

THE ECHO

Created by incarcerated people



NEWS
FROM
THE
INSIDE

Est. 2018

VOLUME VIII | ISSUE 82, SEPTEMBER 2025

EASTERN OREGON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

2500 WESTGATE

PENDLETON, OR 97801



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

The Fine Dining Program's Neil Watford adds honey whipped ricotta to grilled peaches for the first course of five on the Aug. 19, 2025. Watford, a student with the program, helped to prepare and serve 24 guests at the event, which included ODOC administrators.

Some Pendleton prison residents received a visit from Oregon Department of Corrections Deputy Director Heidi Steward and East Side Institution Administrator Jamie Miller on Aug. 19, 2025.

And it wasn't just a meet and greet — they were invited to dinner too.

Seventeen adults in custody at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution met with Steward, Miller and members of

EOCI's administrative team to have a five-course meal. The meal was made as part of a pilot program, a culinary course that teaches incarcerated people to prepare and serve high-end cuisine.

For EOCI administrators the dinner was an opportunity to showcase the new program. The underlying goal, however, was to create an opportunity for incarcerated people to interact with corrections staff in a normal setting.

See PRISON FOOD Page 6

SECOND CHANCE CAREER FAIR

Written by Logan Gimbel with contributions from Brian Bement and Jamil Chavis

Having a career and earning a livable wage after prison may seem unattainable to many adults in custody, but career fairs hosted inside prisons can help them overcome those hurdles.

On Aug. 1, nearly 30 employment, transition, housing and treatment vendors greeted about 400 residents of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution at its second career fair. Some vendors were previously incarcerated at EOCI, returning to help incarcerated people transition to the future. Opportunity Oregon, Worksource Oregon and the Oregon Department of Corrections partnered to connect services to AICs.

According to a 2022 Prison Policy Initiative report, it takes an average of six or more months for the returning citizen to find work. Complications of securing housing, complying with parole and overcoming social stigmas are three contributing factors.

The Second Chance Career Fair at EOCI offered resources which can address those issues.

See CAREER FAIR Page 12

**PRISON BREWS COFFEE
IN VISITING Page 4**

**AUGUST FAMILY
BARBEQUE Page 16**

**BACKPACK AND SCHOOL
SUPPLY DONATION Page 21**

**BARBERSHOP GOES
MOBILE Page 26**

The Echo

Est. 2018

**The Echo Team**

Phillip Luna | Editor in Chief

Chris Ainsworth | Staff Writer

Kurtis Thompson | Staff Writer

Logan Gimbel | Correspondent

Brian Bement | Correspondent

Jamil Chavis | Contributor

ODOC Staff Support

Ray Peters | Supervising Editor

Jaylene Stewart | Research and Support

Advisor

Berit Thorson | East Oregonian, Journalist

.....

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.

Sponsored by


www.pollenpress.org
New Schedule Starts Sept. 7, 2025

TIME	DAILY SCHEDULE
3:30 a.m.	Bakery/Kitchen Shift A Workline
5 a.m.	Count Time
5:15 a.m.	Kitchen Tray Crew
6:10 a.m.	Dining Room Workers/Diabetic Line
6:10-7:10 a.m.	Breakfast /Labs/ Medication Lines
6:45 a.m.	Workline (Canteen/Laundry/Garment Factory)
6:30-7 a.m.	Workline for Physical Plant (Autoshop@6:30am)
7:45 a.m.	Call Center Workline
8 a.m.	Two Way Line/ Yard Line
8:15 a.m.	Education Line (Mon-Fri)
8:30 a.m.	Kitchen Shift B Workline
8:30-2:30 p.m.	D2/D3 Religious services
9 a.m.	Two Way Line/ Yard Line
9:15 a.m.	Education Line (Mon-Fri)
10 a.m.	Yard in (WEEKENDS/HOLIDAYS-Extra Two Way Line)
10 a.m.	Kitchen Tray Crew
10:15 a.m.	Education Line (Mon-Fri)
10:45 a.m.	Kitchen Shift C Workline
11:30 a.m.	Count Time
12 p.m.	Dining Room Workers/Diabetic Line
12-1:15 p.m.	Lunch /Medication Lines
12:30 p.m.	Workline (All work area's)
1:15 p.m.	Education Line (Mon-Fri)
1:30 p.m.	Two Way Line/Yard Line
2 p.m.	Kitchen Shift C (Scullery) Workline
2:15 p.m.	Education Line (Mon-Fri)
2:20 p.m.	Two Way Line/Yard Line
3:15 p.m.	Two Way Line/Yard Line
3:15 p.m.	Kitchen Tray Crew
4 p.m.	Yard in/Unit Closed
4:30 p.m.	Count Time
5 p.m.	Dining Room Workers/Diabetic
5-6 p.m.	Dinner
5:30-6:30 p.m.	D2/D3 Religious Services
5:40 p.m.	Sock/Towel Exchange (When applicable)
6 p.m.	Two Way Line
6:30 p.m.	Activities/Multi Line/(night yard)
6:30-7:30 p.m.	D2/D3 Religious services
7 p.m.	Eastside medication line
7:30 p.m.	Two Way Line (Activities/Multi (night)
8:25 p.m.	Night Yard in (When applicable)
8:30 p.m.	Westside Medication Line
8:30 p.m.	Two Way Line (Activities/Multi—Night Yard)
9:30 p.m.	One-way back from Activities/Multi
9:55 p.m.	Unit Closed-Cell In
10 p.m.	Count Time

MAILROOM WOES

Department Makes Effort to Reduce Contraband, Considers Switching to Digital Mail

Written by Phillip Luna

In February, the rule for incoming mail changed for correctional facilities in Oregon. Mail was limited to white envelopes and non-card stock items.

“The changes have reduced the opportunities to conceal illicit substances in the mail, which was the primary purpose of the rule change,” said ODOC Chief of Security Brian Stephen.

Stephen said the mail rule change is part of a broader effort to eliminate contraband in the correctional setting. He said the department has several methods of monitoring drug use, but mailrooms generally “err on the side of caution.”

“If a piece of mail is suspect it is returned to sender, often without full testing,” said Stephen.

He said the testing process could take weeks and flagged mail is denied without testing to speed up the process.

“A piece of paper coming in that has been colored in crayon is suspect, because it is easy to conceal illicit substances within the wax,” he said. “However, DOC does not perform chemical analysis tests on every piece of mail they receive with crayon.”

Unapproved mail is either rejected or refused, he said. Rejected mail is opened by the mailroom and found to violate the rule. Refused mail is given back to the delivery service prior to being opened by mailroom staff. Stephen said this is to expedite the process.

Adults in custody are not notified if their mail has been refused.

“In both cases,” Stephen said, “a white label is affixed to the front of the

envelope explaining why the mail was sent back. For example, the label might say ‘Only white envelopes are allowed’ or ‘Cardstock is not allowed.’”

The Tablet Survey

In June, AICs were prompted to complete a survey through the tablet system. The survey questions focused on making mail digital and issuing personal tablets to incarcerated people.

“The current contract for the tablets and phones is up for re-negotiations this year,” said Stephen Cook, Strategic Initiatives Project Manager for ODOC’s Office of Communications. “The survey was exploring various options that are available.”

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

The department is considering all options in terms of reducing contraband, but the change to digital mail would not be soon, he said.

“Any change involving a move to electronic mail would require infrastructure changes which would likely not be available at all places by that January 2026 date,” said Cook. “This survey is an attempt to get feedback from AICs, friends and family to include them in improving the situation.”

Cook said the department will communicate the results of the survey to AICs. He said the results of the survey will not be an “end-all-vote.”

The practice of mail scanning or using digital mail in prisons has increased across the United States in recent years. Proponents of the practice say it will reduce contraband.

However, in several cases — in

Pennsylvania, Missouri, Virginia and New Mexico — correctional facilities saw an increase in positive drug tests after introducing digital mail, according to a study by Prison Policy Initiative. The study does not indicate what caused the increase, only that changing to digital mail did not reduce the use of drugs in their facilities.

“The mail rules have been changing a lot in the recent months and new proposed changes will also come to clarify some recurring issues,” said Stephen. “I encourage [AICs] and loved ones to call or write the mailroom if they or you have any questions whatsoever about mail.”

A Goal of Health

The availability of drugs in prison has increased, likely because of fentanyl and suboxone which are both small, easily hidden and difficult to identify.

But drug use in prison is not new.

“The presence of illicit drugs in correctional facilities is a detriment to everyone,” said Tye Stewart, Assistant Superintendent of Security at EOIC. “They create a black market economy that leads to assaults and extortion, and overdoses lead to high costs of medical care.”

The availability of drugs in the correctional setting can also make it difficult for incarcerated people to maintain sobriety and focus on rehabilitation, Stewart said.

