

THE ECHO

Created by incarcerated people



NEWS
FROM
THE
INSIDE

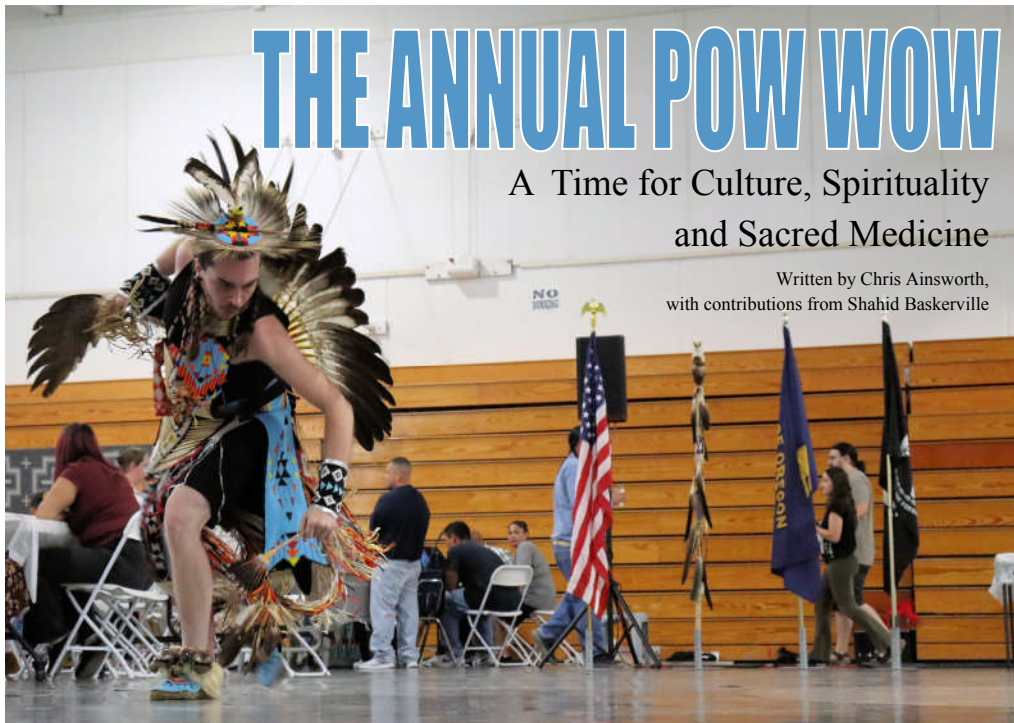
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EASTERN OREGON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

2500 WESTGATE

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THE ANNUAL POW WOW

A Time for Culture, Spirituality
and Sacred Medicine

Written by Chris Ainsworth,
with contributions from Shahid Baskerville

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

On July 25, 2025, a dancer at the pow wow performs an Eagle Dance in regalia. The dance is meant to symbolize an eagle stalking its prey.

A line formed on the warm morning of July 25 as burning sage was wafted over people with an eagle feather fan. Each person was waiting to enter EOCI's multi-purpose building to attend the facility's annual pow wow.

The 70 adults in custody, their 60 family members, the 25 volunteers, AIC workers and DOC staff went through the ritual, often called smudging, before entering.

Pow wow has many meanings. To the Narragansett people it means spiritual leader and for the Algonquians it means conjuror. The word has many variants, including *powwow*, *Pawaw*, *Powaw*, *Powah*, *Pauwau* and *Pawau*. Regardless of the variant, a pow wow today means a time for people to honor their cultural, spiritual and religious beliefs through the sharing of song, dance, gifts and food.

See POWWOW Page 10

INDEPENDENCE DAY ON THE INSIDE

Men Imprisoned at Eastern
Oregon Correctional Institution
Find Ways to Celebrate Freedom

Written by Phillip Luna, The Echo
and Berit Thorson, East Oregonian
Published in the East Oregonian

The Fourth of July was a typical day at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. Adults in custody were woken at 6 a.m. when the hiss and crash of hydraulic cell doors announced it was breakfast time.

But for James Renfro and Brian Hardegger, the day started 10 minutes before six.

"We were called to the kitchen to fix a clogged drain," said Renfro, an apprentice plumber at the facility. "It took an hour and a half."

Many incarcerated people have jobs that allow them to learn vocational skills. Renfro and Hardegger are earning their plumbing licenses, a 7,700-hour certification through Penn Foster.

Technically, Hardegger and Renfro were supposed to have the day off. However, they're on call 24/7. Although they are only paid a few dollars a day, they said experience is more

See FIREWORKS Page 7

MAIL RULES CONTINUE TO
EVOLVE Page 3

GOGI GIVES OUT
DONUTS Page 4

KORY STURGESS MAKES A
BOARD GAME Page 16

A SOFTBALL SEASON
OF MOVES Page 22



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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.

Friends can receive a digital version of The Echo by texting the word "CORRECTIONS" to the phone number 22828.

The Echo and 1664 are sponsored by the Pollen Initiative. The publications can be found online at www.pollenpress.org. Incarcerated people can access both publications on Edovo.

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EOCI TO INTRODUCE FIRST PRISON JOURNALISM COURSE IN OREGON

Classes Scheduled to Start as Early as September

Written by Phillip Luna

In collaboration with Pollen Initiative, The Echo and 1664's sponsor, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution will be offering the first prison journalism courses in Oregon.

The 15-week training course is part of Pollen's effort to introduce and train journalists in the correctional setting. Pollen's team includes experienced journalists who will lead the courses.

Students will participate in instruction via video call for one three-hour class per week. Computer lab time will be scheduled separately.

Students in the journalism program can expect to complete four articles: a Q&A, an event coverage story, a op-ed piece and a profile. Additionally, students will keep a weekly news journal and complete homework on Associated Press style, the standard in the news industry.

Articles completed through coursework may, but not always, be featured in The Echo or 1664.

The course is open to incentive level 2 and 3 adults in custody. Interested AICs should send a communication form to IWP.

About Pollen

Pollen Initiative, formerly known as The Friends of SQ News, supports the incarcerated-run newspaper of the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center and other projects at the facility.

SQ News is the most successful prison newspaper in the United States, and circulates nearly 50,000 print copies across the state of California and beyond.

In 2023, The Friends of SQ News was rebranded as Pollen Initiative

with the goal of advocating at prisons outside of San Quentin.

The organization continues to support SQ News and several other projects such as Forward This Productions, which teaches filmmaking and content creation - the only program in the country which offers incarcerated film crews a platform.

About The Echo

The mission of The Echo is to serve the incarcerated community by providing monthly news and other important information, while highlighting the human experience in the carceral setting.

The Echo is EOCI's prison newsletter. It was established in 2018 with one AIC employee under the supervision of IWP staff. The publication has been through several redesigns and revamps. Today, The Echo is produced by eight incarcerated people who adhere to the ethical standards set by the Society of Professional Journalist and follow style and structure guidelines set by the Associated Press.

About 1664

1664 is a quarterly magazine that was established in 2024. The magazine is produced at EOCI and available in limited print copies and digitally at all Oregon prisons.

At the time 1664 was established, there were a total of 1,664 federal and state prisons in the United States. Together these systems along with jails, juvenile facilities and immigration detention centers hold over 1.9 million people.

The mission of 1664 is to provide names and faces where there were once numbers and statistics. | **ECHO**

MAIL RULE CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

Department Aims to Reduce All Forms of Contraband

Written by Phillip Luna

The Oregon Department of Corrections has banned mail coming from CNA Entertainment, as of July 30.

The ban of CNA Entertainment, a business that sells non-explicit but sexually provocative photos, is the department's latest effort to stymie explicit content and other forms of contraband, mainly drugs, in correctional facilities.

According to mailroom staff, ODOC headquarters made the decision to ban CNA Entertainment because of the company's repeated attempts to send prohibited content to adults in custody.

"The mailrooms use OAR 291-131 to determine what meets the sexually explicit criteria," said Brian Stephen, ODOC Chief of Security.

The mailroom applies the rule most frequently when banning books that they have determined contain prohib-

ited content, or when reviewing incoming mail.

But some AICs have pointed out that the rule is not applied equally in other mediums.

The closed circuit institution channels play Swank-approved movies. In some situations, the book is banned for content, but the movie-version of the book plays on institution channels.

"I would imagine that there is a difference between watching a movie and possessing a publication or other physical item," said Stephen Cook, Strategic Initiatives Project Manager for ODOC's Office of Communications. "A similar argument could be made regarding why [AICs] can watch movies with people shooting guns, but you're not allowed to possess a gun yourself."

"The mail rule is the guiding docu-

ment for printed material, including such things as letters, books, magazines, calendars and photographs," said Cook. "The mail rule does not cover what is broadcast on TV channels or movies."

Magazine subscriptions fall under the purview of the mail rule, but the criteria for what is considered explicit content is slightly different for a magazine.

According to mailroom staff Park, magazines are considered reputable publications since there are verifiable records that models are 18 years of age. Some magazines with nudity have been approved through the mailroom, whereas individual photos with the same content are denied.

"This is why individual photos are rejected for nudity," said Park. "ODOC cannot verify the models are of consenting age." | **ECHO**

LIBRARY ADMIN CRACKS DOWN

Admin May Ban Checkout Program, Issue Fines

Written by Kurtis Thompson

Since the library's checkout program was restarted in April, many books have been returned damaged.

According to administration, they will be monitoring checked-out resources more closely. If resources are returned damaged, responsible parties will be restricted from the resource checkout and may be fined for the damaged book's cost.

"These resources are for everyone," said Library Coordinator M. Johnson. "Damaging or removing pages will not be tolerated."

