facility residents: music team leader Marvin Harley, sound assistant

Jacob Pomerleau, emcee Treshaun Thomas, and music technicians Cody Raymond and Dylan Sanchez. Rather than relegate anyone to one or two tasks, they shared duties from setup to adjusting the sound equipment settings.

The work began with laying protective carpets for instruments and equipment. This prevents the gym floor from being scratched and the instruments from delivering surprise static shocks to musicians. Instruments, speakers, foot pedals, microphones and other equipment were set up according to a diagram.

After all the electronics were connected to the sound board, the team tested instruments and mics, adjusting the sound according to performers.

“Open mic requires a lot of teamwork. It requires us all to come in here with a goal set,” said Harley.

“We have a great music team here. All credit for setting up the production goes to them.”

- Zach Hall,
Recreation Specialist

Harley said the team must make sure the correct cabling is used before setting up the sound board to blend each instrument's sound equally. They check the percussion and stringed instruments first, followed by the electronic piano and mics.

After the stage was set, everyone placed the audience chairs in a half-moon shape split by a carpet runner covering electronics cables. Finally, just as event participants filed through the door, the music team finished preparing everything for performances.

Recreation Specialist Zach Hall observed the setup, leaning against the gym's bleachers.

“We have a great music team here,” said Hall. “All the credit for setting up the production goes to them.”

When the show began, emcee Tho-

mas strutted to the stage, comically swinging his arms, to deliver a one-liner joke. He said his duty is to enhance the show.

"I keep the audience laughing," Thomas said afterward. "If everything is going wrong, I make it better."

As Thomas attempted to entertain the audience, Harley and Pomerleau adjusted the sound board and camera in preparation for the first performer of the night, James Coonrod.

"Everyone's voice is different. A raspy voice needs the lows turned down," Harley said, referring to his own voice, "then bring the highs up to get the air in the voice crisp and clear."

Adjusting for different vocals is only part of the music team's sound job. The environment must also be considered.

Harley said being inside a gym with no sound panels can give a lot of feedback from the drum's reverberation. With the gym's high ceiling, sound tends to travel up more than out towards the crowd. The music team must adjust for this as well.

"The sound board is not as complicated as it looks," said Pomerleau while he pointed to sound board knobs.

Though the music team kept the show together, none of it would happen without recreation specialists Hall and Jerrad Templin. Sanchez said they both volunteer after work hours for open mic night.

"The show takes time away from their families to allow us this extra freedom," said Sanchez. "We all should be grateful."

Marvin Harley, Cody Raymond, Luis Rodriguez and Dylan Sanchez preformed an original song to close the event. The audience sat silently, then met the end of the performance with applause.

"I never thought it would be this popular," said Templin. "The mic is open for everyone ... it is an outlet for AICs."

The last open mic of the year was on Oct. 23. Those who wish to participate or spectate can contact Recreation Specialist Templin. | **ECHO**

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IN SPORTS



BASKETBALL SEASON KICKS OFF IN OCTOBER

Players Dust Off Rust in Preparation For a Long Season

Written by Brian Daniel Bement

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Wearing number 12, Zyyon Stephens from unit B3 dribbles around the three point line as defenders from A3 swarm on Oct. 20, 2025. Stephens scored 18 points during the game, including two late 3-pointers to help tie the game with under a minute left in regulation.

Basketball is in season at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, dribbling through the minds of resident players. On Oct. 20, west and east side teams played for an hour each in the multipurpose building. The west side game was close and had 30 total fouls, but east side's match had unbalanced teams.

A3 and B3: A Game of Fouls

West side teams from B3 and A3 played a very close game, with B3 using fouls as a tactic in the second half.

B3 played an aggressive defense, particularly against A3's 6-foot heavy-weight Mohamed Ali. In doing so, he was fouled enough to make 5 points in free-throws. With field goals from Timothy Suell, Justin Vancill and Mi-

chael Johnson, B3 had 20 points in the first half.

But while A3 had Ali, B3 had Zyyon Stephens.

Stephens was like greased lightning, bobbing and weaving down the court. With jukes, passes and fakes, he and Carlos Argueta scored 13 points between them. Combined with Everett Montgomery's 3-point swish from nearly half court and Jaime Flores' 4 points, B3 and A3 sat tied at 20.

By the last three minutes of the second half, B3 lagged behind A3 by 9 points. In a bid for the win, B3 went all in on fouling to stop the clock.

Ali, still the biggest threat to B3, was fouled so many times that 11 of his 19 points in the second half were from the foul line. However, this calculated risk

allowed B3's Stephens, Aden Abdiraham, Josiah Tiscareno, Flores, Argueta and Montgomery to score the bulk of 25 points before the buzzer.

B3 looked like they would win in a comeback, but two fouls in the last eight seconds by Stephens put Ali back on the free-throw line twice.

B3 lost by 3 points, with a final score of 48-45, A3.

G4 versus F3: A Full-Court Press

For the east side game, G4 had 14 players to F3's eight.

"F3 is missing players. It's my prediction we will win by at least 20 points," said G4's Colby Benson.

F3 played aggressively in an attempt

to make up for their disadvantage.

In the first five minutes of the first half, G4's Maciel Munoz charged down the court on a return with F3's Scott Boyd glued to him on defense. About a foot into the key, both players caught air as Munoz went up for a shot, and Boyd collided with him. After Boyd extricated himself from their tangled mess on the floor, Munoz took a minute to recover from an ankle injury.

Instead of switching out with another player, Munoz kept playing and made another field goal. Then, he was fouled again and swapped out until the second half.

F3 focused on passing offense throughout the game, with Juan Garza bringing most rebounds and returns back across the court. Garza leaned forward as he ran, charging like a man at a bull run to get the ball into a shooter's hands. But, despite their best efforts, F3 could not close the gap.

The score at halftime was 33-10, G4.

"We're having a good time," said F3 coach Adrian Coleman with a shrug at the scoreboard. "When we get a full team, watch out; we'll be coming."

In the second half, F3 started hitting more 2 and 3-point shots, outscoring G4 with 23 total points to their 21. But, they still lagged behind G4 by more than 20 points because of the first half.

When basketball teams at EOCI are down by 20 or more points, a mercy rule kicks in which bans full-court presses by the winning team against the losing team. While this was not enforced last year, it has been a rule for some time and is enforced this year.