For Oregon’s incarcerated residents, changes to the mail process may continue as ODOC works to stymie the presence of drugs in the correctional setting. | **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

PRISON BREWS EXPANDS ITS SERVICE

Residents and visitors are able to enjoy EOCI's Prison Brews

Written by Brian Bement



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Coffee beans and items used by Prison Brews lay on a counter top.

In August, Prison Brews began selling cold brew coffee in visiting. Residents and their visitors can now purchase coffee during visiting.

"Currently the program is still new," said Liza Emory, food service man-

ager. "But we've expanded to offering cold brew coffee in the visiting room."

Visitors can order coffee at the officers station by filling out an order form and purchasing a ticket. Orders are limited cold brew.

"We are offering cold brew coffee because it is easier," said Emory. "Our workers are new, and cold brew is just more feasible right now."

The cold brew menu includes Americano, latte and macchiato. The flavoring choices for a latte or macchiato are vanilla, caramel or hazelnut. The dairy choices for a latte or macchiato are oatmeal or almond. A macchiato can be topped with chocolate or caramel drizzle upon request.

Once the coffee order has been placed, a barista will deliver it to the visiting room. The service time is about 30 minutes. Visitors and residents must consume the drink in the visiting room.

"It's always been the plan to expand to visiting and eventually to the population," Emory said. "We are scaling."

Only one drink order is allowed for each visitor and resident. The cutoff time for orders is 9:15 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.

Emory said the goal is to expand to the general population, but there are no current plans to do so.

"We have to work out all the kinks, and expanding to residents will be looked at down the road," Emory said.

| ECHO

VACCINATIONS START SOON

Flu and COVID Vaccinations Available in October

Written by Logan Gimbel

Vaccines are one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of illness and disease. Along with washing the hands with soap and water vaccines can help people to stay healthy as flu season nears.

Rob Nutt from the Four Rivers Pharmacy said that beginning in October, Health Services will be offering influenza and COVID vaccines to residents. He said that Health Services will ask each resident if they would like to re-

ceive either vaccine. The flu and COVID vaccines will be offered in the same visit via two separate injections.

"Receiving a yearly vaccine is important, as protection wanes and viruses change over the course of a year, and so newer vaccines are needed to fight them," Said Nutt. "We encourage you to say yes."

Nutt said that the side effects from the injections may include tiredness or a sore arm, generally lasting a day or

two. He also said the vaccines will be using inactive virus components, not live viruses, to help train the immune system.

"Vaccines reduce the risk of getting sick," said Nutt. "If you do get sick the symptoms are likely to be much milder and shorter in duration."

Nutt said to direct questions regarding the vaccines to health care providers.

Taking zinc within 24 hours of developing cold symptoms can help to reduce the severity and duration of the cold, according to "Nutrition Facts" by Karen Frazier. **| ECHO**

A BIG GIANT WATER BUCKET

EOCI's Greenhouse Received a Rainwater Catch System in July

Written by Chris Ainsworth

A **rainwater collection** system, part of a pilot program at four Oregon facilities, arrived at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in July. The system will be used by the facility's greenhouse workers to reduce water use throughout the year.

The system includes a 1,000-gallon storage tank, external pump, leaf filter, water gauge and installation hardware to collect water from a roof downspout. The rainwater harvesting system costs around \$3,000.

Michael Burke, the sustainability program manager for ODOC and the department that provided the harvesting system, said the purpose of the system is to reduce erosion, pollution and destructive runoff. The ODOC is incorporating bio swales, channels designed to concentrate and filter storm water runoff; vegetated areas; and permeable pavements as part of the sustainability initiatives to improve drainage from impervious surfaces like parking lots and rooftops.

Rainwater collection systems provide a relatively clean source of free water. The water does not have additives, like fluoride in city water, making the collection systems popular among home gardeners.

"At EOCl – where summers are hot and dry – the [rainwater harvesting system] will be used to test the viability of irrigating EOCl's landscape and gardens during the summer without increasing the facility's total water consumption," Burke said. "If successful, the program may be scaled up to meet that demand."

The Federal Energy Management Program uses a formula to determine the amount of water that can be collected through harvesting systems. The catchment area is multiplied by the

monthly rainfall; the conservation factor, which is 0.62; and by a collection factor of 75-90%, to account for losses in the system.

A 1,000 square foot roof with Pendleton's average of 1.05 monthly inches rain would collect about 489 gallons per month.

Without filtration systems, rainwater collection is found suitable for basic uses including gardening, fire suppression and grey water. Grey water is a term for non-drinkable water that is used for things like showers and laundry using ecofriendly soaps. Filtration systems that would turn collected rainwater into drinkable, or potable, water can be expensive. Filtration and storage systems can cost up to \$20,000 and require additional maintenance to protect against compromised drinking water quality.

"The purpose of installing a [rainwater harvesting system] is to capture and store rainwater from facility rooftops for reuse in non-potable applications such as landscape irrigation, equipment washing and gardening," said Burke.

Harvesting rainwater is slightly more complicated than collecting rain in a bucket under a gutter spout. The best roofing materials for collecting rainwater are slate, aluminum and galvanized iron because they don't possess heavy metals or chemicals found in treated wood and other roofing. Water also needs to be used regularly to avoid bacteria growth.

Collecting rainwater also reduces



Photo provided by ODOC

A 1,000-gallon storage tank sits in the ODOC warehouse. The tank and accompanying parts were delivered to EOCl in July.

stress on the environment. By collecting rainfall, the amount of stormwater runoff is reduced and potential drainage issues can be alleviated, another step towards sustainability for EOCl.

The institution teaches AICs sustainability through programs like Roots of Success, Seed to Supper, Master Gardener and Greenhouse Management. The gardening programs receive annual seed donations from Lettuce Grow, a non-profit developed to provide hands-on education to incarcerated individuals in gardening and greenhouse management.

The greenhouse's rainwater harvesting system is being stored by the facility's physical plant. Planning for the installation of the 1,000-gallon system is expected to begin soon. | **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

PRISON FOOD continued from page 1

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Benjamin Lundberg clears plates and talks with guests during the Aug. 19, 2025 fine dining event. The event included staff and AIC participants.

"I believe breaking bread with people provides for an opportunity to demonstrate we care and see AICs as human beings," said Miller. "It provides them with an opportunity to share their experiences with ODOC leadership and a brief time away from feeling like they are incarcerated."

The AICs invited to dinner were members of the Enrichment Club, a prison fundraising group. To attend, each member had to purchase the meal.

"It was a very humanizing occasion," said EOCI Superintendent Dave Pedro, who dined with AICs at the event. "Most of the AICs I sat with I've seen around the facility, but never really talked to beyond pleasantries."

In addition to connecting with incarcerated people, Pedro said it was important to have administrative leadership attend because it builds support for a program that helps AICs develop job skills.

"It's our responsibility to present opportunity for growth and improvement and this program supports that effort," he said.

SHOWCASING A PROGRAM

The culinary course, dubbed the Fine Dining Program, is the first of its kind in a U.S. prison.

"There are other culinary programs," said Liza Emory, food service manager. "But I don't know of any that teach fine dining, five-course meals and front-of-house service."

There are 10 AIC participants in the program. For the past four months, they have been learning to make the five mother sauces, perform specific knife cuts and identify herbs and plants used in cooking.

"The hardest thing to learn was how to identify plants," said Michael Morris, a student in the program.

Morris said the students spent time in the prison's greenhouse, naming plants and herbs by sight and learning each herb's country of origin. He said understanding where an herb comes from can help him pair it with a dish from the same location.

"Some herbs, they don't taste very

good by themselves," he said. "You have to learn how to pair them."

Many of the students started the program with little cooking experience. They learn the basics first, such as boiling water or peeling potatoes.

"Before the class, I didn't know how to peel potatoes," said student Nickolas Vega.

Just four months after he started the program, however, Vega helped make Potato Pave for the event. Potato Pave is a complex and time-intensive dish that requires russet potatoes to be peeled, sliced into paper-thin layers, soaked in cream, and carefully layered with seasonings and butter. The potato layers are then compressed, cut into squares and eventually fried.

It's often referred to as a 1,000 layered potato and requires a three day process to make.

Students Alfred Velazquez and Neil Watford have more experience than their peers do in the culinary industry. Both worked in the food industry prior to their incarceration and have participated in several fine dining events since the program started in November 2024.

"It's easy once you get to understand the process," said Velazquez.

He worked as a chef before he was incarcerated, but said learning to make high-end meals will make him more employable in the future.

Watford's experience, however, is in baking. He is responsible for making the dessert for fine dining events. For this dinner, he made a chocolate truffle torte with huckleberry anglaise, hazelnut tuile and gold flakes.