Library administrators said those responsible for damaging resources

will not be "allowed to check out any further books for a set time decided by staff." They also said further disciplinary action may be taken, but did not specify what that would be.

According to ODOC's internal violation grid, the destruction or misuse of state property is—at minimum—a Property II violation, carrying a fine of \$25 which would be in addition to the cost of the damaged book. Some resource books are \$79.99 or more.

If a resource is damaged beyond use, it will be discarded. It will not be replaced because the library does not have a budget and fines are paid to the AIC Care fund, said the administrators.

Johnson said all program participants should review the responsibility card issued to them along with their checked-out book. On the card, the following is written:

"Do not trace the patterns or tear out the pages. If the book is damaged while in your possession contact the library immediately. You will be held accountable for the replacement of the book at full price if it is damaged. This book is available on a checkout system and will be checked for damage on return."

The library staff also said loaning the checked-out resources to other residents is prohibited.

"If further damage to the art books, manga or graphic novels continues they will be taken away," Johnson said. "All books in the general library are a privilege, not a right, so let's not ruin it for everyone." | **ECHO**

DONUTS, COFFEE AND A LITTLE APPRECIATION

GOGI Participants and Instructors Gather in the Multi-Purpose Building

Written by Logan Gimbel with contributions from Shahid Baskerville

Over 100 participants in Getting Out by Going In were invited down to the multi-purpose building on July 11 for an appreciation event. Staff members and GOGI board members gave speeches, presented certificates and handed out over 300 maple bars, which were provided by the Two Rivers bakery.

GOGI, a self-help program which began in 2002, teaches the power of positive thinking, self-reflection and mindfulness. Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution has a total of 667 GOGI participants who have completed a combined total of 1,958 courses.



Photos by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Importance of Change

Joe Byrnes, a correctional counselor who oversees the GOGI program, spoke about the importance of change and how difficult it can be. Byrnes said it's easy to become comfortable with routine and for those wishing to change, taking the first step can be terrifying.

"Change is inevitable. It's frequent and it's hard," said Byrnes. "In order to succeed you have to be ready to fail."

Byrnes said one of the unwritten rules of man is how men cannot show vulnerability, which is amplified in the prison setting. GOGI, however, is challenging that preconception. In order to get the most out of the program, participants must be willing to "go into themselves" and show vulnerability.

After thanking those in attendance for showing the willingness to engage in lasting change, Byrnes shared testimony from a staff member about GOGI.

"Lieutenant Alvarado, in the 16 years he's been here at EOIC, said he has never seen a program implemented

Correctional Counselor Joe Byrnes speaks at the podium on July 11, 2025 during the GOGI appreciation event in the multi-purpose building. Byrnes commended the participants on taking steps toward changing their lives.

with such impact and change on the lives of the population," said Byrnes. "That's coming from the Segregation Lieutenant. He sees it; we all see it."

**In order to
succeed you
have to be
ready to fail**

GOGI Helps Some with Coping

Keaton Stephens, who has been a part of GOGI since 2017, found it was able to help him cope with his sentence, find relief and "a little bit of purpose" in prison.

"When I first fell I was having a hard time sleeping and coping with my sentence. I felt my life was over and I had taken it for granted," said Stephens. "GOGI was just something I was able to grasp on to and start trying to find a little bit of purpose and service in prison."

After getting out of segregation at Snake River Correctional Institution, Stephens was ready to try something different. He credits GOGI for helping him change his situation and way of thinking.

He was not sure what to expect at first, but as he attended the meetings he found he was able to break stigmas, be vulnerable and grow.

Since first starting GOGI in 2017, Stephens has completed all 47 available courses, finishing some multiple times. Stephens thinks that the victim impact course or "Why Gang When You Can GOGI" helped him the most.

“If GOGI can work for me, it can work for anyone”

If GOGI Works for Me, it Can Work for You

Gerardo Cabrera-Cabrera spoke at the podium with an English translator. He shared his personal story. He said GOGI helped him release 40 years of resentment towards his father.

Raised by his single mother in Mexico, the only father figure Cabrera had was his uncle, who was physically abusive. As a result, he became a violent person and turned to alcohol and drugs to cope.

Cabrera remembers when he was 16 and his mother asked why he drank. He responded with: “If I had a father things would be different.”

Cabrera said that he later came to the United States hoping to have a better life and that things would be different.

“Everything changed when I met my wife and had two kids,” said Cabrera. “But I failed and went back to doing the same things as when I was younger. My actions got me a 20-year sentence.”

Two years into his sentence, Cabrera began attending GOGI meetings and realized it was a life saver. He has been a facilitator off and on since 2018.

Six months ago, while talking about the GOGI tool “ultimate freedom,” Cabrera realized he couldn’t continue to facilitate the meetings. The tool



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

A GOGI facilitator hands out donuts to participant Troy Kirk on July 11, 2025. Every participant received two maple bars which were made in the Two Rivers bakery.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Gerardo Cabrera-Cabrera, left, and Gonzalo Barbosa-Salgado pose for a photo after the GOGI appreciation event. Cabrera spoke at the podium during the event, sharing a personal story about how GOGI helped him. Barbosa translated for Cabrera.

teaches letting go of the past, but he couldn’t – he was still harboring feelings of resentment towards his absent father.

Using GOGI tools, he began writing down all his thoughts and feelings in a letter to his father. As he wrote, Cabrera said he felt like a “heavy weight” was lifted.

Three weeks ago, Cabrera mailed the letter. Then, for the first time in 40 years he spoke to his father over the phone.

“It was an easy conversation. I told him how I was doing and then to hand the phone to my sister” said Cabrera. “If GOGI can work for me, it can work for anyone.” |ECHO

AROUND EOCI



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Trevor Trollope poses on July 20, 2025, with flags he helped create in EOCI's welding shop.

FLAGS COMPLETED IN THE NATION'S MONTH OF INDEPENDENCE

Welding Shop Workers Master Creative Arts Project

Written by Chris Ainsworth

The last of six military-inspired flags found their home above a table used for breaks and meetings by physical plant workers at the end of July. The flags were the brainchild of tenured welding shop worker Gerry Hight, but completed by Trevor Trollope following Hight's transfer to a minimum-security facility in June.

Hight submitted the creative arts project for staff approval after fabricating the design on one of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution's physical plant computers. He created the plans so anyone working in the welding shop could recreate the project after he was no longer housed at the facility.

"Wherever the inspiration came from, it came on him hard. It took

precedence over everything else he was doing," Trollope said. "He was frantic towards the end, trying to get everything together so he could make it something other people would be able to do."

The six flags display an emblem of a military branch set to the right of the field of stars. The projects were designed with the stars and logos raised to give the flags a three-dimensional look.

"I love his work, and the beauty of his art," said Trollope. "I decided to take after his legacy. That is where my motivation came from, from Gary."

Creative arts projects are made with the intent to be sold to the public. The flags can be purchased through custom orders or sales held behind the facility. Sales are scheduled when enough inven-

tory is available, like the sale in June that showcased items made from the carpentry and welding shops.

These flags, however, were fashioned as display pieces only. Thanks to the plans created by Hight, any of the flags could be made for future orders.

"I speak loud and proud about [the creative arts program]," Trollope said. "All the money from the program goes right back into the shop."

Each of the flags takes around 30-man-hours to complete. The plans were created on a computer assisted design program, known as CAD. Completed plans are sent to a plasma table where each piece is cut out of stainless steel

using a plasma torch. After the pieces are cut, each needs to be cleaned and polished. An individual star takes about a minute and a half to polish.

When ready to assemble, the pieces are welded in place from the back using MIG welds—MIG stands for metal and inert gas. The technique is one of many learned in the facility's welding certification program.

"It took me a month to do these six. There was so much work. It was aggravating and frustrating," said Trollope. "You get six things done and realize you have to go back and redo steps. I was angry at Gary, then I loved Gary when they were done."

Currently, custom orders are unable to be purchased by adults in custody, but friends and family can contact physical plant staff to purchase one of the custom flags designed by Hight.

Each flag is priced at \$135. Now that Trollope has made each one he hopes to reduce the hours needed to complete them. **ECHO**

FIREWORKS continued from page 1

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

On July 4, 2025, residents of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution watch Pendleton's firework show through small panes of safety glass.

valuable than the pay, even if that experience comes at odd or inconvenient hours.

Hardegger, 40, said he prefers to work on holidays because the down time makes him reflect on what he has lost. He said he sometimes feels angry and alone, but he knows he can only blame himself.

"I'm the reason I'm here," he said. "I know that."

Hardegger has been incarcerated since he was 17. He started working in the plumbing shop in April 2022. He said learning to be a plumber has given him a sense of purpose.

"I took the holidays for granted before," Hardegger said. "You can't really experience the Fourth in here. You can't experience a lot of things. Being in prison stunts your growth as a person."

He is scheduled to see the parole board in 2026. If paroled, he said on the following Fourth of July, he'll be fishing with his feet dipped in the water.

Renfro, 42, has a static release date of 2030. He said being a licensed plumber will change his life and give him something he's never had before: a career.

"I don't mind working, because I want the experience," Renfro said. "The only thing I do on the Fourth is

call my kids. As long as I can do that, I'm fine."

Celebrating Behind the Fences

Kitchen workers also don't get the day off. Instead, they spend their morning preparing a special meal. Starting at 7 a.m., the smell of charcoal barbecue flooded the prison compound. Holidays are one of the few times a year when the prison's barbecue is used.