G4's Christian Igo, in a contested rebound, got a technical foul for violating the mercy rule. In the long run,



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Mohamed Ali, wearing number 1, waits for a screen to be set at the Oct. 20, 2025 basketball game. Ali, from unit A3, scored 33 of his teams 48 points, which resulted in a victory.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Unit G4's Senfinh Saetern takes a jump shot in a less-than-competitive victory over F3 on Oct. 20, 2025. G4 won the game by 21 points.

however, it did not change the game's outcome. The final score was 54-33, G4.

"I told you we would win by at least 20," said Benson after the game.

According to sports commissioner

Ben Edwards, basketball matches will continue until mid-December.

Holiday photo shoots will be done in the multipurpose building for two weeks. The season has been extended to January to accommodate for the pause. | **ECHO**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wedding Announcement

Weddings held in EOCI's visiting room in October



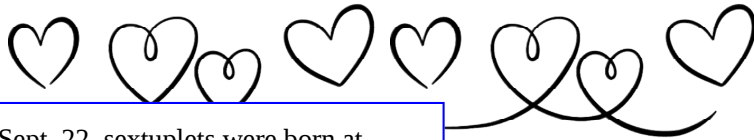
Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

James and Annette Gulley were married, for the second time, in EOCI's visiting room in October.

The two met in 1983 while in middle school. They bonded over sports and their friendship blossomed. Their first child was born three years later and their second born in 1988 while James was stationed in Germany for the U.S. Army. They married in 1988 during his 30-day leave following the birth of their second child. They have three children in all.

Their marriage lasted for 20 years before they decided to part ways as friends. Over the next 17 years, as their children grew and grandchildren were born, their friendship allowed them to rediscover their love for each other. They remarried two days before what would have been their 37th wedding anniversary.

The groom said their relationship is "an innocent chance encounter that lead to something extraordinary – and it just seems to keep getting better."



On Sept. 22, sextuplets were born at EOCI. The mother, who was also born at EOCI, spent almost five hours in labor.

Ursa, the mother, was the runt of her seven siblings. She was born at the facility in 2023 and trained as a service dog for a year and a half before being selected as a breeder. The birth was the second 2025 litter of puppies born for Joys of Assisted Living Dogs, a program where incarcerated people train service animals.

The little balls of fur won't be given names until after they receive their eight-week shots in November– they are currently referred to by colors. They are the "G" litter, or Glitter as some have taken to calling it, because all their names will start with the letter "G."

Members of the public who want to participate in the naming process can purchase raffle tickets as a way to vote for their favorite name.

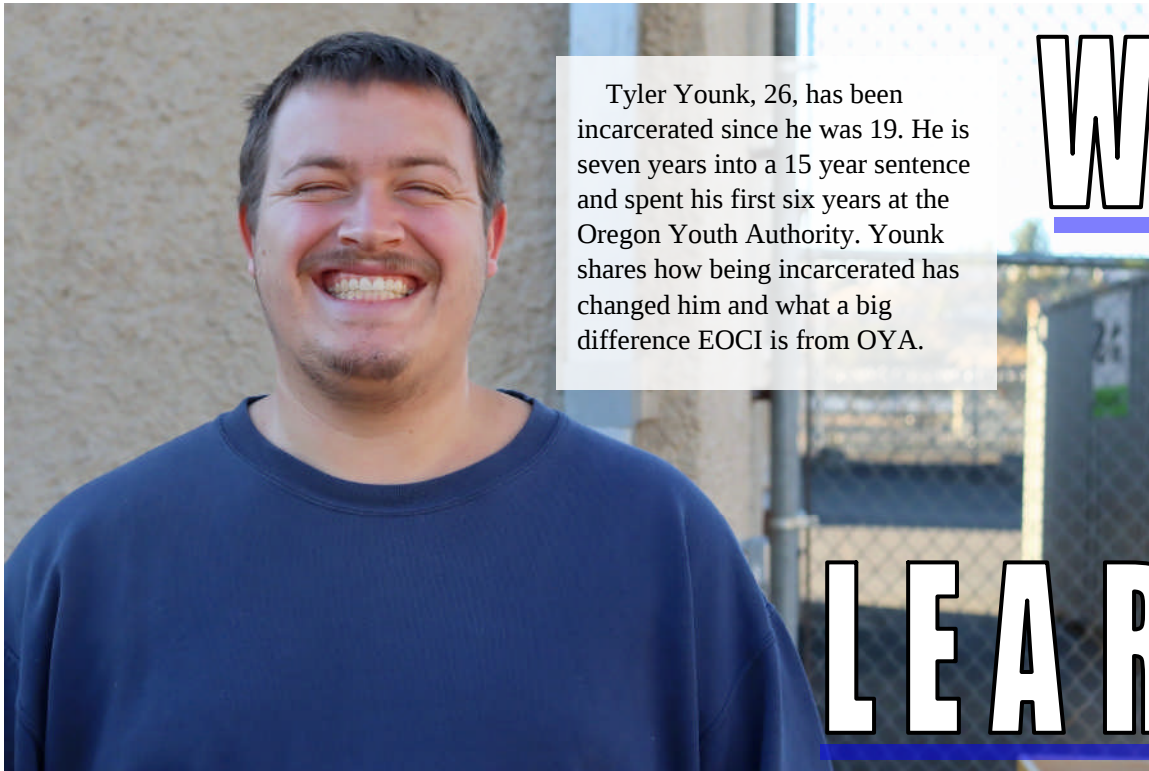
To learn more, check out JLAD's website, www.joydogs.org/

Birth Announcement

Puppies born in the JLAD program in September



Photo by provided by JLAD



Tyler Younk, 26, has been incarcerated since he was 19. He is seven years into a 15 year sentence and spent his first six years at the Oregon Youth Authority. Younk shares how being incarcerated has changed him and what a big difference EOCI is from OYA.

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

With Tyler Younk

Interview by Logan Gimbel

One thing that surprised me about prison was... The change. There is a lot of structure and it's strict.

The change I'd like to see the most in prison is... For people to show more respect to each other. I wish the COs would listen more.

Best advice I could give someone is... Do your own thing and focus on yourself.