But he took on new responsibilities as well.

"I'm doing more this time. I'm making scallops and helping plate each

course,” he said. “It’s different. Baking is very much following a recipe. Cooking requires you to understand a flavor profile, to find what herbs and spices can elevate a dish and add depth.”

The menu included grilled peaches wrapped in prosciutto with hot honey whipped ricotta; potato pavé with chives, smoked sweet cream butter and crème fraiche; a salad of tomato, mozzarella, English cucumber, baked parmesan crisps and balsamic reduction; Wagyu steak tips, wild caught Maine sea scallops, tempura battered haricot vert with a demi glace; and, of course, the chocolate truffle dessert.

During the event, seven of the students donned slacks, buttoned chef shirts and hats customary to the culinary industry. They prepped and plated each dish in front of their guests. Prior to serving, one of the students would address the diners, explaining the course they were about to eat.

“The attention to the fine details was amazing,” said administrator Miller. “[I] loved the background information prior to the meal and then prior to each course of service.”

The remaining three students took the role of wait staff. Wearing button up shirts and bow ties, they served each course and refilled drinks.

“I want this to be as close as possible to a real world experience,” Emory said.

The guests drank from glassware and had a fork, knife and a spoon wrapped in a cloth napkin. Each had an individual menu, printed on cardstock with crisp swooping letters available for review. While these might seem like unimportant details, it is a notable contrast from the plastic cup, plastic spork and cafeteria menu incarcerated people are accustomed to.

Continued on next page...



Photos by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Above: On the morning of Aug. 19, 2025, Neil Watford and Liza Emory work on the dessert for the fine dining event.

Right: A chocolate truffle torte with huckleberry anglaise, hazelnut tuile and gold flakes sits on a blue table cloth at the fine dining event.



Photos by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Above: Nickolas Vega, right, helps peel 50 lbs of potatoes on Aug. 17, 2025. Vega and the other students are making potato pave, or the 1,000 layered potato.

Right: At the fine dining event, potato pave with chive, smoked sweet cream butter and crème fraiche.



AROUND EOCI



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Student Nickolas Vega explains the next course of the five-course meal and jokes with the guests, which included DOC administrators and members of the Enrichment Club.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Fabian Solis, left, and Marco Vildozala-Aguirre slice Wagyu steaks at the for the main course of the fine dining meal.

GOODS DEEDS GO REWARDED

“I want you to pretend you are not at EOCI,” said Emory. “Make this an experience for yourself.”

These were her instructions to the guests of the fine dining event. Of course she was addressing the incarcerated guests, many of whom had never

eaten a five-course meal before.

Emory said she hoped to make the event as casual and comfortable as possible, and that she wanted people to feel like they were eating at a high cuisine restaurant with friends.

The AICs that attended the event are part of EOCI’s Enrichment Club. They

meet regularly and work with prison administrators to plan and organize fundraisers and donate to charitable causes. The prison’s business administration office processes funds and donations, but every dollar raised comes out of an incarcerated person’s pocket.

The club’s most notable donations include a \$5,000 contribution to the Community Action Organization Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO) in July 2021 as well as \$3,500 to Miranda Case, a Pendleton high school student in need of a heart transplant.

The club has made more than \$50,000 in donations since 2020.

A month prior to the event, the club members were given the opportunity to purchase the meal for \$31.30, or about half a month’s salary in prison wages.

The majority of club members bought the meal, but they did not know they would be dining with prison administrators and other staff.

“It was uncomfortable at first,” said AIC Brett Riddle. “But then we started talking.”

The AICs sat intermixed with staff members at the event, making conversation between the courses.

“I didn’t really know what to expect,” said AIC Ben Edwards. “It’s been a long time since I experienced anything close to that.”

Edwards said they support the new culinary program, and, of course, the food was a big incentive. Dining with staff members was an unusual experience, but Edwards said he didn’t feel uncomfortable. The staff made the conversations easy.

“I really enjoyed the conversations with the AICs I sat by,” said Miller. “I’ve been with the agency over 29 years and this was the best meal I have ever eaten at a prison or prison event.”

ACTING LIKE TEACHERS

“Chef Emory has started a remarkable program,” said Deputy Director Steward, “one she should be proud of. I hope to be invited back again.”

The compliments were plenty by the end of the meal. After five courses, the wait staff served coffee from Prison Brews, EOCI’s coffee shop. The guests listened to Emory, her staff and the students explain how the program has affected them. Many of the students plan to pursue a career in the culinary industry upon release.

“I learned a long time ago that many people who parole work in restaurants,” said Emory. “I’ve wanted to start this program since I started working for ODOC in 2011.”

But despite the benefits, some incarcerated people were skeptical when the program started.

“People in prison were negative at first,” said student Fabian Solis.

Solis said some residents disapproved of him working and cooking for staff members. Over time, he said, people have come to understand the benefit of the program.

“They’re not acting like cops. They are acting like teachers,” Solis said. “Now, [other AICs] want to sign up.”

The students meet weekly for kitchen training with Emory and Food Service Coordinators Kurtis Dodson and Adam Sparhawk, and Assistant Food Service Manager Joshua Endersby.

Office specialist Tami Clark, who was, in fact, a schoolteacher before working at ODOC, trains the students on front-of-house service.

The Fine Dining Program is still in its pilot stage, but the current students will continue the program for one year. If the program is successful, Emory will take on new students in 2026.

“I was extremely proud to experience this event and the growth of the program from Emory’s concept to fruition,” said Superintendent Pedro. “What a great occasion.” | **ECHO**



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Student Marco Vildozala-Aguirre, right, salts the tomato, mozzarella and cucumber salad while the other students complete various tasks.

Guests at the event discuss the meal. From left: Walter Thomas, ODOC Deputy Director Heidi Steward, East Side Institution Administrator Jaime Miller, Gonzalo Barbosa-Salgado, Keaton Stephens and Asst. Superintendent of Special Housing Bryan Clark.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Enrichment Club members pose for a photo with administration after the fine dining event. From left: James Renfro, Superintendent Dave Pedro, Roger Williams and Maciel Munoz.



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

AROUND EOCI

MUGS AND FOLDERS

GOGI Fundraiser Items Distributed in August

Written by Chris Ainsworth

The **GOGI team** handed out folders and mugs on Aug. 18.

Adults in custody trickled into the counselor's offices on F2 appendage at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution throughout the morning, picking up their purchased items.

The expandable folders were previously sold in July 2023. The coffee mugs replaced the GOGI water bottles that have been sold over the years.

"The folder had been approved before so we followed the same format," said GOGI facilitator Horacio Orozco. "Last time we sold GOGI bottles, but we were told there are too many in the institution. We are trying to do something different."

The shipment of folders and mugs



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Horacio Orozco poses with expandable folders and a coffee mug on Aug. 18, 2025.

arrived incomplete, which delayed the handout, said Orozco.

The next event will be the annual suicide awareness walk, which is an at-cost event. GOGI hopes to offer pep-

peroni sticks, bracelets and mugs, but Orozco said the plans are tentative.

GOGI hopes to hold the suicide prevention walk around the end of September. | **ECHO**

LATE SUMMER COOLING TOWELS

Enrichment Club Finally Sells Inventory of Cooling Towels; Low Turnout

Written by Brian Bement

The **Enrichment Club**, a fundraising group at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, handed out blue cooling towels on August 13.

The club sold 45 of the 600 towels they purchased in a previous fundraiser.

The low turnout was likely due to the club's donut and coffee fundraiser and a GOGI fundraiser which both occurred in August, said Enrichment Club President Ben Edwards.

"We only sold 45. I think it was bad timing," said Edwards. "We jumped on the opportunity to be able to sell them because we've been sitting on them so long and I think that probably knocked our numbers way down."

Last year, the Enrichment Club bought more towels than needed for a fundraiser, said Edwards.

The club expected to sell the towels as part of future fundraisers. However, shortly after they purchased their stockpile, commissary began selling the item.

Administration policy prevents the club from competing directly with canteen, which prevented them from selling cooling towels.

On July 9, however, administration made an exception and authorized the club to sell their inventory.

The Enrichment Club sold the towels for \$5.00, which is \$0.70 less than canteen's price.

"We are putting the sale proceeds towards purchasing a barbecue for multi," said Edwards. "We are not allowed to use the kitchen or any of their equipment."

The Enrichment Club does not have the proper equipment to make large meals to raise more money for charity, said Edwards. Purchasing a grill would help the club provide more fundraising opportunities.

"There are no more fundraisers scheduled for the rest of the year," said Edwards. "The administration allows us to do only four a year."

Edwards hopes the club is able to purchase a barbecue before their fundraising season starts in 2026. | **ECHO**

NEW UNIT, WHO THIS?