For Independence Day, the cooks made burgers, potato salad, watermelon and once-a-year corn on the cob. Barbecuing burgers for the more than 1,400 residents of EOCI takes all morning. The cooks are at the grill until holiday lunch is served at noon.

"There is a statewide, standardized menu," said Liza Emory, EOCI's food service manager. "But we make special meals on the holidays because that's the normal thing to do."

The men at EOCI look forward to the holiday meals. Trevor Trollope, an EOCI resident, said he and his unofficial cousin, Hugh Crow, were excited for the food.

"We get a good meal. We got burgers," he said, chuckling, "plus we ac-

(Continued on next page...)



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Past several chain link prison fences, a firework booms in the night sky on July 4, 2025.

AROUND EOCI

(...continued from previous page)

tually came up on a couple extra patties, so we'll be eating triple burgers this year."

A Pop of Color in a Dreary Day

Pendleton's fireworks show is visible from a handful of EOCI's 20 housing units. Generally, residents on these units will gather in common areas to catch a glimpse of the show through 4-inch wide panes of safety glass.

For most residents, moving to an east-facing housing unit is a long-term

goal. Trollope said he and Crow were planning to watch the fireworks together for the first time since their individual incarcerations.

"Years ago, we talked about being over here on the east side together so we could see the fireworks," said Trollope. "We'll actually be able to hang out and watch fireworks together, and it'll be awesome."

And Hardegger, the plumbing apprentice, said the day feels different

because of the chance to see fireworks. Before transferring to EOCI, he hadn't seen even a glimpse of fireworks for 10 years. Now, they remind him that there's life outside the fences, and they serve as a break in the monotony of prison life.

"Everything in here is the same muted color. It's the same walls, same doors every day," Hardegger said. "With fireworks, we get to see bright colors that we don't see every day."

| ECHO

STILL A PATRIOT

Veterans Celebrate Independence Day in Prison

Written by Phillip Luna, The Echo and Berit Thorson, East Oregonian
Published online with the East Oregonian



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Residents of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution gather to watch a softball game—a common pastime for incarcerated people.

While Independence Day was work as usual for some, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution resident Paul Reyes spent his morning breaking his routine.

Along with four others, Reyes, a U.S. Army Veteran, completed a popular Crossfit workout called Murph as a way to demonstrate his patriotism.

"Even though I'm incarcerated," Reyes said, "I'm still a patriot."

The workout was named after Lt. Michael Murphy, a U.S. Navy Seal who was killed in Afghanistan in 2005. It's a 1-mile run, followed by 100 pull ups, 200 pushups, 300 squats and another 1-mile run. The workout is completed in a 20-pound weighted vest.

Weighted vests are not available in the correctional setting, so Reyes ran the Murph without it.

Reyes served two tours in Iraq, and in 2011 a blast of a roadside bomb injured him. After his service, he struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorder, which he said contributed to his incarceration in 2015.

His prison job is training service animals for Joys of Living Assistance Dogs, a program in which incarcerated men train service dogs for persons with disabilities.

Some of the canines Reyes has trained now support veterans with PTSD.

The JLAD trainers work and live with the service animals. It is an all-day, nonstop job. But on July 4, Reyes was able to orchestrate some time away from training.

At 8:30 a.m., he donned running shorts and tennis shoes before hitting the recreation yard. He started with a 6 minute and 52 second mile around the crooked little prison track. After more than 43 minutes, an exhausted, sweat-

(Continued on next page...)

drenched Reyes stopped the timer on his wristwatch: Murph complete.

In the evening, many facility residents attended the recreation yard. Some people there participated in a game of slow-pitch softball.

From the pitcher's mound, a high-lighter yellow softball was underhand tossed to a player with a tethered aluminum bat. The tether is a safety precaution. The clink of a pop fly, the

cheers and heckles of spectators, the muted thud as a mitt closes around a ball thrown to first — the sounds of the game are universal.

Jerry Shaw, an incarcerated U.S. Army veteran, was a spectator. He said watching softball on the Fourth of July felt uniquely American. Shaw, 43, celebrated two Independence Days in Iraq, but now he celebrates from behind razor-wire fences.

"It's not what I expected for my life," he said.

There are about 180 veterans housed at EOCl, or approximately 13% of the population.

Shaw said he wished the facility would do something to acknowledge veterans.

"Yes, I'm incarcerated. But I'm also a combat veteran," he said. "That didn't change." | **ECHO**

ALL ABOUT THEM BIRDS

Some Residents Find Baby Barn Swallows Unable to Fly

Written by Logan Gimbel



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

A barn swallow rests on a chain link fence on June 9, 2025. The nestling was pushed from its nest and is unable to fly more than a few feet at a time.

Nestled in outcroppings around the institution are many non-human inhabitants; however, these particular residents are free to fly away whenever they wish.

Residents of the institution may see baby swallows, called nestlings, on the ground. These nestlings may have fallen out of one of the many mud nests around the facility, or may have been

shoved out by an unmated male swallow in an attempt to break up a mated pair.

The nestlings that have either fallen out or have been shoved out of the nest may not be able to fly away, allowing some individuals to handle the infant bird. Contrary to popular belief, nestlings that have been handled by humans will still be accepted by the

mother, as most birds do not recognize human scents.

The barn swallow, a passerine songbird, almost exclusively makes its nests on manmade structures. Passerines are a group of small to medium primarily perching songbirds. More than half of the world's known bird species are considered passerine.

A quick and agile flyer, the barn swallow uses its speed to hunt flying insects, reducing the bug population wherever it lives. The speed and agility of this aerial hunter comes from its slender and streamlined body, long pointed wings and forked tail.

Both male and females of the species have long tail feathers, with the males' tail feathers typically 18% longer. The females select a mate based on the length of his tail feathers.

According to the website All About Birds, barn swallows once nested in caves throughout North America, but as cities became more prevalent, the species adapted. Only one population of barn swallows, which reside in the Channel Islands off the coast of California, still regularly use caves.

The most distinguishing feature of the barn swallow is its deeply forked tail, which it received by stealing fire from the sun, according to Native American legend. As the swallow was flying away an angry deity hurled a firebrand, burning away the thief's middle tail feathers. | **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

POW WOW continued from page 1

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

A dancer in full regalia, left, prepares to join behind the honor guard in the opening ceremony of the pow wow on July 25, 2025.

Heartbeat of the Dance

“The pow wows encompass everything about our people,” EOCI resident Marcos Delgado-Carter said. “It brings us all together in unity.”

The event can last a single day, though some last a month or more. A pow wow can range from including a single tribe to numerous tribes depending on the event.

“I have been coming to the [EOCI] pow wow since the beginning. The first one, I was there,” resident Librado Pena of the Azetec tribe in Mexico said. “It is an experience for us to share with all people, not just Native. We share our tradition, our food, our dances.”

Marching to the beat of the Soaring Hawk Singer’s drum circle, the color guard began the pow wow by presenting flags with both patriotic and cultural significance. The flag bearers walked around the room followed by men and women dancing to the me-

lodric rhythm of the drums. The dancers invited everyone to join, regardless of cultural heritage or spiritual beliefs.

“The drum symbolizes your heartbeat.

That is how we get grounded,” said two-year drum circle member Wacho Pratt. “Each of the thunder strikes is your heartbeat. That is what I have always been taught, listen to your heartbeat while you are drumming.”

Drums, dancing and singing were a main focus of the event. People would often break from conversations to dance in the center of the room with friends and family. And they were almost always following the one of the elders of the event, a man simply known as Edmo.

For the first time the EOCI pow wow welcomed a dancer to perform throughout the event. In the past, attendees of the event were invited to dance, but including a dedicated dancer was a new experience. Dressed in regalia that

included an eagle bustle and eagle fan, the dancer was Karuk tribe member Sikye West-Merrill, brother of EOCI resident Joseph Dexter-Merrill.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Volunteers Gale Ireland and Veronica Manderjano cook fry bread in the west yard before the pow wow began on July 25, 2025.

Not a Religion, a Culture

Jered McMichael, member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, described the event as an opportunity for tribal members to share parts of their individual culture. McMichael volunteers at the institution multiple times a week, offering his knowledge of Native American culture and heritage.

“There are songs from our ancestors, the same songs sung for thousands of years,” said McMichael. “By singing those songs it is showing respect – respect for the culture, respect for the ancestors. And it also helps bring them here with us. The spirit from all these folks are here with that song.”

Food is another significant focus of Native American culture. Often referred to as first foods, some of the items served included fry bread, elk and salmon. The fry bread was made fresh at the event. The salmon was caught and blessed specifically for the pow wow by the Grande Ronde Tribe near Oregon’s coast. The elk was also donated and blessed.

“The food and atmosphere reminds me of my family, of my home,” said Steven Neal Anderson, who sang a song significant to his tribe before the meal. “This is not religion. It is culture.”

Elder Edmo was also the event’s storyteller. He took the stage sharing stories with the crowd. In his first story the elder called upon the help of a few puppets to tell his tale. Another story required crowd participation, engaging everyone in attendance.

A pow wow committee planned and organized the event. They consisted of four adults in custody, multiple volunteers, family, friends and help from the facility’s chaplains. Preparation started long before the day of the pow wow.

“There is a lot of pieces to this puzzle.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Fry bread cooking in oil out on the west yard for the 2025 pow wow. Volunteers cooked the bread outside while the pow wow began in the multi-purpose building.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

On July 25, 2025 an attendee at the pow wow adds toppings to fry bread, a traditional Native American food. The food was served in the multi-purpose building by staff and volunteers.

There are a lot of unknowns,” said EOCI’s Chaplain DiSalvo. “Most people here, like staff, have a very Western way of thought, very left minded. How [Native Americans] do things, there is

more of a flow to it.”