Being incarcerated at OYA was... Fantastic. The staff there showed a lot more care. We had more freedom, too. We were able to travel to other facilities to compete in different sports leagues.

EOCI compares to OYA by... Having a lot less freedom and the staff are stricter. OYA was almost like a summer camp, there is a big difference.

The best item to buy off canteen is... Candy. Doesn't matter what kind.

The canteen at OYA is... Cheaper. It's the same things, but cheaper. OYA has a level system: bronze, silver, gold and platinum. High tags got to buy things off of a special list — things from Fred Myers like energy drinks or large tubs of ice cream.

Being incarcerated at a young age... Matured me faster than usual. I was surrounded by younger kids and had to be

an older role model, almost like a big brother.

Before coming to prison, I would consider myself... More impulsive and energetic. There is a drastically big difference between young Tyler and old Tyler.

Now I would consider myself... More of a critical thinker and problem solver.

What I've learned... You have to show respect to get respect.

What program has helped you the most... The woodshop at OYA. It kept me busy and taught me new skills.

One thing I wish I had never wasted money on is... Jersey's while I was at OYA.

I wish I had spent less time... Sleeping.

I am looking forward to... Being with my family and friends and making up for lost time. I can't wait to go to my first football game and to be able to sleep in my own bed. Also, being able to have a beer with my dad.

The food I'm looking forward to eating most is... Good pizza from Papa Murphy's.

A piece of advice I could give to someone new to prison is... Mind your own P's and Q's. Hang out with people you enjoy being around and spending time with. |ECHO

VIDEO GAMES

NEW GAMES, BRIEF REVIEWS

Reviews for FLE's New Game List

Written by Kurtis Thompson

These are online reviews and ratings provided by Nintendo Life and Imagine Games Network (IGN), edited for length and clarity.

Monster Hunter Rise (8.8 Rating): Players hunt large monsters in open-world biomes to collect materials for crafting equipment. A “wirebug” grappling hook system allows enhanced movements and attacks, plus canine companions called Palamutes can be ridden. This portable Monster Hunter with quality of life improvements provides a satisfying entry in the series.

Castlevania Dominus Limited Collector's Edition (8.5 Rating): The core of this collection features three classics: Dawn of Sorrow, Portrait of Ruin and Order of Ecclesia. It also has the original Haunted Castle and a fully remastered widescreen HD version. The updated version provides upgraded visuals, new soundtrack and a wider 16:9 aspect ratio. Modern conveniences include save states, the ability to rewind gameplay and more.

Dragon Quest 3 HD 2D Remake

(8.4 Rating): This classic role-playing game has been updated with a vibrant high-definition 2D art style. Players control the child of a legendary hero, assembling a party to defeat the threat of a dark lord. The world is massive – filled with towns, castles and dungeons, with a more interactive and rewarding world map. The combat is turn-based with a first-person perspective during encounters. There are also new additions such as Monster Arenas and battle speed options.

Advance Wars 1+2 Re-Boot Camp (8.1 Rating): The games have a fresh, colorful 3D art style with character and battle animations, plus a fully re-recorded soundtrack. Players engage in turn-based combat where terrain matters, manage units and capture cities for resources. Commanding officers have unique special abilities, called CO Powers, that can swing the tide of battle. Beyond campaigns, enjoy the War Room for challenging single-player missions.

Marvel vs Capcom Fighting Collections (8.1 Rating): This has seven Capcom arcade titles with Marvel characters

from 1993 to 2000. There is multiple quality of life features, such as a training mode with visible hitboxes and damage numbers. Each game allows players to check move lists, but Capcom also included the original marquee cards with moves and tips. There's also quick save functionality and achievement-like challenges for further content.

Sid Meier's Civilization VII (8.0 Rating): Not to be confused with the low-rated PC version, this game was created with consoles in mind. There are new mouse controls via control sticks for a smoother experience with faster turn speed. Players build empires, exploring and conquering through eras such as Antiquity and Exploration. Any historical leader may be played with any civilization, offering unique strategic possibilities beyond traditional pairings. There are new diplomatic options and improved combat systems, including army commanders who lead multiple units. Online reviews indicate the PC version's low ratings are due in part to poor user interface performance on computers.

Bloodstained – Ritual of the Night (7.8 Rating): This is a 2D sidescroller action role playing game set in a gothic horror world. An orphan is cursed to “crystallize” and must explore a demon

Monster Hunter Rise



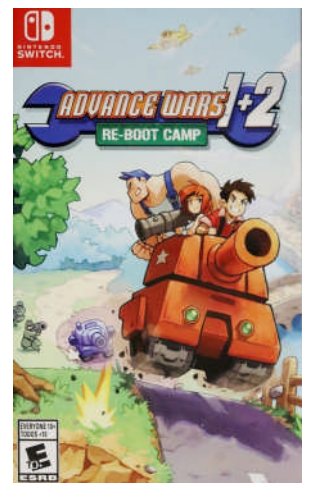
Castlevania Dominus Limited Collector's Edition



Dragon Quest 3



Advanced Wars 1+2



-infested castle. The game offers deep customization through collecting and equipping weapons, armor and shards which grant demonic powers. Combat styles include diverse, including melee, magic and firearms. Some consider this game to be a spiritual successor to Castlevania: Symphony of the Night.

YS Memoires – Oath of Felghana (7.8 Rating): This is a fast-paced action role playing game featuring the classic story of Adol Christin set in the land of Felghana. It is enhanced with modern features such as high-definition visuals, a high-speed Turbo mode for faster gameplay and accessibility options. Players battle enemies with sword combos and magic, navigate platforming challenges and can switch between Refined or Classic art styles. The game retains its renowned challenging gameplay, including tough boss fights, but offers multiple difficulty settings.

Gundam Breaker 4 (7.6 Rating): A customization-focused action game where players build and battle custom models of giant robots from the Japanese series, Gundam. Players collect equippable kit parts from defeated enemies. Over 250 base kits are available. Gameplay is fast-action arena-style combat, followed by parts-swapping to create unique Gundam builds with

paint, decals and weathering. Strategic use of EX skills and manual aim are crucial to victories.