Incarcerated Residents Relocate Around the Facility as Stairwells are Renovated

Written by Logan Gimbel

Since June 2024, many people around the institution have been playing musical units as the stairwells receive a shiny new paint job.

Approximately 300 residents have been moved from the west side of the institution over to the east side. While some people have enjoyed the opportunity, others felt uncertainty. Some residents who were working in the west side dining hall lost their job when they moved to the east side.

“I technically got fired from line serving and then hired as kitchen prep,” said Sean Theriault, a resident who previously worked in the west side dining hall.

Most of the uncertainty came from learning whether or not the moves were temporary or permanent. For most residents the move it was temporary, but for others it was permanent.

A majority of the residents moving from the west side were placed in the E building, which sat vacant after receiving its stairwell renovation in July 2024. Due to the vacancy the buildings plumbing gaskets dried out causing leaks and other plumbing issues.

Matthew Gilbert, a resident of E2, said that when he was flushing the toilet it began to leak soaking this shorts.

“I was like, ‘Why I am I wet?’ Then I looked down and was like,” and then Gilbert mimicked screaming like Homer Simpson.

Now that E building is occupied the east sides already large resident population has grown even larger. The east side of the facility has 11 housing units, with each unit able to house anywhere from 80 to 107 residents. The west side only has nine housing units with a typical resident capacity of 72.



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Outside contractors build scaffolding around the G unit stairwell on Aug. 19, 2025.

The four honor housing units on the east side, G3, G4, H1 and H2, have the ability to house almost half of the west side’s population.

Prior to a large scale moves, the housing assignment office does about 40 hours of preparation work. They research each moving resident’s history, hoping to find the right place for each person.

The assignment office also works with the Office of Population Management in Salem, reporting relevant movement information. OPM is responsible for maintaining the housing database for all correctional facilities in Oregon, showing which units are occupied or empty.

Jason Walker, Group Living Manager, said that finding the right place for each resident is “like playing chess.” His goal is to find a place where each resident will be comfortable and able to succeed. Walker also said that when residents finally move

to the east side, many do not want to leave.

“I have 150 kytes from people requesting to stay on the east side,” said Walker.

Andrew Slover, who originally lived on the west side for over a year, believes that moving to the east was a step in a positive direction.

“If you want to be independent and be around like-minded individuals, the east side is the place,” said Slover.

For individuals who have contacted the assignment office and have not received a response, Assignment Officer P. Messenger said that no response is a good thing. It means they are considering the request.

Some residents were moved back to their original housing unit after the stairwell renovation was complete. Of all the units moved from the west side unit C1, now E2, will be remaining on the east side. **|ECHO**

SECOND CHANCE CAREER FAIR

CAREER FAIR continued from page 1

Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Ironworkers Local 29 representative Tyler Smith shakes hands with Gerry Cunningham, a physical plant worker, at the Aug. 1, 2025 career fair. This is the ironworkers second time attending.

Businesses Lead the Way

Opportunity Oregon's co-founder and Director Nancy Pance gave a speech to vendors and facility staff just before the event began. She wore a shirt with the words "Incarcerated Lives Matter" emblazoned across the back. Pance thanked everyone for making the event possible and shared information about the importance of jobs.

"According to 2024 U.S. Chamber of Commerce, people coming out of incarceration on the job are maintaining a 68% retention rate," she said.

Pance also said 85% of human resources representatives are saying people with a record are performing at the "same level or higher" than employees who have no record.

Employers representing the Ironworkers Local Union No. 29, a roofers and water proofers union, the railroad company Union Pacific, Oregon Corrections Enterprises and more were

present. But jobs were not the only focus.

Without housing, returning residents face significantly more challenges.

Urban Alchemy is a non-profit which provides housing services, directed by former EOIC resident Ben Pervish. The organization is mainly staffed by returning citizens and people who have experienced homelessness. They operate three tiny home villages in Portland to serve those without a permanent residence.

Pervish said he was nervous about returning, but came back wishing to share his story. He spent 25 years in prison and was released in 2023.

"I am – or was – that one a lot of people felt didn't deserve another chance. They felt like I should die in here," said Pervish.

After releasing Pervish worked with Pance to get the job at Urban Alchemy.

"She put some work in with me, she

really put in work with me. Got me the opportunity to interview with Urban Alchemy," said Pervish. "I walked in there, I had three interviews to get the job and I aced them."

There were also housing providers present who help people stay sober.

For the first time, Oxford House attended the event. The not-for-profit organization provides a self-ran, self-supporting sober living home for people affected by substance use disorder. Tanya Hill, the representative for Oxford House, said it is a "safe place to call home."

According to Pance, housing is just one piece of reentry success.

Other vendors who attended included various reentry support service providers such as Golden Rule Reentry which provides peer support and free clothing; The Miracles Club focuses on helping returning African-Americans; Worksource Oregon provides work clothes, transportation and job search services. Each organization helps to make the transition back to society as smooth as possible.

Reentry organization Changing Patterns, ran by Frank Patka, consistently had one of the largest crowds during the event. Patka was released from EOIC in 2010.

"When I was in prison only two people who got out came back to speak positively to us," Patka said. "The career fair allows us to come back in and show the people in prison that we made it and we can help you to make it."

SECOND CHANCE CAREER FAIR

It is well-known that successful reintegration into society lowers crime. Recidivism levels drop when transition success increases.

Dave Pedro, superintendent for EOCI, told volunteers that the vast majority of individuals in custody will be returning to society and communities. Like Pance, Pedro highlighted the importance of employment to reentry.

“A key piece to a successful reentry is supportive family, a supportive network out there in the community, and gainful employment,” said Pedro.

An example of Pedro’s point would be Michelle Elhers. Pance hired Elhers after she was released from prison. Elhers is now a reentry support specialist for Opportunity Oregon.

During her incarceration at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, Elhers earned her bachelor’s degree – a first for incarcerated women in Oregon. She now works with the transitional services departments at every correctional facility in the state helping releasing AICs create transition plans. On aver-



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

AICs and vendors fill the multipurpose building at EOCI to discuss life after prison. The second annual career fair was held all day on Aug. 1, 2025.

age, there are approximately 12,000 incarcerated people in Oregon prisons with the majority eventually releasing.

“Because of these [career fairs] right

here it makes a difference. We provide hope and inspiration and we bring success to our communities,” said Elhers.

AIC Impact – Seeking a Future

Some vendors, such as Opportunity Oregon, have been offering services to incarcerated people prior to their release, making transition back to society smoother. These vendors provide classes inside facilities, work with transitional counselors, and meet with AICs directly.

Pance said there are many success stories tied to career fairs. Opportunity Oregon was able to help 114 individuals get jobs in 2024, ranging from trade apprenticeships to caregiving.

At the Second Chance Career Fair, AICs appeared excited as they interacted with employers and businesses.

“It is amazing to see how many people are willing to help [us] with our transition,” said Ryan Huebner, a resident at EOCI.



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

In the afternoon of Aug. 1, 2025, Ben Pervish speaks with four AICs. Pervish was previously incarcerated at EOCI and returned to discuss what his organization, Urban Alchemy, can do for incarcerated individuals.

Continued on next page...

SECOND CHANCE CAREER FAIR



Left:
During the Second Chance Career Fair, Jaylene Stewart checks in attendees for the event. Stewart coordinated with Nancy and Sue Robson to organize the event.

Bottom left:
Frank Patka talks with two AICs about his incarcerated life. Following incarceration, Patka started Changing Patterns, an organization which aids individuals following release.

Bottom right:
Before the career fair starts on Aug. 2, 2025, Michelle Ehlers addresses vendors. She shares memories of incarcerated life while Nancy Pance looks on. The two were incarcerated at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility together where Ehlers became the first incarcerated woman in Oregon to obtain a Bachelor's Degree.

Photo by OCE



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

The career fair also helped some residents realize there would be more to their lives than prison. William Harvey said the event helped him realize he has worth and that his story is not over because of a prison sentence.

Bill Barnard, the director of operations for St. Vincent de Paul, demonstrates Harvey's point that there is life after prison.

Barnard served a cumulative 16

years in the state and federal prison system. When Barnard heard about the Second Chance Career Fair, he immediately volunteered.

"You don't lose opportunities just because of your felony background," Barnard said. "I try to use my success to show other people that if you make the right choices, you can do the same thing."

"I'm glad we get the chance to talk

to people who have been in our shoes," said resident Alonzo Lewis.

After the event, AICs in attendance were asked to fill out a small survey on the career fair. Based on the responses, most were thankful and excited about the resources and services offered.

"I'm glad people care enough to do this," said resident Robert Redwine. "It will make re-entry less stressful and scary."