The chaplains were mostly involved with scheduling, background checks,

Continued on next page...

AROUND EOCl



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Top left: AICs, volunteers, family and friends gather around one of the two drums to provide the July 25, 2025 pow wow with its heartbeat.

Bottom left: Items made by AICs in the weekly beading and weaving classes fill a gift table.

Top right: In the multi-purpose building Justice Ashpole, right, poses with his spouse and with fellow AIC, Manuel Pinedo, during the event.

Bottom right: Volunteers Trish Jordan and Lana Hecoceta pose with gifts made by AICs at the pow wow.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

visitor authorizations and administrative work. The two major outside organizers of the event were Jared McMichael and Trish Jordan. Jordan is the main liaison for Red Lodge, a Native American non-profit organization that works with incarcerated men and women.

Hand-Crafted Culture

Beading and weaving classes took place multiple times a week at the facility creating gifts. The gift table displayed chokers, dream catchers, necklaces, bracelets, woven baskets and

intricate bead-worked earrings and medallions.

“Some of these things are dying out with our elders. I am just glad I get to teach people some of these ways,” beading instructor Marcos Delgado-Carter said. “It means it is being passed on. Something that I was taught by my grandma and something that she was taught when she was a kid.”

Near the end of the event, Wacho Pratt and Joseph Dexter-Merrill handed out various gifts made by AICs to the volunteers, including a painting donated by the facility’s painting program de-

picting an Native American. The institution made it possible for men to mail the gifts they had made if family members were unable to attend.

The event’s conclusion does not mean a halt to the practice of culture and heritage for the many Native Americans in custody at EOCl. Smudges, sweats, drum circles, beading and basket weaving take place without missing a beat. Preparations for the next pow wow are already underway with a number of gifts already completed and songs being practiced for 2026. | **ECHO**

SELF-HELP AND ENTERTAINMENT

Three Edovo Apps Worth Reviewing

Written by Brian Bement

Self-help and entertainment can be found by residents on Edovo, an education application on institution tablets.

Residents will discover a variety of information from science and art to mathematics and more. Some courses offered may help residents prepare for GED testing. Here are three educational courses available on Edovo:

1. Many residents have been talking about Veritasium, found in the science category. Veritasium is where curiosity meets cutting edge science through storytelling, experiments and misunderstood physics. It is perfect for bed-

dwelling physicists. Their newest video is “The Biggest Misconception in Football” with Tom Brady.

2. The art category on Edovo includes writing and poetry, music, art, books, audio books, sports and society. The art section has MasterClass videos with earnable certifications.

The newest MasterClass is “Dan Brown Teaches Writing Thrills.” There are many MasterClass courses on subjects such as cooking, gardening, acting, movie producing, writing and many more.

3. The academic category has Post-Test: Math. This course is a practice test to help people prepare for math testing by simulating GED exams.

The material in this course is designed for students to work at their own pace.

According to Edovo, educating people in prison reduces recidivism by 43%. Many adults struggle with core classes, such as math. Former education director Eddie Alves said nearly every degree requires competency in math 65 or higher.

Fortunately, Edovo has education tools and resources focused on building math skills.

Additionally, many courses earn certificates which some residents have used in parole board hearings. | **ECHO**

LEGAL ASSISTANT TRAINEES FOR LAW LIBRARY

NOW HIRING

Applications are being accepted for legal assistant trainee(s) in the EOCI law library

The EOCI law library is accepting letters of interest and applications for legal assistant trainees.

To be considered, AICs **must** do all of the following by Aug. 29, 2025

1. Review the minimum requirements below and be sure you are eligible to apply.
2. Send a kyte (AIC Communication Form CD214) to the Law Library Coordinator indicating your interest in this opportunity to be trained as a legal assistant. One page maximum.
3. Complete and submit a job application to IWP with legal assistant trainee in the section titled “position applied for.”

The minimum requirements for candidates include the following:

- GED, High School Diploma or above
- Non-cash Incentive Level 2 or 3
- Minimum of 1 year misconduct free
- Ability to follow directions
- Ability to communicate complicated instructions, interpretations, and to maintain as much confidentiality as possible
- No DOC record of staff assault(s)
- No DOC record of prior removal from library assignment that resulted in an adjudicated disciplinary report (DR)
- Minimum of 2 years remaining in sentence

Desired attributes may include, but are not limited to:

- Bilingual – fluent in Spanish, including legal terminology
- Knowledge of the legal system, including Oregon & federal
- Legal research capabilities
- Legal writing skills
- Typing skills
- Able to work independently
- Must be able to work well as a team member

A trainee position does no guarantee an assignment as a legal assistant following the 16-week training program.

PRAS points will start at a minimum of 15 points during the training. AIC legal assistants who have completed training and are assigned as legal assistants will earn up to 17 points.

AROUND EOCI



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Participants in the activity night play cornhole on July 3, 2025. A thrown cornhole bag appears slightly off-course, but flies in a curved trajectory to land on the target board.

ACTIVITY NIGHT IN MULTI

A Hodgepodge of Tournaments Makes for a Fun Outing

Written by Kurtis Thompson with Shahid Baskerville

The gym echoed with voices, laughter and bouncing basketballs. More than a dozen people were gathered to compete in a 3-point shootout, heckling, encouraging and sweating their way through 30-second shot-clock windows. Just behind them were three sets of cornhole lanes with 12 people sending beanbags on arcing flights, pumping fists with scores and groaning over misses. Behind the more physical activities were tables of people deploying strategies in either Magic the Gathering or chess – two highly technical games requiring concentration despite the noise.

In short, it was the welcome, organized chaos of game night in multi.

On the warm evening of July 1, about 60 residents gathered to compete from 6 to 8 p.m. There were no awards – just bragging rights.

“I didn’t do much in the last two events, but now I’m more interested,”

said 3-point contestant John Lewis. “There’re all these different games and just a positive atmosphere, so I decided to give it all a try. I think it’s pretty cool. Templin and Hall give us this stuff to do.”

Lewis was referring to Recreation Specialists Jerrad Templin and Zach Hall who run events and support pro-social programming at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

3-Point Shootout

The 3-point shot basketball contest was refereed by resident Shane Goins.

It was participant Shane Early’s first time attending activity night. He hit a hot streak of 5 baskets as he shot, finishing in first place with a total of 8 baskets.

“I’ve been into sports since I was a kid,” Early said. “I wouldn’t call myself a basketball player – just more of an

athlete. I feel good about this win. It’s my first event, first victory.”

Jesus Camarena said he expected to take first place, but came in second after a three-way tie-breaker. He swore victory next time.

“I want a rematch!” Camarena said. “First time, second place. Next time win.”

Treshaun Thomas also participated in the basketball contest and took third place.

“I got robbed and want a rematch,” Thomas said. “We’ll have a better event next time – where I win.”

Cornhole Beef

A last-minute team change created controversy in the two-man cornhole tournament. Jeremy Bonsignore and John Benge, defending champions for about two years, were split up for the night’s game play.

Cornhole team requests are done by sending a kyte to multi and are processed in the order received. According to Bonsignore, he and Benge planned on teaming up again, but Benge was requested by Dominick Geronimo.

“[Benge] got snaked from me,” Bonsignore said. “Everybody knows we’re defending champs.”

Geronimo said he was tired of coming in second place and wanted to “win for once.” He has been good friends with Benge for eight years, and since they spent so much time together Geronimo figured nobody would mind.

Bonsignore did mind, and Geronimo said he was very upset. However, the three have since made up.

Bonsignore and Benge found themselves on opposing teams for the final match. Tony Hadd and Bonsignore played against Geronimo and Benge who won the competition 24-14.

“We knew we were going to win,” said Geronimo.

A Magic the Gathering Gathering

Aside from physical sports, Magic the Gathering and chess were hard-fought. Jacob Pomerleau was referee for the card game that he also helped build decks for.

“There wasn’t as much time as I’d have liked to play-test the Magic decks,” he said. “But we’re poking people’s brains for feedback on how we can improve.”

Magic the Gathering and chess often take longer to finish than other tournaments. Due to the number of players and length of play, championship matches carried over to the following evening of July 2. Residents Donald Bonine and Chad Smith faced off in Magic, with Bonine winning the matches 2-0.

“I love the fact we can get together and have pro-social games,” Bonine said.

Bonine has been playing Magic the Gathering since 1994. Smith, however, has much less experience – he started playing six years ago after he became incarcerated. Smith also participated in the 3-point basketball shootout.

“I’m so much better at Magic than



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

E3 resident Cody Pangelinan, right, plans his next play in Magic the Gathering during the July 3, 2025 activity night event.

basketball,” Smith said. “I think it’s awesome the events have come back. Anything to get off my bunk for a while.”

The Art of War, Chess-Style

The chess championship was held one table over from the Magic com-

petitors. Residents Eduardo Gaytan-Maldonado and Timothy Johnson were the final players in the three-match series.

They were focused and quiet, forming battle-lines with multiple moves and several minutes before a single attack was made. Then, in rapid tit for tat succession, eight plastic troops left the board in four seconds. End-game play took much longer.

All three rounds played out this way, with Gaytan-Maldonado winning the last two.

“Man, that was a close one! I thought he had me,” Gaytan-Maldonado said.

The competitors were close enough in skill that neither one knew who would win the competition.

“I used to be a lot better, but I’m really busy now,” Johnson said. “I was pretty good when I was studying.”