Capcom Fighting Collection (7.6 Rating): Includes all five Darkstalker titles – Hyper Street Fighter II: The Anniversary Edition, Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo, Super Gem Fighter Mini Mix, Cyberbots: Full Metal Madness and Red Earth. There are enhanced features and accessibility options included, such as assigning special moves to the console's ZL and ZR triggers. Save states are also an option, which allows players to save and reload any time. Includes many titles that were previously unavailable in the United States.

Harvest Moon – The Winds of Anthos (7.5 Rating): This is an open-world farming simulation where players must restore the Harvest Goddess and her sprites after a volcanic eruption left the land separated by giant walls. It offers an explorable map with multiple towns, farming, animal husbandry, mining, cooking, crafting and fishing. Players can customize their farm, explore by foot or mount and tame wild animals. The game received mixed reviews; praise for its exploration and farming features, criticism for its performance, repetitive story elements and weak prologue.

My Sims Cozy (7.5 Rating): A collection of classic Wii titles where gamers play as builders. Their objectives are to revitalize a town by completing tasks for residents and crafting items. Players can build and decorate houses and furniture, meet a variety of characters and bring their town to a 5-star status through construction and design. While it is a relaxed experience, some find the controls for building to be frustrating, making the touchscreen mode a preferred way to play.

Disney Epic Mickey Rebrushed (7.4 Rating): In this 3D game, players guide Mickey Mouse through a twisted and forgotten world of Disney characters called Wasteland. Mickey uses a magic brush to paint, restore, thin and erase the environment and enemies. The world is filled with hidden areas and numerous collectibles such as tickets and pins to reward exploration. Use the brush to paint objects back into existence or spray paint on enemies to make them friendly. A player's choice of paints and thinners impact Mickey's destiny and the story's outcome, leading to multiple endings.

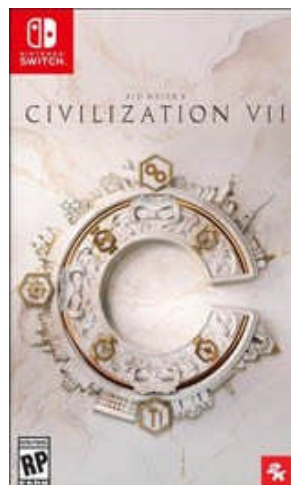
Looney Tunes Wacky World of Sports (7.0 Rating): This game features four sports – basketball, soccer, golf and tennis – where players control iconic Looney Tunes characters and

(continued on next page...)

Marvel vs. Capcom Fighting Collection



Sid Meier's Civ 7



Bloodstained — Ritual of the Night



YS Memories — Oath of Elghana



VIDEO GAMES

(continued from previous page...)

use power-ups in arcade-style matches. Unfortunately, this game is best played with others using the Nintendo Switch's local wireless communication. Online ratings say the game is criticized for its inconsistent controls, sluggish animations, outdated graphics and poor computer-controlled characters, making the solo-play experience unsatisfying. The 7.0 rating could be from people who enjoyed the game while playing with others.

Skater XL (5.0 Rating): Skater XL utilizes a physics-based control scheme where each analog stick controls a skater's foot, allowing for highly creative and precise trick execution. This game is best suited for experienced skateboarders who enjoy realistic physics

and the process of perfecting tricks. Unfortunately, the Nintendo Switch version suffers from frequent crashes, especially when trying to complete objectives on core maps. Due to its performance issues and lack of content, online reviewers consider this game to be a niche offering even within the Skater XL community. The game does have a nice soundtrack, though.

FIFA 21 Legacy Edition (3.1 Rating): In short, this is FIFA 20 with an expanded roster. There are updated kits and squads but no new gameplay or modes since the previous iteration. Basic modes such as Kick Off, Tournaments, Career Mode and an updated Ultimate Team are available, but there have been no improvements to shooting, player

interactions or overall gameplay. However, if this is a gamer's first venture into FIFA, this is not a bad place to start for soccer games. Most online complaints seem to be consumers feeling like they are paying for a game they may already own or have played and were expecting a new experience.

| ECHO

The reviews presented here are from Nintendo Life and Imagine Games Network (IGN) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Echo. In addition, the online reviews represent the gaming community which has access to regular updates, whereas the incarcerated population does not. It is possible that some of the features, issues and improvements listed above do not apply to the non-updated versions of games.

Gundam Breaker 4



Capcom Fighting Collection



Harvest Moon — The Winds of Anthos



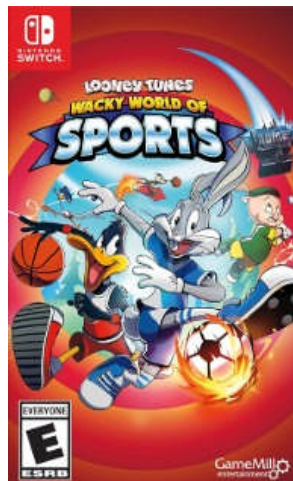
My Sims Cozy



Disney Epic Mickey Rebrushed



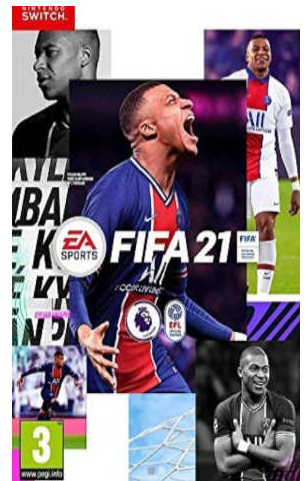
Looney Tunes Wacky World of Sports



Slater XL



FIFA 21 Legacy Edition





BUDGETING FOR COFFEE

Breaking Down a Cup of Joe

Written by Logan Gimbel

Shutterstock

Due to tariffs, coffee at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution has seen a price increase. Folgers coffee prices have increased by three or more dollars. Here is an at-cost break down of the various coffees provided by the commissary by ounce – two tablespoons equal one ounce. Each figure has been rounded up to the cent.

Coffees Compared

The two most expensive coffees available are Folgers instant coffee and Taster's Choice. Both come in eight-ounce packages. The Folgers instant increased from \$13.23 or \$1.66 per ounce to \$17.04 or \$2.13 per ounce. Taster's costs \$13.51 or \$1.69 per ounce. The Taster's costs 47 cents less per ounce.