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Nancy Pance photo bombs Marlee Willmarth and Leif Ryman at the Eastern Oregon Workforce Board vendor booth. Willmarth smiles while Ryman attempts to keep a straight face as he talks with two AICs. The second annual Second Chance Career Fair had nearly 30 businesses and about 400 AICs in attendance.

Staff Impact – Helping the Future

Residents and vendors were not the only ones enthusiastic about the event.

Transitional Coordinator Sue Robson was happy to see the career fair return with an even larger turnout than the previous year.

“People felt like they had hope,” said Robson. “That was just so inspiring and awesome.”

Robson and Pance were primarily responsible for bringing the career fair to EOIC. When they presented the idea to Ray Peters and Jaylene Stewart from Institution Work Programs, Stewart said they immediately “jumped on board.”

Stewart, office specialist for IWP, said she was thrilled to be a part of the career fair for the second year.

She was responsible for organizing and planning the event along with Robson and Pance. During the month prior to the event, Stewart worked to verify facility entry authorization for each vendor. During the event, she assisted with set up and with checked in AICs at the door.

“It was great to see new vendors, new faces and new names,” said Stewart. “We had some amazing resources and amazing employers.”

Stewart also wishes to broaden the career fair’s exposure to reach as many

residents as possible, informing them of all the resources available to them.

She hopes to eventually have enough resources and employers to offer two separate events – an employer fair and a resource fair.

As Pance and Opportunity Oregon continue recruiting new employers and services, more options will become available at future events.

Even without the growth, Second Chance Career Fairs are already encouraging optimism in AICs.

“[The career fair] gave me hope for the future and it made me a little less nervous for release,” said resident Austin Sifuentes. | **ECHO**

FAMILY BARBEQUE



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

A dozen staff members and AIC volunteers pose for a photo prior to serving the lunch meal at the Aug. 23, 2025 family event. They served hot dogs, hamburgers, macaroni salad, cookies and chips to more than 500 attendees.

A CLOSER LOOK AT FAMILY EVENTS

The Planning Starts Months Prior and Culminates in an Event that Lasts a Handful of Hours

Written by Chris Ainsworth with contributions from Jamil Chavis

On Aug. 23, 180 adults in custody and about 300 visitors spent the day sharing conversation, playing games, enjoying a meal and listening to live music inside the fences at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. The work required to hold an event that size starts months in advance and includes numerous departments and staff within the facility.

Long-Term Planning

Office specialist Emma Shelden begins planning the family events in January when selecting dates. Early

planning gives others departments involved an opportunity to plan smaller events around the two family barbeques each year.

As the event draws closer, Shelden creates flyers and applications for housing units. AICs must apply to attend the barbeque, which she tracks.

“For a couple months leading up to it I would say it takes a couple hours a day, tracking and everything,” she said. “When it gets to the week of the event [the work] is pretty much all week – nothing but barbeque planning and get-

ting everything in order.”

The family barbeques are limited to 500 AICs and visitors combined per event. Priority is given to residents that have not attended a barbeque before.

Shelden reserves bouncy houses and outdoor bathrooms. She organizes meetings with department heads to discuss details and how the event can be improved.

Shelden said AICs can also make suggestions by contacting her.

“We are always open to feedback or

FAMILY BARBEQUE



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Superintendent Dave Pedro talks with AICs Justin Waldrip, left, and James Renfro as they wait for their families to arrive on the morning of Aug. 23, 2025.

suggestions,” said Shelden. “Even if it’s not possible, it never hurts to suggest them. I would love it if people would send me suggestions.”

Creating The Atmosphere

Recreation Specialists Jerrad Templin and Zach Hall order popcorn, butter, snow cone syrup and cotton candy sugar for event concessions. They also schedule AIC workers for each station.

The house band, a new and popular addition to family events, plan and practice their music for months. In total, five different AICs made up the band. At one point the ensemble included a staff member on drums.

“At the family events it’s really great to have live music because it just means more,” Templin said. “Our house band is absolutely amazing.”

AIC workers and volunteers from different departments show up in the morning to set up for the event. They arrange the seating, outdoor tents, bouncy houses, outdoor restrooms and games.

Some volunteers work the concession booths serving visitors and AICs sugary and salty treats, while others ensure trash cans are emptied. Recreation specialists schedule photographers for family barbeques and dedicate a room for AICs to print and distribute photos.

“It’s in multi, so I take it kind of personally. I want to have my hand in a bit of everything,” said Templin. “It looks like I’m doing more than I am, but for the most part it’s making sure people are having fun.”

Burgers and Hot Dogs

The Food Services department’s work begins a week prior to the event, starting with food orders. They work with Correctional Rehabilitation to get an accurate headcount of everyone expected to be present, including AIC workers and staff, then purchase supplies accordingly.

“We order our supplies well in advance of the event so we can have it on hand,” Food Services Assistant Manager Joshua Endersby said. “We crunch the numbers, keeping everything as close as possible to the number that we’re having.”

AIC workers begin preparing food days in advance. They organize pans, food transport carts, slice onions and tomatoes, prepare cheese slices then recount serving amounts. Any items that

Continued on next page...



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Staff member Travis Garton hands out hot dog buns during the family event.

FAMILY BARBEQUE

...continued from previous page

can be stored in the multipurpose building, such as plates and cups, are brought down ahead of time.

Food Services begins work before the event starts. Three AICs manned the barbeque while about nine others set up tables and food carts. Food Services often relies on volunteers. This year, half their helpers were non-workers from around the facility.

“We had quite a few of our normal workers who had family coming,” said Food Services Office Specialist Tami Clark. “Family is the most important thing of all. We want to support any of our workers who have family coming.”



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Commissary staff member Bomberger, center, and King, right, joke with Jeff Andrews and his family. Bomberger and King were part of the staff supervision at the family barbeque.

CARING IS ENOUGH

The event would not happen if not for staff working the event.

“It isn’t just working in a prison,” said Executive Support Specialist Leslie Halbert. “I get to watch people and

their kids grow up.”

Staff often request to work family events because of positive AIC and visitor reactions.

“The biggest thank you is not the thank you, it’s hearing a guy say he did-

n’t feel like he was in prison,” Assistant Superintendent Bryan Clark said after helping a woman in a wheelchair. “That’s what I enjoy most out of hosting these events and helping put them on – the ability to provide that opportunity.”

Many AICs introduce their loved ones to staff members at family events.

“I like doing all the events, but I like doing these the most. I love being able to meet people’s family,” said Tami Clark. “AICs that are comfortable with us are excited to introduce us,” added Endersby.

Staff builds rapport by showing they are willing to help when they can. Halbert said sometimes just being approachable and available makes a difference, even if she cannot solve a resident’s problem.

“I get stopped on the compound because people know I care. I don’t really do anything,” Halbert said. “I just care. And sometimes that’s enough.” | **ECHO**



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Office Specialist Tami Clark ensures every the servers are ready to start meal service at the family event.

THE WORKERS BEHIND THE EVENTS

Dozens of AIC Workers Help Make The Family Barbeque Happen

Written by Jamil Chavis



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Marco Xiap-Jelkes poses for a photo in front of the popcorn machine at the Aug. 23, 2025 family event. Xiap-Jelkes made and served popcorn to the event attendees.

In 2024, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution brought back what adults in custody yearned for – snacks and a good time. From family events to movie nights in the multipurpose gymnasium, concession stand workers have kept popcorn bags full, snow cone cups topped and cotton candy waiting.

Before COVID-19, the facility offered movies in the gymnasium monthly, with the option to purchase candy, popcorn and soda.

Concessions is not a designated job position at EOCI. Instead, orderlies are tasked with their normal daily work of sweeping, mopping, set-up and breakdown for events, along with running concession stands.

Multi orderlies Marco Xiap-Jelkes and Joel Alfaro-Garcia

worked popcorn concessions during movie nights, the 2025 summer family barbeques and the car show.

Xiap-Jelkes has held the orderly posi-

tion for a few years and looks forward to upcoming functions within the institution. At the August family event, Xiap-Jelkes mingled with visitors and received thanks throughout the event.

“I feel the good vibes in the room,” said Xiap-Jelkes while serving popcorn to a family of three. “Seeing people with their loved ones brings a smile to my face.”

Volunteers helped concession stands run smoother at the family event.

Sergio D’Ambrosio volunteered to serve snow cone concessions at the vent. D’Ambrosio said it was constant work.

People rarely wanted only one flavor, he said. Instead they wanted to mix flavors, and the options included raspberry, strawberry, cotton candy, watermelon, lemonade or grape.

Continued on next page...



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Clerk Walter Thomas, one of dozens of AIC workers are the Aug. 23, 2025 family event, works one of two photo printers.

FAMILY BARBEQUE

...continued from previous page

"I did not know it would be this much work," D'Ambrosio said, several hours in to his shift. "I haven't had a break yet."