According to Recreation Specialist Hall, there may not be an activity night in August due to staff scheduling. However, he believes events will restart in September. |ECHO



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Chess competitors face off in the mid-brackets leading up to the July 3, 2025

THE ECHO INTERVIEWS



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

F2 resident Kory Sturgess, the creator and founder of Caged Wizard Games LLC., poses for a photo in July, 2025.

CAGED WIZARD GAMES

Kory Sturgess Develops a Board Game While Incarcerated

Written by Kurtis Thompson

Trapped in a cage, a wizened old man sits staring through cold iron bars at the only other colors not drab and flat like the rest of his unadorned environment. There is another just like him staring back, garbed in purple with matching pointed cap. The sound of plodding feet comes from nearby, down the hallway beyond the old man's view, and he can tell by the gait who it is, or rather what it is – a patrolling Orc intent on keeping them trapped. After their kidnapper passes with a sneer, the captives wait until his steps are no longer heard and summon their diminutive familiars – the Kobolds, their only hope of escape.

This is the premise of a multiplayer card game developed by Kory Sturgess, a new business owner and resident of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. The game is called Caged Wizards, and it is the flagship title of Sturgess' new company, Caged Wizard Games, LLC, established in April.

In the Making

Sturgess said he has been an avid gamer – both tabletop and digital – since childhood. He had always wanted to be a game developer, so he invested some of his incarcerated time to become one. Once Sturgess set his mind to game de-

velopment, he followed procedure and got a Division 119 authorization on Nov. 20, 2024.

The Division 119 is Oregon Department of Corrections' process which allows adults in custody to market their creations to the public. Once he received approval for his business and products, he set to work.

Creating Caged Wizards took Sturgess approximately eight months. Using index cards and colored pencils purchased from canteen, Sturgess made 200 cards for his game, each with hand-drawn and colored art. He plans to have this art updated with professional image-editing software once the game is market-ready.

Creating and inking the art was not the hardest part, however – it was developing the game mechanics.

Every game has a system which goes beyond the rules. In order for a game to be fun, it must be both challenging and fair. To make it fair, the odds of success or failure must be balanced using complex mathematics. Figuring out the likelihood of rolling a six with dice or drawing the ace of spades from a 52-card deck are the types of mathematics used in game balancing.

Fortunately for Sturgess, he has a Bachelor's of Science degree with a major in mathematics obtained from Southern Oregon University. Using mathematical theory, Sturgess has been creating both the structure and components for his products.

"This has always been something I've wanted to do," he said. "Before [incarceration], I was always playing games. Games have a hidden math system that's built in, and I have a background in math ... this would be a way to take my passion and make a little bit of money out of it."

But Sturgess needed more than math—he also needed people to test his game, which can be more frustrating than it sounds. Sometimes systems do not work as intended, and it takes multiple rounds of testing to make progress. It took six months to find balance for Caged Wizards.

"Figuring out the mechanics is a lot of trial and error," Sturgess said. "That's what it really comes down to, is trial and error—and putting my group of friends through a lot of torture and tests."

Facility resident and Sturgess' friend Glen Wheeler play-tested the game and gave feedback which was incorporated into its system.

"Testing [Sturgess'] games has been a fun experience," said Wheeler. "Taking a concept and turning it into something playable was tedious at times, but gratifying."

Wheeler witnessed the start of

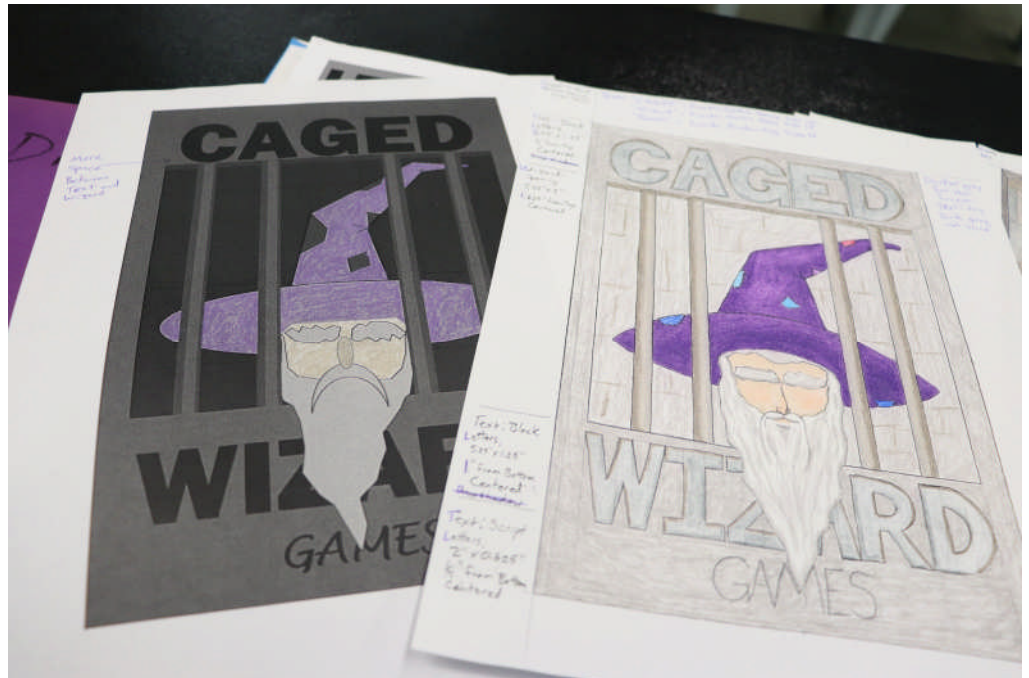


Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

The prototype logo for Caged Wizard Games, LLC lays on top of the digitally-created version.

Caged Wizards and said he "can't wait to see what the future holds."

Caged Wizard Games, LLC

After Sturgess had his Division 119 authorization, he completed the first prototype of his flagship product before his business, Caged Wizard Games, was established. During the last stages of game development, he realized getting a business set up prior to marketing his product would give him credibility and create options for solvency.

Sturgess said having a business also gave him a sense of responsibility which helped keep him committed to success.

At first, he had no idea how to start a business. Fortunately, Dan Harper, a former resident of EOCI and Sturgess' friend, had a how-to guide on starting a company in Oregon. Sturgess used the guide to help direct his father, Michael Sturgess, in beginning the complicated process of setting up a business, which led them to a streamlined online process.

"Kory and I made it a little harder than it could have been," Michael said. "I went to the Oregon Secretary of State's website and it walks you through the process step by step."

Using this online system, found at sos.oregon.gov, Michael registered the business name, created an account and followed their checklist for establishing a new business. It was uncertain progress at first, but by April 29 the process was complete. Caged Wizard Games, LLC became an official business for a grand total of \$100 in fees.

"After getting news my business was official, I felt validated," Sturgess said. "To have an official license means I now have an opportunity to share my ideas with people everywhere."

To Market Prototype

After completing the first test runs of his card game and writing instructions, Sturgess sent it to his family so they could test it.

(continued on next page...)

THE ECHO INTERVIEWS

(...continued from previous page)

"I sent the prototype to my kids," Sturgess said. "They have the instructions and I've told them nothing about it ... so it's going to be a blind play-test with my target age group."

Sturgess' children are 3, 11 and 14 years old. He plans to use their feedback to make sure the instructions were clear, to see if problems came up and if they enjoyed themselves.

If his kids give a thumbs-up, Sturgess' next step will be making the final market-ready version of Caged Wizards. At this stage, he plans to use image editing software to give the art a crisper, more professional look.

Once the art is complete, Sturgess will use mass manufacturing companies such as Board Game Makers to make his product.

"There are companies online who basically produce games," Sturgess said. "You just upload PDFs of what you've made, pick from different options to include and they make the game and ship it."

These organizations work similarly to print-on-demand publishers like Amazon.

"Obviously, the more you order the less expensive it is, but I would do some small orders so I could get some good pictures of it for Kickstarter," he added.

Sturgess plans to upload his product to Kickstarter, an online fundraising platform. He will use the funds to purchase larger batches of his game, and then use a marketing company such as Flat River Games to get Caged Wizards in stores.

A Cauldron of Concepts

Sturgess has other game ideas stewing in the pot as well. He said development, manufacturing and marketing for those will be similar to Caged Wizards.

"I have several different ideas, I'd say 19 or so," he said. "There's game journals I'm working on, which you can use for planning campaigns for role-playing games. I've also got other card games, like Horseshoes and Hand Grenades which involves tossing cards at targets, and then there's a scenario-based story game I call The Station."

The Station is similar to another title called Betrayal at House on the Hill.

Both are multiplayer games which require players to explore and solve problems. One of the big differences is his game takes place on a space station with stories, situations and solutions unique to space.

"The Station is basically an interactive create-your-own-adventure book for multiple people," Sturgess said. "You're members of a crew who found this abandoned space station, and you go in to explore to see if there's anything worth salvaging. Then one of 25 or more preplanned scenarios play out."

Sturgess plans to petition EOCI to have copies of Caged Wizards and The Station donated to the facility once they are complete.

"I would love to see physical copies of my games," he said. "I want to see people sitting at a table, playing Caged Wizards or another game I made. That would be so cool."