The Folgers grounds increased from \$9.81 for 9.6 ounces to \$14.09, which

cost \$1.47 per ounce. However, the ground coffee comes with an extra cost. The consumer needs filters, which cost \$5.50 for 100, and the drip cone, which costs \$4.75. One filter is needed per brew, adding an additional 5.5 cents. A handkerchief can be used in place of the filters and costs 86 cents.

Last to be compared are Maxwell's Select Roast Coffee, the 100% Columbian, and the Espresso Instant Dark Roast. Both the Maxwell and 100% Columbian cost \$1.08 per ounce while the espresso costs 64 cents an ounce.

Creamer, Milk and Cocoa

The eight-ounce Paramount Non-Dairy Creamer is \$1.80 or 23 cents per ounce. The Paramount Nonfat Instant Milk costs \$3.56 for 10 ounces or 36 cents per ounce. Residents are provided a 22-ounce tumbler of milk each morn-

ing with breakfast, which may be used as a no-cost creamer.

EOCI's commissary provides three different hot cocoas. The Swiss Miss Hot Cocoa costs \$4.98 for eight packages, or 63 cents per package. The Keefe Cocoa With Mini Marshmallows costs \$2.16 for 10 ounces, or 22 cents per ounce. Last up is the Nestle Dark Chocolate Whipper Mix, costing \$8.09 for two pounds – 32 ounces – or 26 cents per ounce. Overall Keefe cocoa is the most cost effective.

Sugar or Sweetener

Canteen also offers sugar and sweetener. The C&H Pure Cane Sugar Cubes are \$2.73 for 126 cubes – each cube costs about 2 cents. The Zero Cal sweetener is \$1.79 for 100 packets – less than 2 cents per packet. Also, one sweetener packet is the equivalent of two sugar cubes, so residents are getting twice as much out of the sweetener than the sugar cubes. Sweetener is also provided each morning at breakfast by the institution.

Most Cost-Effective Mix

For residents wishing to make the cheapest 16-ounce cup of coffee that includes creamer, cocoa and sweetener the cost comes out to about \$1.12. This includes one ounce of espresso, one ounce of non-dairy creamer, one ounce of Keefe cocoa and two sweeteners.

| ECHO

Editor's note: The article reflects commissary prices as they were on Oct. 31, 2025.

Help Shape The Content of The Echo

For adults in custody:

If you know of a story that could be covered in The Echo, send a communication form to IWP and let us know. The Echo is always looking for new and interesting story ideas.

For staff:

Have an idea for a story? Have a program or class that is graduating? Are you implementing a new process or policy in your area? Send an email to Ray Peters.

NOTICES

NOTICES

PACKAGE AUTHORIZATIONS

Due to a personnel change, package authorizations will be processed through the Operations Captain’s office. Contact OS2 Warner.

EXTENSION CORDS

Due to a personnel change, requests for extension cords will be processed through R&D. To request an extension cord, adults in custody will have their unit officer verify the need for an extension cord. The officer will stamp and sign a communication form, which the AIC will send to R&D.

Extension cords are only available for television power cables that do not reach the outlet.

SUSTAINABILITY
IDEAS WELCOME

EOCI’s green team welcomes ideas for how to make the prison more eco-friendly.

The green team is a group of staff members and managers from various departments that meet monthly to review sustainability at EOCI.

To propose an idea for how to reduce waste, power or other resources, send a communication form to IWP: Green Team.

LIST OF LAW LIBRARY BOOKS
ON TABLETS; MORE TO COME

The law library added a list of its available books to tablets. Adults in custody can select the “notices” icon on tablets to a see a full list of what is available in the law library.

The law library has reference books including legal terminology dictionaries, medical diagnoses and treatment references, Oregon revised statutes and law strategies.

Some books can be checked out, but others are restricted for use in the law library only. In the book catalog there is a “restricted” column. If a check mark appears in the restricted column, then the book can only be reviewed in the law library and is not available for checkout.

The library is planning to add a list of recreational books to the tablets.

ACTIVITY ROOM

On Oct. 17, 2025, G1 activities were opened to G and H unit simultaneously.

Per Operations Cpt. Miller, adults in custody are allowed to take a cup for water to activities. The cup must be empty coming to and from the activity room.

FLE GAME LIST NOTICE

Bloodstained: Ritual of the Night, recently added to the Nintendo game list, will not play on some consoles.

The game requires a profile linked with a Nintendo account in order to start. All Nintendo Switch consoles distributed to incarcerated people from Fully Loaded Electronics have this master profile. But, if the master profile gets deleted, there is no way for residents in prison to re-link a new profile.

Residents can contact Fully Loaded Electronics for more information. They are open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Their phone number, 425-582-3173, is institution-approved.

PODCASTS ON CHANNEL 15

Residents of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution are now able to listen to a podcast on institution channel 15.

Currently, channel 15 is playing the podcast “Fathom,” a series about a team of deep-sea researchers finding an alien vault on the bottom of the ocean.

“Fathom” will start Wednesday at 4 p.m. and continue until 10 p.m. The episodes will replay at 8 pm for those who miss it.

THE ECHO CORRECTIONS

We made a mistake! In the October 2025 edition of The Echo, the article “It’s Not All Fun, Flags and Fire Pits” on page 4 listed the welders as having 200 hours accrued. This should have said 2,000 hours.

ALL TOO EARLY, UNOFFICIAL
CHRISTMAS CANTEEN LIST

(Subject to change)

Name	Size	Price
Tajin Classic Seasoning	5 oz	3.54
Ranch Cornuts	4 oz	1.92
Chorizo Refried Beans	8 oz	1.76
Cajun Rice Chicken & Sausage	8 oz	4.45
Jerk Pork	5 oz	6.62
Mackeral	3.5 oz	1.71
Hard Salami Slices	3.5 oz	3.08
Doritos Sweet & Spicy Chili	7.5 oz	2.69
Bugles Cinnamon Toast Crunch	3 oz	2.77
Smoked Swiss Cheese	3 oz	1.38
Smoked Pepper Jack Cheese	3 oz	1.38
Nacho Cheese Cup	4 oz	0.92
Cinnamon Bears	7 oz	3.71
Doublefilled Mint Cookies	11.8 oz	3.54
Butter Toffee Peanuts	3.5 oz	1.15
Double Dipped Peanuts	5 oz	2.75
Espresso Rocks Coffee Chocolate	6.5 oz	7.54
White Chocolate Cookies & Cream Bar	3.5 oz	1.69
Peppermint Bark	3.5 oz	1.77
Vanilla Pudding Cup	4 pk	2.31
LD Xmas Trees Vanilla		3.19
Skittles Drink Mix	30 ct	7.69
Hawaiian Punch Drink Mix	30 ct	8.75
Halzenut Creamer	15 oz	6
French Vanilla	15 oz	6
Suave 3n1	12.6 oz	4.23
Old Spice 3n1	18 oz	8.23
Irish Spring Moisture Blast	20 oz	8.46

From the Desk of Administrative Rules

Below is the list of status changes made to DOC administrative rules since 7/29/2025.