The event was D'Ambrosio first-time working concessions. He underestimated the cravings people had for snow cones on hot summer day.

During the family barbeque, six volunteers were photographers. There was a constant line of AICs and visitors waiting to get their pictures taken.

Multi clerk Walter Thomas and can-teen worker Branch Niehouse printed photos using two recently-purchased printers. Branch said compared to the old printer their operation smoother. Photos printed in nine seconds. | **ECHO**



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Cotton candy makers pose for a photo at the Aug. 23, 2025 family event. The event requires dozens of AICs to work concession stands, serve food, clean up and to take and distributed photos.

EVENT PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

BUY YOUR PHOTOS

Photos taken by The Echo are available for purchase through the Recreation Department. AICs may purchase photos taken at family events, career fairs or other activities throughout the year.

Photo tickets must be purchased through multi by properly filling out a CD-28 for \$2.00 per photo ticket and writing "Acct# 2590" in the Pay To section.

For AICs that have photo tickets and want to purchase the photo, please contact the Recreation Department to review the snapshots binder. AICs will be scheduled to review the binder.

A few notes:

- In most cases, AICs that are featured in The Echo will receive a free copy of their photo. Photos containing other people's families or staff will not be printed.

- The Echo team will take photos throughout the month at various events.
- Photos will be added to the snapshot binder monthly, usually after the first of the month.
- Due to limited storage, photos are removed every 90 days from the snapshot binder.

Contact the Recreation Department to purchase photo tickets and set up a time to review the binder. | **ECHO**



FAMILY BARBEQUE



Photo by Phillip Lune/The Echo

On Aug. 21, 2025, Enrichment Club member Branch Niehouse poses with a backpack full of school supplies while club member Roger Williams looks on.

BACKPACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Enrichment Club Donates to Kids Attending Family Barbeque

Written by Brian Bement

Many family barbeque participants were surprised in August. The Enrichment Club, a fundraising group, purchased and donated backpacks and school supplies to kids attending the event.

“We bought 37 backpacks this year,” said Ben Edwards, the club’s president.

The club members felt the gifts gave them a sense of purpose.

“It’s a sense of being a part of the community,” said member Roger Williams. “I feel like this is paying it forward which is something I need to do for the rest of my life. I get chills thinking about these kids getting the backpacks, jumping up and down.”

Edwards said there are many supplies for all different age groups, ranging from 1 to 17 years old. The school supply list helped the club decide what to purchase.

The group filled the backpacks with dozens of items such as Troll pencils, colored pencils, gel pens, glue sticks and composition notebooks. The items were

purchased with funds raised from previous club events.

“It takes the burden off the kids parents,” said Edwards.

For the Enrichment Club, this event marks one of the few times they are able to make a tangible donation — something they can physically put together.

“I’m doing this for the kids and the parents because school supplies are expensive,” said member Maciel Munoz. “It is awesome to be able to participate in something like this. I feel proud the Enrichment Club came together and made something happen for the kids and the community.”

The gifts are handed out when visitors are leaving the event, said Edwards.

“Last year, two of my grandsons got their backpacks and sent me pictures,” said Edward. “They were really thankful they got them.”

“We don’t have plans for any more fundraiser [this year],” said Edwards. He said they do not usually have fundraisers during the holiday season, because of the numerous events, meals and holiday canteen. | **ECHO**



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Enrichment Club President Ben Edwards poses with a green backpack on Aug. 21, 2025.

Family Barbeque 2025, Best Photos

1. Dylan Sanchez hugs mom at the start of the family event.
2. Dylan Sanchez, in addition to having visitors at the event, played in the house band.



3. Trevor Trollope tries desperately to keep up in a game of basketball with his son.
4. Randy Fritz poses with his family at the event.
5. Jacob Davis hugs his visitor at the start of the event.



6. Gerry Cunningham steals a kiss from his daughter at the family event.
7. James Renfro hugs his father, Walter, for the first time in ten years.

Photos by Phillip Luna/The Echo



8



11



9



12



10



13





Best photos, continued:

8. Logan Gimbel poses with his mom.
9. Blaine Silversmith and family.
10. Federico Jimenez embraces his spouse, while his JLAD companion looks on.
11. Justin Waldrip poses with his father.
12. Chris Vasey laughs with family member

at the start of the vent.

13. Micah Kennedy poses with his mom and step-father.
14. Ben Edwards with his granddaughter.
15. Benjamin Jones poses with his family at the event.

AROUND EOCI

COMING TO YOUR UNIT

The Barbershop Goes Mobile for All Units

Written by Kurtis Thompson



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

A barber chair on a housing unit in August, 2025. The EOCI barbershop went mobile this month; barbers visit each housing unit to cut hair while the former barbershop in multi has been converted to an office space for AIC clerks.

On the week of July 7, the barbers went mobile.

Previously, adults in custody who signed up for haircuts waited to be called to the barbershop in the multipurpose building on their scheduled day. The process is mostly the same, except the barbershop has been converted to an office space and barbers travel to the unit instead, barber kit in hand.

Recreation Specialist Jerrad Templin said this change was requested by facility administration. So far, EOCI's barbers have had trouble getting all assigned haircuts done in time. Barbers say one problem is limited time for haircuts. Templin said barbers have no set workstations and are stuck digging through their kits for needed tools,

slowing them down.

When the barbers arrive on a unit there is a barber chair, but no dedicated space for equipment.

"One thing is there's no shelves on the units yet for the barbers to use," Templin said. "Those are being built by the carpentry shop. Once those are up there that'll speed things up a little bit."

Resident Antonio McCaw said he likes the new process, but looks forward to improvements.

"The mobile barber program is a good idea and convenient having them come right to the unit," he said. "The only issue is there's never enough time to get through everybody ... if you're not one of the first five signed up, it's a toss-up whether you'll get a cut."

McCaw also said he believes adding a second barber chair and barber would help workers complete all the haircuts.

"I waited roughly a month before I got my haircut and I signed up every week," he said. "But what staff are doing is pulling the old list of haircuts they didn't get through the week before. It still took a month for me to get a cut."

Resident barber Emanuel Gonzalez said it is not possible to complete all scheduled haircuts on time under the current system.

"Everyone deserves to have the same amount of time and attention on their haircuts as the next guy," Gonzalez said. "And right now, if you're not one of the first people signing up on the haircut list, you're basically burnt until the barbers are able to make it back up to the unit again."

He also said when barbers worked in the multipurpose building, haircuts were a team effort. Under the new system barbers are sent to units alone, so inexperienced workers have no teammates to assist them. If 25 people sign up for haircuts on a unit and new barbers finish 10 of them, 15 people are left waiting until the next cycle.

Templin has ideas to improve efficiency. Currently, barbers only visit units on specific days. For example, E3 residents get haircuts on Thursdays. If barbers finish all E3's haircuts for the day, they are not able to start on other units. Templin suggested changing the schedule to allow barbers to continue working once a unit is finished.

To get a haircuts, EOCI residents on regular housing units must sign up the night prior to their units assigned haircut day.

Incentive housing units have a dedicated barber that cuts hair several days a week. | **ECHO**

THE I DO'S AND I DO NOT'S OF GETTING MARRIED IN PRISON

Chapel Starts Three-Part Wedding Orientation

Written by Chris Ainsworth

On July 9, almost 30 incarcerated individuals attended an orientation explaining the process of getting married to their significant other who resides outside the walls of Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

The chapel aims to alleviate some of the stress and hiccups of the marital process by offering a wedding orientation to help adults in custody. The workshops were divided into three meetings spread out between July and August. The chapel is the first in the state offering a wedding orientation.

Chapel clerk Luis Trybom led the first meeting aided by a slideshow, he explained what can be an intimidating process. Trybom said he believed AICs felt overwhelmed by the marriage process.

“I wanted to create a system that would walk them through every single step to help reduce their stress,” he said. “It allowed for us to be able to have more questions and answers on a face to face level.”

Held in the chapel, the first orientation lasted close to an hour and explained what AICs, their loved ones and the chaplains are required or able to do. The slideshow covered facility policies, state regulations, paperwork and who is required to attend. The second orientation showed AICs how to file the application and other documen-



Photos by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

On July 9, 2025, chapel clerk Luis Trybom speaks to about 30 incarcerated people who are planning on getting married.

tation. And the last covered completing marriage licenses and all final documentation.

“The orientation showed me that getting married is a process that when unprepared can become overwhelming quickly,” said potential groom Andrew Slover. “The ceremony at EOCI is too sterile. I am waiting to get married somewhere I can have a more personal experience with my fiancé.”

In the past year only five marriages have taken place at EOCI. The first orientation, however, contained close

to 30 individuals interested in the marriage process. Seven AICs attended the final orientation in August.