After Sturgess' family finishes testing Caged Wizards, he will move on to funding, production and marketing. He hopes to have his game on store shelves by the end of 2026. | **ECHO**

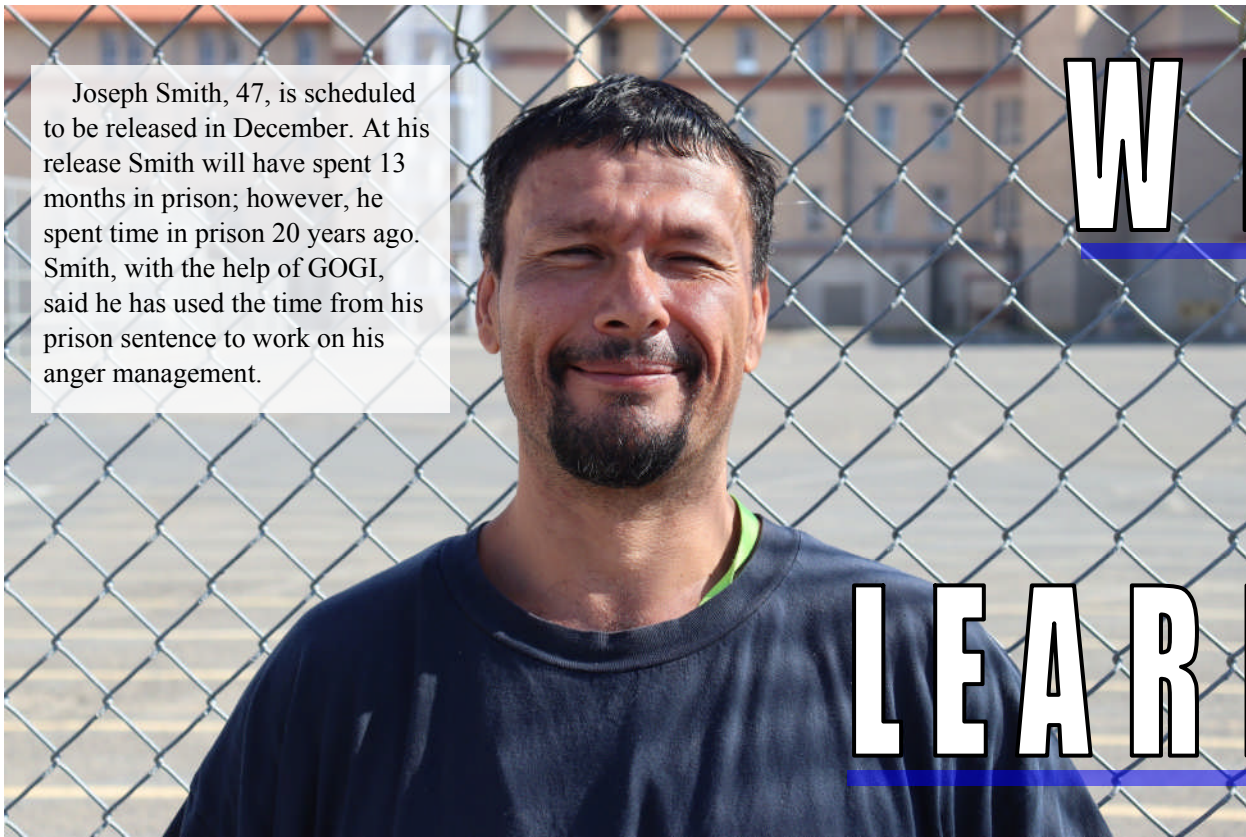


Photos by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Above: Caged Wizards game cards are held during game play. The cards are hand-drawn and colored by Kory Sturgess, the game's creator. "Orc Inspection" is on top.

Right: Sturgess plays a session of Caged Wizards with two friends in June, 2025.





Joseph Smith, 47, is scheduled to be released in December. At his release Smith will have spent 13 months in prison; however, he spent time in prison 20 years ago. Smith, with the help of GOGI, said he has used the time from his prison sentence to work on his anger management.

Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

With Joseph Smith

Interview by Logan Gimbel

One thing that surprised me about prison was...

It's a lot easier time now compared to when I was in prison 20 years ago. It was a lot different then.

One thing I wish I had never wasted money on is...

I haven't really wasted any money this time. I haven't really spent a lot of money. I've been pretty frugal.

The food I'm looking forward to eating the most is...

Spanish food, I love Spanish food, hot food in particular. Fried chimichangas, chili rancheros and fried chicken.

I wish I had spent less time doing...

I'm living in a dorm right now, I kinda wish I would have stayed in a cell. Because I am not programming as much as I once was. I am spending a lot more time conversating and not programming.

Before coming to prison, I would consider myself...

Before prison I was a very angry and introverted person. I've taken this time to get control of my anger and do some self-reflecting and self-improving. When it came to this prison sentence I felt I needed it.

Now I consider myself...

A lot more mellow, thinking smarter, using the smarter part of

my brain which is a GOGI tool. More in control of my thoughts and not reacting to things right away that bother me. A more positive thinker.

The program that helped me the most...

GOGI. I have done GOGI packets one through four. I am working on my anger management GOGI book. I am also doing pro-social life packets that are helpful. But GOGI has been a mainstay in my programming and has helped me a lot in keeping me positive.

The change I'd like to see the most in prison...

The way things work in segregation. When you get released from segregation you have to work 30 days free on top of being fined. It feels like a triple punishment.

What I've learned...

Patience. Patience is definitely something I have learned and I am still working on it.

I am looking forward to... Being with my son, I have a great relationship with my boy. He's 17 and I can't wait to be hanging out with him again. It tears me up.

A piece of advice I could give to someone new to prison is... Mind your own business and stay to yourself. Keep your head up, stay positive and do you. | ECHO

AROUND EOCI

TOO HARD FOR THE YARD

Cicada Killers Found at EOCI; Scares Some Residents

Written by Kurtis Thompson



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

A cicada killer sits on a white sheet of paper in July, 2025. The insect was found on the east yard of the correctional facility.

“After I stab my victims until they can’t move, I feed them to my children,” she said.

Okay, maybe nobody actually said that, but this is basically what the female cicada killer does.

Residents out at yard have found discarded chitin husks of the insects, and some have seen the giant wasps flitting around. Often mistaken for “murder hornets,” the cicada killer is actually quite docile in comparison.

The state of Washington and British Columbia had reported finding northern giant hornets (commonly called

murder hornets) on their lands in 2019. This stoked fear of those honey-bee-killing insects migrating across the country like genocidal maniacs. According to pest control specialists at Western Exterminator, people can “rest assured” that these bugs have no workable invasion plans.

Since discovery, two individual bugs were squashed in northwest Washington and one nest has been exterminated in British Columbia, according to Western Exterminator.

There are many differences between the cicada killer and the murder hornet,

but here are a few characteristics people can use to properly identify these two insects.

The murder hornet is very aggressive, lives in large colonies with a queen, drones and workers, plus their stings can penetrate thick material and are very painful. They also decimate bee colonies.

Cicada killers, however, are less aggressive unless agitated. They do not have queens, workers or drones and do not instinctively protect their nests. Males have no stingers, but females do. Their primary prey are cicadas which the female paralyzes with their stinger for larvae food. They have no interest in honey bees.

The two insects can be roughly the same size, but murder hornets are bigger – 1.5 to 2 inches in length. One obvious visual difference is their heads: murder hornets have large bright orange heads, and cicada killers have small brown heads.

While the cicada killer is more docile, they should still be left alone. Though males have no stingers they may still bite. Females do have stingers, but mostly pose a threat to people who may be severely allergic, Western Exterminator said. The females use their stingers to paralyze cicadas for larvae food.

People can avoid agitating the insects by leaving them alone. The nests are built underground in well-drained soil, so being mindful of where one steps or sits will help avoid bites or stings. **| ECHO**

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 or Jaylene Stewart.

THE FIRST MAJOR ARC

A Book Review of “Wind and Truth” by Brandon Sanderson

Written by Logan Gimbel

“**Wind and Truth**,” a 147-chapter epic published December 2024, concludes what author Brandon Sanderson calls “the first major arc” of the 10-book series and marks the mid-way point in the Stormlight Archive.

The Stormlight Archive is a fantasy series that focuses on the emotional impacts of war and loss and its traumatic effects on mental health – something many fantasy novels ignore.

Readers should start with book one “The Way of Kings,” which is the start of Kaladin and Shallan’s long and difficult struggle to mental wellness.

“Wind and Truth,” focuses on the contest of champions between Dalinar and Odium. While the days count down and Dalinar seeks an edge against Odium’s champion, war rages across the land. The coalition forces lead by Adolin, Jasnah, Sigzil and Venli desperately defend their lands and cities from the armies of Odium.

As the story progresses readers will

finally learn the secrets of the radiants and their heralds, humanity’s arrival on Roshar and the mysteries of Shinarovar and the gods of the Cosmere.

Sanderson does an excellent job narrating the effects of mental and emotional trauma which many of the characters face throughout the series. Kaladin, Shallan and Szeth all struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder but cope with it in different ways.

Kaladin, like many returning combat veterans, struggles with finding a place for himself after retiring from fighting. As he comes to terms with his actions and learns to cope with PTSD, Kaladin spends much of book five helping Szeth on his journey to his homeland.

Shallan suffered an extremely traumatic event during childhood causing

her mind to fracture, creating different personalities to help her deal with various stressful situations. Much of her arc revolves around becoming less reliant on these alternate personas and learning to be true to herself.

Book five leaves readers with a message of remaining true to themselves, practicing self-forgiveness and understanding that no matter how difficult it becomes, it never hurts to try again.