PROPOSED RULES:

291-037 Release of Public Record

Amends rule to permanently adopt temporary amendments (updated PRR procedures for non-AICs and AICs, clarifications); make terminology updates; add credit card payment process; update definitions; remove unnecessary reference; further clarify or define process; added processing fees related to video content; and improve consistency with applicable statute, DAS policy, or other department rules.

Public Hearing: 10/22/25 at 2:00PM

Extended Comment Period: Comments must be received by the Rules Office before 12:00PM (noon) on 11/30/25 (extended from 10/28/25).

291-058 Structured, Intermediate Sanctions

Amends rule to reattach and reincorporate Attachment A Administrative Sanctions Sanctioning Grid and Attachment B Sanction Equivalency Table, which were inadvertently removed; and to apply the procedures prospectively and retrospectively.

Comments must be received by the Rules Office before: 12:00PM (noon) on 11/19/25.

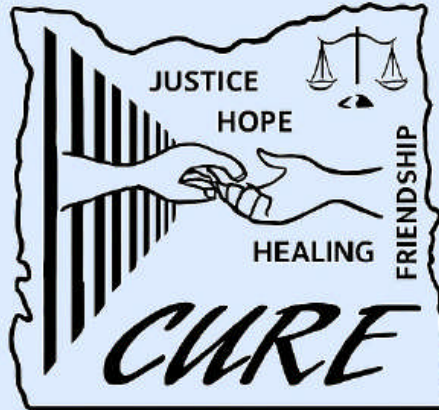
291-076 Suicide Prevention

Repeals rule OAR 291-076-0040 related to suicide review process.

Comments must be received by the Rules Office before: 12:00PM (noon) on 11/27/25

TEMPORARY RULES:

291-058 Structured, Intermediate



In partnership with **CURE**, the Oregon Department of Corrections Reentry and Release Unit invite friends and family of individuals nearing release to learn about the release process, support services and timelines.

To join an upcoming online Reentry and Release Community Outreach Session, please use the QR code to access the Microsoft Teams link.



Oregon CURE's mission is to reduce crime by advocating for effective criminal justice policies and practices.

We are a volunteer organization for families and friends of those in prison.

Sanctions

Amends rule to reattach and reincorporate Attachment A Administrative Sanctions Sanctioning Grid and Attachment B Sanction Equivalency Table, which were inadvertently removed; and to apply the procedures prospectively and retrospectively.

Effective: 10/1/25 through 3/29/25

291-076 Suicide Prevention

Suspends rule OAR 291-076-0040 related to suicide review process.

Effective: 10/2/25 through 3/30/26

PERMANENT RULES:

291-070 Records Management (Adult in Custody and Adult on Supervision)

Amends rule to update the term "offender" to "adult in custody"; clarify these rules; to update for consistency within these rules and other department rules; and align definitions with those adopted by the department as standard.

Effective 9/30/2025

1. Continental quilt (5) 2. Garden songbird (6) 3. African canine carnivore (5)
4. Plant that give liquorice its taste (5) 5. Land of Hope and Glory composer (5)
6. Sporting arbiter (7) 7. Stamp a design into paper (6) 8. Male deer (4)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Theme: Salute

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20					21					22				
			23						24					
25	26	27					28	29		30	31	32	33	
34				35		36				37				
38			39						40					
41						42					43			
44					45				46		47			
			48	49				50						
51	52	53				54	55				56	57	58	
59						60				61				
62						63				64				
65						66				67				

From USAtoday.com
Puzzle created by: Alex Cole

ACROSS

- 1 Epistles writer
- 5 Deli creations
- 9 Rose oil, e.g.
- 14 Korbut of gymnastics
- 15 Siouan
- 16 Aquatic bird
- 17 Whiskey ingredient
- 18 Ice sheet asea
- 19 Ear-related
- 20 Sign at many a driveway
- 23 Bitsy opening
- 24 Stocking stuffer
- 25 Certain bank quote
- 28 Professional org. since 1847
- 30 Entranced
- 34 Man-mouse link
- 35 Darned introduction
- 37 Prefix meaning “one thousandth”
- 38 Padres, e.g.
- 41 Silly
- 42 Barely sufficient
- 43 Way to go, briefly
- 44 Haggling topic
- 45 Mouse’s reception
- 46 Great depression
- 48 Bygone school event
- 50 Skitter
- 51 You may vote in it
- 59 Notched, as a leaf
- 60 They inhibit sound thinking
- 61 Harmless, as threats
- 62 Danny’s daughter, Phil’s wife
- 63 Water, in Seville
- 64 Common mixer
- 65 Sojourns
- 66 Frat alternative
- 67 Hysteria curber, sometimes

DOWN

- 1 Ceremonial elegance
- 2 Pertaining to wings
- 3 Certain large fruit
- 4 View from the Baltic Sea
- 5 Easygoing marketing technique
- 6 Newsman Garrick
- 7 Fleischer’s Betty
- 8 Divination practitioner
- 9 Visibly shocked
- 10 John Wayne classic
- 11 Guam, for one (Abbr.)
- 12 Blind as a ____
- 13 Be dependent (on)
- 21 Dress-code concern
- 22 Pay attachment
- 25 “Doonesbury” or “Garfield,” e.g.
- 26 You may pour it down the sink
- 27 Hindu princes (Var.)
- 28 One way to be taken
- 29 Prefix with byte or buck
- 31 On one’s toes
- 32 Word with fashion or dinner
- 33 Kitchen counter?
- 36 ____ majeste
- 37 Measuring system
- 39 Furtively
- 40 Well-known recruiter
- 45 Clean-air org.
- 47 Overhead storage
- 49 Snacks with three layers
- 50 Bakery staple
- 51 Some are priceless
- 52 Middle of QED
- 53 Writer/director Ephron
- 54 Balloon variety
- 55 Breakfast food brand
- 56 “American ____”
- 57 Spicy Spanish Stew
- 58 Less-than-average tide