“We offered the orientation to give AICs the information in a different way,” said Chaplain Zuleta. “It was to help AICs understand each step.”

The application deadline for a fall wedding is Sept. 1. The final ceremonies of 2025 are planned for 2 days, Oct. 20 and 21, due to increased interest. AICs that have questions about the wedding process can contact the chaplains using a communication form. **| 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.

RECIPE

TWO SUMMER BEVERAGES

Stay Cool in the Late September Heat

Written by Jamil Chavis

Adults in custody have limited options for flavored drinks, but two iced beverages may satisfy their palates.

First is a banana smoothie. It can be made with four or five ingredients: either powdered milk or chow hall milk, water, crushed ice cubes, three bananas and an optional juice packet for flavor.

For smoothies, use the 1/3 cup whey protein scooper to measure two portions of powdered milk or chow hall milk and mix it into half a tumbler of cold water and crushed ice cubes.

Mash bananas to desired consistency and add to the tumbler mix.

Optionally, add a juice packet such as strawberry, cherry or others for a banana flavor twist. Powdered juice packs may be purchased from canteen at \$1.43 per box for most flavors.

“I’ve made those smoothies a lot. I wish I had one right now” said adult in custody Andrew Slover.

The second drink option is flavored iced coffee. These drinks have resident George Davila’s attention. His signature mix for a pitcher consists of five heaping

spoons of Nestle cocoa whipper mix, four to six sugar cubes, two tablespoons of creamer and one or two scoops of coffee.

“It’s nothing special, I make a pitcher whether it’s summer or winter,” said Davila. “I make it to my liking, but [the desired flavor] depends on someone’s taste buds.”

A single serving of a different blend is two scoops of coffee, two tablespoons of creamer, half of cup of milk and four scoops of cocoa-marshmallow mix.

Chilled beverages are trending in EOCI. No Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts or Dutch Bros., no problem. Prison Brew’s is not open to AICs outside of visiting. | **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

EXTRACURRICULAR GARDENING

EOCI Residents Volunteer to Work Garden Plots

Written by Chris Ainsworth

Twenty-nine facility residents have volunteer to garden four nights a week.

Eastern Oregon Correction Institution is growing food for the Food Services department on nine different plots of land within the facility. Much of the harvest would spoil if not for volunteer gardeners who started on July 28.

“To prevent the vegetables from rotting on the plant we implemented a volunteer harvesting program for the east and west side of the facility,” said gardening program facilitator Brett Lloyd. “Food Services provides the seed so items harvested can be served at meals.”

From 7 – 7:30 p.m., four times a week, the volunteers harvest tomatoes, tomatillos, green beans, peppers and cucumbers. The volunteers are divided and spend two days on the east side and two days on the west side of the facility harvesting different gardening plots.

The harvested food is delivered to the kitchen by Lloyd, the following morning. Eventually, the fresh vegetables find their way to vegetarian meals.

Many of the volunteers are participating EOCI’s Master Gardener certification course, but not all. Some of the helpers heard the facility’s Institution Work Programs office was looking for help and

offered to harvest produce.

“I have been gardening my whole life, since I was three,” volunteer Ian Lohrman said. “I enjoy being outside in the garden, around plants and seeing things grow. I find it very calming.”

This is the first year IWP was responsible for organizing harvesting volunteers.

In the past the Food Service department was responsible for harvesting. The kitchen oversaw the volunteers who shared the workload with greenhouse workers and members of the facility’s grounds crew.

As of Aug. 29, the plots have already exceeded last year’s total of 6,500 pounds, which ended in October. Lloyd said the harvesting will continue into October this year as well. | **ECHO**

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, origami, food (if food is art to you), and any other medium. If you are interested in being featured in the next artist spotlight, send a communication form to IWP.

Please include a brief description of your art style. Interested artists will be placed on a call out to IWP.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT SAFFRON

Garden Plots Grow Safflower, Often Confused With One of the Most Expensive Spices

Written by Chris Ainsworth

Gardeners at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution tended a patch of bright yellow and orange flowers in June. They harvested, dried and packaged the flowers later that month. The flowers were grown by request of the facility's Food Service department. Saffron, a prized spice, is used in many middle eastern dishes for its taste and ability to change the color of a dish. However, it was not saffron they tended, but safflower.

Safflower can be confused with saffron due to the similar name, flower color and their use as a natural food dye, but similarities are limited.

Saffron is one of the most expensive spices in the world, costing an average of \$5,000 per kilogram, or just over \$141 per ounce. Its exuberant price is due to the requirements that go into harvesting the plant.

One freshly picked flower yields roughly 30 milligrams fresh saffron with one kilogram of fresh saffron required to produce 13 grams of the dried spice.

Unfavorable growing conditions, lack of space and insufficient manpower caused the facility's greenhouse to plant and harvest safflower seeds instead of the much less common saffron flowers.

"Harvesting safflower was frustrating and painful due to its thorns," said greenhouse worker Joseph Tuttle. "But in the end harvesting the plant was satisfying and I look forward to seeing how it will be used."

Much less labor intensive, the safflower is grown mainly because its seeds produce a high-quality cooking oil prized for its low saturated fat content and neutral flavor. The red, orange



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

A safflower, often confused with saffron, grows in the EOCI garden plot outside of east gate on Aug. 15, 2025.

and yellow flowers can be used as a mild flavor spice but are more commonly used as a natural food coloring.

The dried safflower will be used as a culinary spice by the facility's Fine Dining Program for test recipes and event meals.

"We boiled the safflower in milk, then sifted it and turned it into an alfredo," said fine dining participant Michael Morris. "We seasoned a chicken sandwich with the safflower alfredo and pesto. It turned out delicious."

The saffron flower produces three small, vivid crimson threads – collected from the stigma and style of the flower – that are then dried. The quality is graded by the quantity of the red stigma versus yellow style. The varying regions also impact potency and value.

Safflower has been sold as counterfeit saffron to unsuspecting consumers. It

has been found with added horse hair, corn silk or shredded paper to look like saffron. Even dyes have been added to the fake powdered spice. Safflower is often used as a low-cost substitute in recipes that call for saffron.

Methods of altering saffron to increase its volume or weight have also been discovered. Adding viscous substances like honey or vegetable oil to the saffron fibers have been found to increase weight while substances like beetroot, pomegranate fibers, red dyed silk fibers or even tasteless parts of the saffron flower have been added to increase volume.

Most of the plants were removed at the end of June and will be used by EOCI's Food Service department in the future.

The few that remained are now producing red and orange flowers, ready to be harvested. | **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

COOLING DOWN THE CLOTHING ROOM

Clothing Room Gets Air Conditioning in July; Workers Rejoice

Written by Jamil Chavis

Under July 2025's rising temperatures, 11 resident workers clustered in Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution's stuffy clothing room. Some folded and sorted clothes while others placed or removed identification tags using 400-degree irons. Sweat trickled down their faces as two industrial fans blew at full speed – but to hardly any avail.

Then, at last, the clothing room got an air conditioner.

The building had a swamp cooler previously, but it stopped working. Clothing room Sgt. Joe Arguello de-

cided to put in a work order for an air conditioner to be installed. He and facility resident Gonzalo Barbosa-Salgado, and HVAC worker, discussed the technical details before moving forward.

EOCI's electrical shop and HVAC department completed the project in two weeks.

Adding the air conditioner required square footage measurements of the building, air exchange calculations per hour, wire size estimates, electrical draw calculations, plus the AC and electrical components.

Electric Shop Supervisor Joedy Marlatt said these jobs typically cost \$12,000 plus labor hours.

The final cost for the clothing room's air conditioning was between \$8,000-\$9,000, which was split between HVAC and the electrical shop.

After years of relying on a swamp cooler and two industrial fans, everyone in the clothing room was relieved to have a cooler working environment.

Sgt. Arguello was pleased with the hard work done: "Those fans weren't doing [us] any justice," he said.

Marlatt said the clothing room will not be cold when winter comes because the heat exchangers will allow the clothing room to be comfortable in all seasons. | **ECHO**

ORGANIC BEETROOT

Commissary Adds Beetroot to Available Supplements

Written by Brian Bement

VitaLabs Organic Beet Root supplements were added to the canteen list but the cost of \$6.95 for 60 pills is too steep for some.

In June, correctional residents bugged out on the vegetable beetroot for its performance enhancing properties. Residents have debated about the best way to eat the root.

"They may be free in the dining hall, but eating beets is a tough chew, and almost impossible to cut," said resident athlete and beetroot enthusiast Andrew Slover. "Either go through a tough chew – or save your teeth by spending a little money on a supplement."