“One more try,” said Kaladin. “Just once more.” | **ECHO**

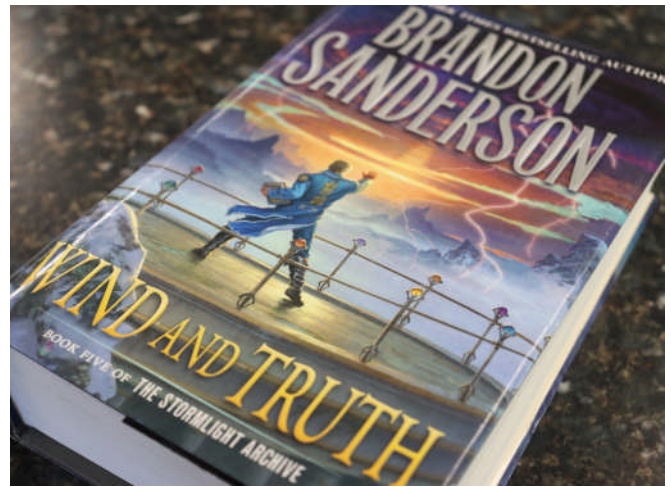


Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

“Wind and Truth” is book five of 10 in the Stormlight Archive series by Brandon Sanderson.

READING WITH THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE

Taking Small Breaks While Reading Can Improve Results

Written by Brian Bement

There is a time management method which can be applied to reading exercises to sharpen the mind, relieve stress and slow cognitive decline.

The Pomodoro technique involves working for set periods of time followed by breaks. Pomodoro is the Italian word for tomato, which technique-creator Francesco Cirillo used to label the short breaks. He chose pomodoro after a tomato-shaped kitchen timer.

The Prison Alliance, a prison reform advocacy group, suggests applying Cirillo’s technique to reading in 25

minute intervals.

Combining the Pomodoro technique and reading involves six steps:

1. Choose the reading material
2. Set a timer for 25 minutes
3. Read the chosen material
4. Pause reading when the timer rings and take a short break
5. Return to step 2 and repeat a total of four intervals
6. Then, break for 20 to 30 minutes

These steps can continue until reading is complete, but the objective is to finish at least four intervals.

According to studies by the University of Sussex, reading has numerous benefits. Stress levels drop by up to 68% after six minutes of reading.

The rate is faster than going for a walk, drinking tea or listening to music, all of which have been proven to reduce stress.

Additionally, people who read regularly in mid-life have a 32% slower rate of cognitive decline in old age. | **ECHO**

GOOD TO KNOW



Photos by Phillip Luna/The Echo

A glove and bright yellow softball sit in the grass outside the baseball diamond at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

A SOFTBALL SEASON OF MOVES

Units Moving East and West Makes for Unpredictable League Schedule

Written by Brian Bement

The correctional facility's ongoing stairwell renovation has caused units to be relocated in June and July. EOCI's sports leagues are separated by east and west side, and softball players have experienced a tumultuous and unpredictable season as a result.

Emotions were high on a June morning when the housing assignment office moved units A1 and B4 to E3 and E4, respectively.

A few members of the softball teams chose to relocate to other units, rather than move to the east side. Additionally, players said the move and potential future moves made them apprehensive about continuing the season.

"The move was a loss of our [west side] fan base and left players discouraged to continue the season," said E3 coach Justin Dreger.

Referee Shane Goins said the recreation department has had challenges scheduling games because they are unsure when units will move. They

have done their best to accommodate the fluid renovation schedule, he said.

A1's first game as E3 was against a familiar foe—they played an undefeated E4, formerly B4, on July 6.

The game cracked off with Neal Wells of E4 hitting a home run. The top of the first inning was 52 minutes. E4 scored 19 runs before the first out.

E4 hit a fly ball to left field and shortstop Micheal Marler made a superman dive to catch the ball. Spectators and both teams went wild with fist pumps, high fives and cheers.

The softball diamond was so loud, residents on the weight pile thought E3 won the game, said Goins.

"E4 were good sports and they rooted for E3," said Goins.

Due to a staffing shortage, the game ended at the top of the second inning. E4 won 24-0.

"E4 has a good squad. They are team

players and they got the top four heavy hitters," said referee Christopher Johns. "Having more teams this season on the east side because of the moves made for a great season."

Sports fans were looking forward to a matchup of E4 and H1 on July 19, as both teams were expected to be undefeated.

But, E4 had their first loss of the season on the day prior against H2.

According to a symphony of E4 voices, the loss can be attributed to roster changes. Three E4 players recently moved to different units.

E4 hoped for redemption when they played H1 the following night.

"This has been the game E4's been waiting for all year," said Goins.

It was a chance to prove themselves against one of the east side's best teams.

In the sixth inning, E4's Eduardo Gaytan crossed homeplate head-over-heels after a wild throw to the catcher. Gaytan missed the plate and had to scramble backwards. He earned E4 run number seven, their final run of the game.

E4's effort, however, was not enough. H1 won the game 10-7.

On July 20, E4 found redemption when they played G3, the final score was 15-13 with E4 barely squeaking by.

July 27 was E4's biggest hiccup on the east side. They played G4 and were wiped out 35-5.

"It's a rough game but we're having fun," said E4 catcher Daniel Beverly.

"Given the fact E4 was still trying [while] being down, it shows their passion for the game," said G4's Maciel Munoz. "It's hard to find players to participate and their playing goes a long way."

The last game of E4's east side season was July 29 against G3. E4 was back to their former glory with outfield

IN SPORTS

catches and fast outs at first.

G3 played hard, like a drowning man gasping for air. The final score 23-9 and an E4 victory.

“We did not know there was a game because we thought E4 moved back to the west side,” said Luis Fernando Del Rio. “We scrambled to get ready with [all the] indigestion after a bad dinner.”

Del Rio said even though his team was down, they cheered each other on because “rising tides raise all ships.”

In the fourth inning, E4’s Dustin Herron hit a pop fly and the ball was caught by the G3 shortstop.

The shortstop, believing the runner on second had moved off base, threw the ball which hit the runner, Edward Cerf, in the head as he stood on base. Cerf appeared to be uninjured.

“We’re all out here to have fun,” said E4 pitcher Dustin Herron, “and to win a softball championship.”

Unfortunately, E4 may be in rebuild mode after moving back to the west side.

“The moving of E4 to the west side left players behind on the east side. The team may have to rebuild before play-offs,” said AIC sports commissioner Walter Thomas.

Thomas also said that unit E3, prior to any relocation, has forfeited the remainder of their season. The team forfeited too many league games, Thomas said.

The softball season is expected to conclude in August.

“Softball playoffs for west side and east side will be held separately in the last week of August,” said Thomas. “Operations will not allow west verses east side teams to play games, or All-star games to be held, until further notice.”

| ECHO

IN BLACK AND WHITE

Rules according to the Referees

Branch Niehouse, a softball referee, said the biggest rub between players and referees is the infield fly rule.

An infield fly rule is when a runner is on first and second base or first, second and third base and there is one out or less. A referee will announce infield fly rule.

When the ball is hit in the infield where an infielder can reasonably field the ball, an umpire will announce “infield fly rule, batter is out.” Once this is announced, the runner can run at their own discretion, but if an infielder catches it the runner must tag up.



Photos by Phillip Luna/The Echo

A typical softball game at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

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

PUZZLES

See how many points
you can score in one word!

Scrabble Board: August 2025

- Scrabble Basic Rules
- No proper nouns like names or places
 - No contractions like “it’s” or “that’s”
 - No abbreviations like “app” or “spec”

- Board Scores
- TW = Triple Word Score
 - DW = Double Word Score
 - TL = Triple Letter Score
 - DL = Double Letter Score

TW			DL				TW				DL			TW
	DW				TL				TL				DW	
		DW				DL		DL				DW		
DL		N	O	T	I	F	Y				DW			DL
					N					DW				
	TL				N				TL				TL	
		DL		R	E	L	A	T	E			DL		
TW			DL		R		P		X			DL		TW
		DL				DL	E	DL	T			DL		
	TL				TL				R				TL	
					DW				A	DW				
DL			DW					DL			DW			DL
		DW				DL		DL				DW		
	DW				TL				TL				DW	
TW			DL					TW				DL		TW

PLAYER 1



PLAYER 2



SUDOKU

Puzzle 1:
Demanding

	3				8			
			5					
	8		7		2		9	
				6				8
6			9				2	5
						3	4	
9	4		6			7		
							1	
		5		1				

Puzzle 2:
Difficult

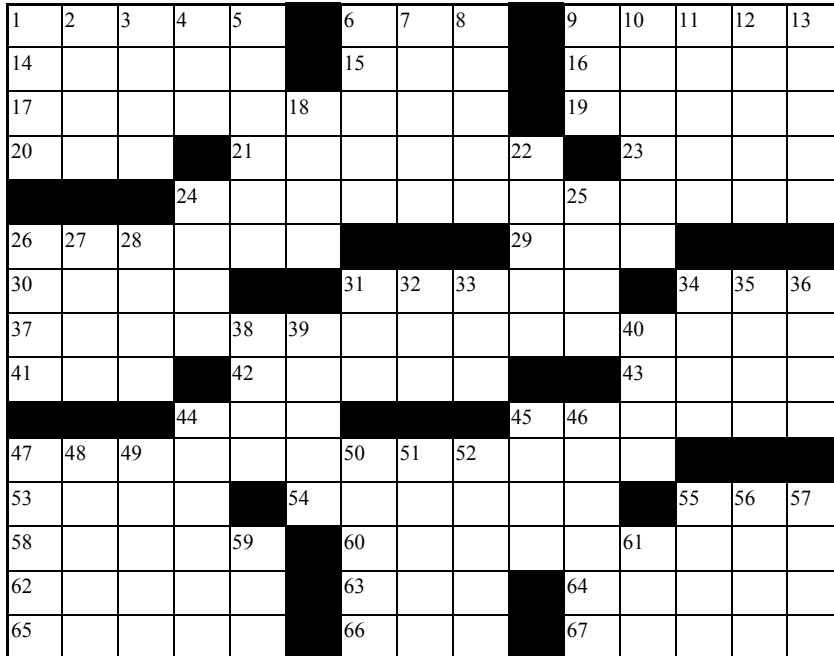
	3	1		7		4		
5					8	3		
					9			
	7			2			6	
2			5		3			9
4					5	2		
	5		9				1	
				6				3