ANSWER KEYS



Puzzle 1:
Decipherable

G	A	T	S	S	O
E	R	E	E	M	B
F	E	R	A	G	L
N	A	N	I	S	E
E	Y	H	S	U	R
D	U	V	E	T	H

Puzzle 2:
Computable
Diagonal Word: Dynamo

ANSWER KEY

P	A	V	L	S		M	D	O	D	S	V	T	A	S
A	R	C	O	L		A	G	U	A		O	L	O	M
E	R	D	I	S		O	G	E	S	E	S	O	E	R
N	O	N	E	R		A	L	E	L	E	C	T	I	O
R	E	R	A	T		C	R	A	K	E	E	P	H	O
E	R	T	E			N	T	S	C	A	N	T	E	R
M	A	J	O	R		L	E	A	G	U	E	T	E	A
O	R	A	V	E		M	L	L	E	B	E	M	L	L
C	D	R	A	T		A	M	A	E	T	S	A	P	T
		G	E	L										
P	R	I	V	A		T	E	P	O	P	E	R	T	Y
M	A	T	T			F	L	O	E					A
O	L	G	A	O		T	O	E						B
P	A	U	L	S		U	B	S						A

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

James Jones, 55, performs at an open mic night in the multipurpose building on Sept. 23, 2025. Jones is a father of three and currently incarcerated at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

JAMES JONES: MUSICIAN IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Inspired by his Family, Jones Continues to Make Music While Incarcerated

Written by Brian Daniel Bement

“Sometimes playing music was the only thing putting gas in the car and food in our bellies,” said James Jones, 55-year-old guitarist and song writer of rock and country music. He never learned to read sheet music – he plays by ear.

Jones, now incarcerated at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, said his music was inspired by family. He and his partner Heather Tilton led an unorthodox life – traveling the Pacific Northwest so he could perform music.

Ten years ago, they travelled all over California, Oregon and Washington so Jones could play.

On average, he would make \$10-\$50 an hour while doing sidewalk performances. If he played at resorts or wineries, sometimes he would make \$300-\$500 a night within a couple hours.

Jones said they preferred this cozy-camper living to putting down roots. He said his interest in the traveling-musician lifestyle began in early childhood.

Demo Recording

“I’ve always written poems and songs and comedy skits,” said Jones. “I got into music because of song writing – it all came naturally.”

Jones began writing poetry at 12. He said it started off as a “cool little hobby.” When he turned 40, Jones learned to play the guitar along with his songs. After creating a few pieces, he sought a producer and found a recording studio called 31-Minute Music in Tulare County, California.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

"I recorded a three-song demo," he said. "The producer asked me if I had any more. I sang him a few more and he said, 'Change of plans, I want to produce you.'"

Demos are like resumes with references in the music industry. With the demo in hand to land gigs, Jones could give potential customers a sample of his work. He and Tilton began traveling so he could perform.

But their free-living lifestyle would only last so long.

The Family Life

Jones and Tilton were living out of a recreational vehicle. They would travel up to mountainside camping spots near the areas Jones would go perform.

"I cooked over an open fire," said Jones.

Even though times could be hard, he and Tilton loved the freedom of waking up on the side of a mountain.

"When we would wake up in the morning, we would look out the window of the motor home and find beauty," he said.

Life was easy-going, until Tilton got pregnant. In 2017, the couple had their first child, followed in 2019 by twins.

The challenges of parenting without a home were already difficult, but then the coronavirus pandemic hit.

Jones and Tilton decided to move into Prineville, a small town in Eastern Oregon. Jones began a regular job, and eventually he and his family relocated to Pendleton in search of better-paying work. He still did not give up on his music dream, however.

Old Patterns, New Songs

Jones kept making music and working, but struggled to make ends meet.

Eventually, he turned to crime to get paid, he said, leading to his arrest and incarceration in 2022.

Although incarcerated, he continues to hone his craft and hopes to do a better job providing for his family with music. He stays in touch with his family over the phone and when Tilton finds time

with three small children, they attend visitation. Jones will be reunited with his family in April of 2028.

Jones said music to him is an everyday passion, crutch, pastime and a legacy.

"Being a musician is great, but I would like to be remembered as a good dad," he said. | ECHO

“Being a musician is great, but I would like to be remembered as a good dad”

PREA INFORMATION

Sexual abuse and harassment are never okay. Tell Someone. GET HELP.

Call the Inspector General's Hotline:

1. Pick up a handset
2. Press *999 to leave a message

All PREA Calls are confidential.

Send a letter to the Governor:

Governor's Office, State Capitol, Room 160, 900 Court St., Salem, OR 97301

The Oregon Department of Corrections has a zero tolerance policy for sexual abuse and harassment. AICs family can report on their behalf by contacting the Inspector General's public hotline at: (877) 678-4222.

El Abuso sexual y el acoso sexual nunca son aceptables. Avisele a alguien. CONSIGA AYUDA.

Llame al Inspector General:

1. Al numero de ayuda:
2. Levante el teléfono, marque *999.

Todas las llamadas a 'PREA' son gratis y confidenciales.

También puede reportar a la oficina del Gobernador por escrito.

Governor's Office, State Capitol, Room 160, 900 Court St., Salem, OR 97301

Sus amigos o familiares pueden hacer un reporte llamando a la línea del Inspector General al 877-678-4222.

PREA Advocate:

You may write the PREA advocate at:
ODOC PREA Advocate
3601 State St.,
Salem, OR 97301

SEEKING ARTISTS

The Echo is seeking incarcerated artists to feature in the next artist spotlight. Art from all genres is welcome, including, but not limited to: pencil, graphite, pen, paint, poetry, music, origami, food (if food is art to you) and any other medium.