Puzzle 3:
Very Challenging

								2
	5		9				3	
	1		5		7		6	
			1	8				4
5	3							
9							2	
		4		7				1
		3	4		6			
					1	4		

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Theme: The Masters



From USAtoday.com

Puzzle created by: Alan Olschwang

ACROSS

- 1 Fatigued
6 College cheer
9 Tibetan monks
14 He has his own army
15 Author Umberto
16 Sort of model
17 Sauna
19 Poisonous substance
20 A really good place to sit?
21 Not cook
23 First name in country music
24 Vegas staple that has a degree?
26 Rouse
29 They're administered in ERs
30 Small ornamental case
31 Notorious bacteria
34 Knight's address
37 Regan's Secretary of Commerce who has a degree
41 Be inquisitive

- 42 Perform in a tournament of yore
43 Big name in shirts
44 ___ Paulo, Brazil
45 Sunflower relatives
47 Insult that contains a degree?
53 Farm measure
54 Most played part of LPs, you'd think?
55 Guileful
58 Swine enclosures
60 Thurston Howell III portrayer with a degree
62 Pet ___ (grievance)
63 Alley-___ (basketball pass)
64 Ship sunk in 1898
65 Scatter
66 Wartime entertainer group
67 Bush senior, e.g.

DOWN

- 1 Insect with a slender waist
2 Art deco designer
3 Fresh
4 Spanish estuary
5 Sana citizen
6 The ranch in "Giant"
7 All the stage is his world
8 Mundane
9 WWII craft
10 Things to squirrel away
11 Used all available credit (with "out")
12 Defense's focal point
13 French legislature
18 "The Beverly Hillbillies" cast member
22 Fed offering
24 Involving the ear
25 Dyed-in-the-wool
26 Church platform
27 Info about touchdowns
28 Mope
31 Cassowary cousin
32 A major network
33 Stable morsel
34 Pipsqueak's problem
35 Composer Stravinsky
36 Fire engine and beet, e.g.
38 Resort town near Santa Barbara
39 Weaving equipment
40 Ceremony
44 Record jacket
45 Speedy steed
46 Seed or Street
47 Shocked responses
48 Two quartets combined
49 Town employee of yore
50 Old movie theater name
51 "So long, amigo"
52 Musical speed
55 Fishtail on ice, e.g.
56 Moon over my ami?
57 Flanders river
59 Follow a pattern?
61 Ripken, Jr. or Sr.

ANSWER KEYS

3	6	4	1	4	8	5	9	7	6
5	2	7	2	9	6	3	3	4	1
1	8	9	5	7	3	4	2	9	4
9	2	2	8	3	5	7	1	7	9
6	1	7	1	4	7	2	8	3	5
5	4	3	5	6	8	1	7	2	9
8	9	6	9	7	3	5	2	1	4
7	3	7	1	4	2	9	6	6	8
4	2	8	5	4	2	1	8	5	4

Puzzle 3:
Very Challenging

3	6	9	4	9	7	8	1	2	1
5	7	9	3	6	8	5	7	6	9
1	4	8	1	4	9	2	7	4	6
9	7	2	5	1	8	3	4	6	9
2	1	6	5	8	3	6	1	7	4
8	4	3	2	1	7	6	9	5	8
8	6	5	1	2	4	6	9	7	3
7	8	4	4	3	5	6	9	6	1
5	6	2	1	4	8	3	9	7	6
9	3	1	2	7	6	4	8	5	4

Puzzle 2:
Difficult

9	6	4	7	1	8	5	3	2	5
8	6	7	4	2	7	4	6	7	8
3	1	3	6	5	3	7	8	2	1
9	4	1	6	5	3	7	8	2	1
1	6	8	2	7	5	3	4	6	9
6	7	3	6	8	4	1	2	5	8
4	5	2	3	6	9	1	7	6	8
5	8	4	7	3	2	6	9	1	4
2	1	9	5	4	6	8	3	7	1
7	3	6	1	9	8	2	5	4	1

Puzzle 1:
Demanding

ANSWER KEY

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

LETTERS TO THE ECHO



Letters to The Echo

Edited for length and clarity

AN ACCURATE ARTICLE

Your piece on “Juneteenth” was the first I’ve seen that is accurate in regards to the holiday being associated with the U.S. Army. Politics conveniently leave that part out most of the time. One can debate why they chose that day and not another to make a Black holiday, but there is no debate that the U.S. Army is tri to De Oppresso Libre, Liberators of the Oppressed.

We have a good article there.

-Joshua Pose, EOCI
Pendleton, Oregon

To Joshua Pose,

Thank you—and—thank you for your service.

-The Echo

A JOB WELL DONE

I just wanted to say thank you. Recently there was an article written about me in the artist spotlight by Chris Ainsworth. I wanted to point out that he did an extremely good job and that he represented me well.

I couldn’t have asked to be represented better thank you again.

-Michael Ledbetter, EOCI
Pendleton, Oregon

To Michael Ledbetter,

We appreciate your patience with the article and we are glad you liked it. You’re artwork really added a lot of depth and interest to that month’s Echo.

If you know of any other artist interested in being featured in a spotlight, please send them our way!

-The Echo

AN UNEXPECTED DELIGHT

What an unexpected delight it was to receive your thoughtful gift of the latest issue of The Echo and 1664. I really was not expecting that at all. And then, to top it off, as I was nearing the end of reading that June edition of The Echo, I happened to come across my letter to you which I found was expertly and professionally edited for publication. That was a nice (and clever!) touch to send me the issue that included my letter to the editor. It certainly feels

good to be acknowledged by you and your paper, and it definitely made my week.

Also, I have some more praise for your editor, Phillip Luna. I read his long-form journalism piece about “Unbroken” in 1664 and I must say he did an admirable job of fleshing out this diverse group of women in a way that emphasized their uniqueness and humanity. I came away from reading that article feeling happy that such a program exists – and will continue to exist – long after those current members leave prison and return to society. “Unbroken” is a fitting name for that band in more ways than one.

Respectfully,

-Jared Herdt, PVSP
Coalinga, California

To Jared Herdt,

Having readers outside of Oregon is still new to us, so it’s really exciting to hear from other states. We are glad you enjoyed the copies we sent you.

Please keep reading!

-The Echo

THE ECHO TEAM PUBLISHES ARTICLES WITH EAST OREGONIAN



A print of “Independence Day on the Inside” which appeared in the July 23, 2025 edition of East Oregonian. The article was written by The Echo editor Phillip Luna and Berit Thorson from the East Oregonian.

The Echo had two articles publish with the East Oregonian in July. “Independence Day on the Inside” was printed in the July 23, 2025 print and republished here, in the August edition of The Echo (see page 1).

A second article, titled “Still a Patriot,” was published with the EO online and also appears in this August edition (see page 8).

The Echo published another co-written article with EO about the opening of Prison Brews earlier this year. | **ECHO**

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:

Addiction — due Aug. 30

Family — due Sept. 30

Change — due Nov. 30

Apply for the Journalism Program:

See advertisement below.

Now Accepting Applicants for 15-week Journalism Program

Applications for the first prison journalism program in Oregon are now being accepted. The 15-week journalism course, which is taught by instructors from Pollen Initiative, is expected to begin in September. Residents of EOICI who are interested in participating in the program can send a communication to IWP expressing their interest.

The course will include one three-hour training session per week, computer lab time, and homework that includes reading newspapers and keeping a reading journal.

Class instruction will be conducted via video training with Pollen Initiative instructors. Pollen Initiative, a nonprofit fundraising organization that supports journalism in the incarcerated setting, sponsors The Echo and 1664.

The program is open to incentive level 2 and 3 residents of EOICI.

THE ECHO, VOLUME XIII - ISSUE 81, AUGUST 2025

www.pollenpress.org/the-echo/

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

2500 Westgate

Pendleton, OR

97801

COME AND WORK FOR THE ECHO

The Echo is accepting applicants for future positions. This position starts at 11 PRAS points with the opportunity to go up to 15 PRAS over time.

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
- Incorporating writing feedback and taking direction
- Attending training sessions with outside journalists and other field experts
- Completing weekly homework assignments on AP style writing, news article structure and grammar and punctuation
- Working within the guidelines of ethical journalism, as set by the Society of Professional Journalists
- Being impartial and looking at a topic from multiple angles
- Having a positive attitude and outlook. The Echo does not publish articles that are unnecessarily disparaging to the institution, the Department of Corrections or other incarcerated people

Hours of Work:

Correspondents are scheduled on weekdays. They may also be sent on assignment during evenings and weekends (covering sporting events, multi activity nights, religious service events, etc...).

To Apply:

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

If you have not completed an application in the last three months, please resubmit.

WHERE TO FIND THE ECHO AND 1664

Online:

The Echo and 1664 are available online at www.pollenpress.org.

On Edovo:

The Echo and 1664 are available on the Edovo app at more than 1,200 prisons in the U.S.

Incarcerated people on Edovo can type the publication name into the search field to access current and previous editions.

On Tablets at all 12 of Oregon's correctional facilities:

1664 is available in the free section of state-issued tablets at every Oregon prison. Incarcerated people can access the publication by selecting the "notices" icon on tablets.

In Print:

1664 is available in limited print copies at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution and Coffee Creek Correctional Facility.

The Echo and 1664 are publications of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

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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