If you are interested in being featured in the next artist spotlight, contact IWP. Please include a brief description of your art style. Interested artists will be scheduled to meet with one of The Echo writers.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Letters to The Editor

Edited for length and clarity

CONGRATS

I wanted to express my gratitude for the fantastic Echo newsletter. I found out about The Echo winning the 2025 American Penal Press contest at a recent CURE meeting. It is really deserving of that award! Congrats! Immediately, all of us who have a loved on at EOCI (or in our case, did have someone there) acknowledged how informative it is and how we look forward to reading it. It is a wonderful, helpful snapshot of daily life at EOCI.

- Alice Fay
Portland, Oregon

Hello Ms. Fay,

What kind words! We are very grateful to hear about people reading our publications outside of EOCI — especially outside of prison. Thank you so much.

-The Echo/1664

A JOURNALISM PROGRAM

I am currently housed at Snake River and have been reading The Echo on

Edovo. I read about the journalism program and would love to participate in the program. I'm looking to follow my dream to become a freelance journalist.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

-Shawn A. Cupp
Snake River Correctional Institution

Hello Mr. Cupp

Thank you so much for your interest. We are still in the very beginning stages of developing a program here. We don't have a method to deliver training at other facilities, yet.

Please keep reading!

-The Echo/1664

ON 1664

Congratulations to the 1664 writers and staff on another cover-cover treat. Loved reading Crow's piece about accessing his Native identity inside, really great personal insight and then, larger context about the PowWow. Chris's profile of Gary Kealoha un-

folds with each course — storytelling merges with vivid descriptions of the dishes. Phillip, this just stopped me in my tracks: "Her American dream was paid for with the pennies and dust doled out from under-the-table jobs..." Wonderful way to make the image. Also noticed how you weaved in the personal history, the running and the professional — all through the lens of her cultural perspective.

-Tracy Schlapp,
from PonyXpress

Hello Ms. Schlapp,

It's amazing to have PonyXpress writers in 1664. What an incredible collaboration!

Thanks you for all the work you do, and the support you provide our publications.

-The Echo/1664

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Have something you would like to share? Write a letter to the editor and let us know. Send to IWP: Journalism Department.

PRISON JOURNALISM PROGRAM FEATURED ON OPB PODCAST ON “THINK OUT LOUD”

Phillip Luna and Kurtis Thompson were interviewed about EOCI’s journalism program. on the podcast Think Out Loud” from Oregon Public Broadcast. The following is an excerpt from the OPB website. The broadcast aired on Oct. 10, 2025.

The Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton won five awards last month, including first place honors for its newsletter and magazine at the 2025 American Penal Press Contest.

Twenty-one prison publications in nine states, including Oregon, submitted entries to the contest which is organized by the Pollen Initiative and Southern Illinois University.

A staff of six adults in custody at EOCI write and edit the content published in the prison work program. East Oregonian reporter Berit Thorson serves as the program’s advisor, offering feedback on articles and teaching journalism training sessions on skills

such as how to conduct interviews.

Phillip Luna is editor-in-chief of The Echo and 1664. Kurtis Thompson is a staff writer who joined the EOCI news team last year. The Echo and 1664 won first place in the “Best Newsletter” and “Best Magazine” categories of this year’s American Penal Press contest. Recent examples of Luna’s and Thompson’s writing can be found in the “Artist in Custody” edition of 1664, which includes profiles of an incarcerated and former music producer who teaches music at EOCI and a band of women musicians at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville. Luna and Thompson join us to talk about their award-winning work and how journalism is helping them amplify voices within incarcerated communities.

“Think Out Loud ®” broadcasts live at noon every day and rebroadcasts at 8 p.m.

Check out www.opb.org to listen to the podcast.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

Pitch a story:

We are seeking compelling stories related to the upcoming themes. Do you have a story that shows humanity in the incarcerated setting? Is there a program or a person that changed your life? Let us know.

Write a story:

We are seeking first-person narrative essays to feature in our “from the readers” section. Less than 500 words, shorter is preferred. A first-person narrative essay is a brief story about your life related to the given theme.

Upcoming themes:

Family — due Dec. 30

Change — due Mar. 30

Contact IWP: Journalism Department for more information.

To apply for the for a positions with The Echo, see advertisement below.

NOW HIRING FOR THE ECHO

The Echo is accepting applicants for positions as a correspondent. This position starts at 11 PRAS points with the opportunity to go up to 13, and then 15 PRAS over time. We plan to hire before the end of the year.

Criteria:

- Must be **NCI level 2 or 3**
- Must work well with staff and AICs of many different backgrounds

Duties include:

- Article writing, conducting interviews and researching various topics
- Attending training sessions with outside journalists and other field experts
- Completing homework assignments on AP style writing, news article structure and grammar and punctuation

To Apply:

Send a communication form (kyte) **and a job application** to IWP, Journalism Department.

If you completed an application more than two months ago, please resubmit.

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www.pollenpress.org/the-echo/

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

2500 Westgate

Pendleton, OR

97801

WHERE TO FIND THE ECHO AND 1664

ON EDOVO

The Echo and 1664 can be found on the Edovo application.

Readers can find the publications by typing “The Echo” or “1664” into the search bar.

ONLINE

Readers outside the correctional setting can find The Echo and 1664 at www.pollenpress.org or on the Oregon Department of Correction’s webpage under the newsletter directory. Check out www.pollenpress.org/the-echo/



Scanning the QR code will take readers to the ODOC directory of newsletters where The Echo and 1664 are available.

ON UNITS

Print copies of The Echo is available on housing units at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. 1664 is available in limited quantities at select locations.

For EOCI, each housing unit has a magazine rack dedicated for The Echo and 1664.

ON TABLETS

The Echo and 1664 can be found in the free section on tablets under “notices.”

The Echo is available at EOCI. 1664 is available at all Oregon prisons.



The Pollen Initiative is dedicated to cultivating media centers inside prisons to shed light on the justice system. Through hands-on multimedia training, as well as leadership programs that facilitate personal growth and transferable skills, our team contributes to more balanced narratives about incarceration.

We support existing prison newsrooms, like the historic San Quentin News, and emerging newsrooms and media projects across the country.

HOW TO DONATE

Support The Echo and 1664 by making a donation to Pollen Initiative.

Donations can be made at www.polleninitiative.org.

Pollen Initiative, EIN 9202619177, is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, and your donation is tax deductible within the guidelines of U.S. law. Please keep your receipt as your official record. We'll email it to you upon successful completion of your donation.