Beetroot contains a performance-enhancing chemical called nitric oxide. Eating the vegetable increases levels of the chemical which affects blood vessels and reduces blood pressure, mak-



Kseniya Karelina/Shutterstock

ing exercise easier. It improves exercise performance during aerobic activities and reduces soreness.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics suggest nitric oxide may assist muscle training and the building of mass in muscle growth.

According to WebMD, the following doses have been studied:

To improve athletic performance:

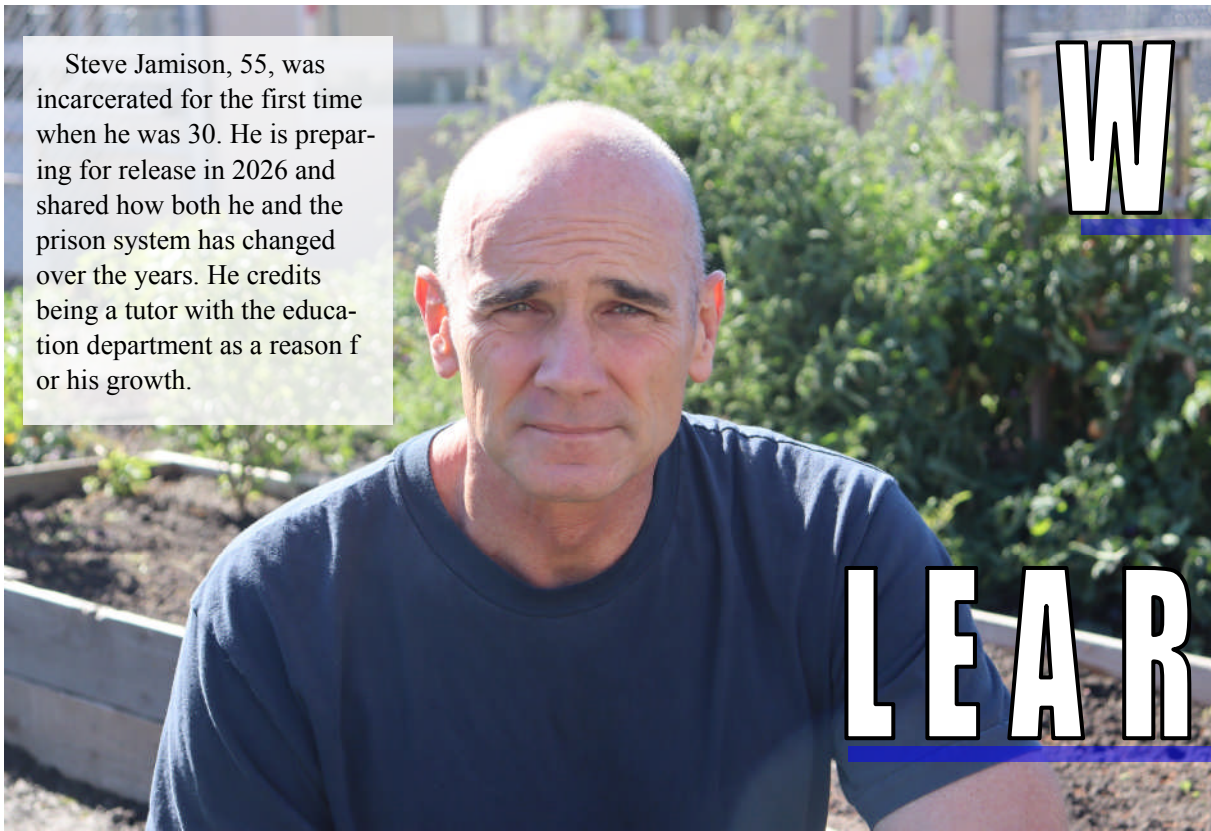
- Beetroot juice 70-140 ml daily taken

hours before exercise.

- Baked beetroot 200 grams taken 75 minutes before exercise.
- Beetroot concentrate 50 mg taken twice daily for 6 days.

To reduce muscle soreness caused by exercise:

- Beetroot juice 125 or 250 ml per serving used for a total of 7-8 servings over approximately 2 days following exercise. | **ECHO**



Steve Jamison, 55, was incarcerated for the first time when he was 30. He is preparing for release in 2026 and shared how both he and the prison system has changed over the years. He credits being a tutor with the education department as a reason for his growth.

With Steve Jamison

Interview by Logan Gimbel

What has changed in the 23 years you have been incarcerated...

Everything. The prices have skyrocketed and the pay has not changed much. The mailroom situation has become way stricter. I am worried that they are going to all electronic which would be really unfortunate for the inmates. People think it will be cool to have tablets or this or that but the reality is that you are never going to have a physical photo of your family.

When you first came to prison what is the one thing that surprised you the most...

It is not like Hollywood. It isn't violent or crazy. I don't care who you are or what you are here for you can avoid the drama. It is pretty simple.

The best piece of advice I could give somebody...

Make use of your time. This is your life. It sucks but it is up to you whether or not this time is just you being warehoused or you are moving forward in some way. If you look at the problems and see them as insurmountable then they are going to be. If you look for ways to move forward you'll find ways to move forward with your life and progress.

Something I learned that stuck with me...

Probably when I came to the realization that this wasn't Hollywood. That there is actually some really good guys in here.

Some really decent human beings. I don't care who you are, what your background is, race, creed, color, crime, where you are from, what geographic location you come from, anything. None of that matters. I see good people.

The program that has helped me the most...

My job tutoring. It puts me in an environment every day that is a professional environment that is all about respect, courtesy and helping one another. You have to have humility. My first tutor job was helping this big, burly gangbanger with F cops tattooed on his face. At his graduation he was hugging me and crying in public saying "thanks bro I couldn't have done this without you." It still gives me goose bumps thinking about it.

Before I came to prison I was...

A drunken logger. I was an alcoholic and the logger mentality is just kind of that anyways.

Now I consider myself...

Much more zen. I don't let things bother me.

The thing I look forward to the most when I get out...

My family, hugging my family. That is the worst part of prison is being locked away from your family. You could feed me bread and water and let me have more time with my family and I would prefer that prison. |ECHO

Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

FINANCE



KrungChingPixs/Shutterstock

MANAGING FINANCES

Record-High Market, but Consumer Cost May Increase, Wall Street Journal Reports

Written by Kurtis Thompson

First-quarter tariffs placed higher costs on imports, which some say have yet to fully impact consumer prices. With companies scrambling to establish new supply chains or relocate manufacturing, future product pricing is uncertain.

Krystal Hur wrote about the stock market's solid second quarter performance in the Wall Street Journal. Despite great numbers, her report quotes Saira Malik, Nuveen's chief investment officer, saying, "The U.S. has remained strong – that doesn't mean the second half of the year will be easy."

Malik believes if previous import costs are going to increase product prices, it would be seen "in the next two to three months."

At Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, residents may already be seeing these tariff impacts. According to Jeff Marks, commissary manager for canteen products shipped to EOCI and

Two Rivers Correctional Institution, vendor prices have slowly increased over the past six months.

"Vendors are letting us know we have increases coming in the next few months," Marks said in an email.

According to Marks, the most recent items affected by tariffs were general snacks and soups, chips, coffee, hot cocoa, music items and meats. He also said it is possible the cost of chips may increase significantly soon. Canteen providers are attempting to offset costs by reducing prices for other items, including art accessories, art paper, bar soap, batteries, dental products, deodorants, eye products, hygiene items, health aids and shaving products.

But pricing may not be the only future problem. Another issue could be product availability.

Walmart shoppers, for example, rarely struggle to find household prod-

ucts such as fairly-priced table lamps because those items are typically always there. But future pricing and availability may change depending on a business's ability to quickly reorganize under tariff pressures.

Manufacturers cannot pay high tariff percentages for materials and keep consumer prices low indefinitely. One solution: establish new factories in other countries and set up new supply lines for them.

These are costly changes which impact production schedules and reduces available consumer supply, but it may be the only way some businesses survive.

"Firm Struggles to Move Out of China" by Hannah Miao, a WSJ report on July 1, describes a company named Lucidity Lights who manufactured their products in China. Since the end of 2024, the business' owner Ryan Bursky has shifted more than 70% of manufacturing to Cambodia – with a goal of 100%.

"Bursky's efforts are emblematic of a push by American businesses to reconfigure global supply chains for a new era of economic warfare," Miao wrote in her report.

However, even though Cambodia's tariffs were lower, manufacturing costs for Lucidity's lighting products were higher because some of their inputs still come from China. And, due to shipping times, the production schedule takes about 30 additional days. Manufacturers who miss deadlines often get slapped with fees by retailers.

These impacts could force manufacturers to raise prices further. The end result could affect canteen product prices.

Many companies are experiencing similar restructuring pains. People like Malik believe these problems will begin impacting storefronts in the second half of the year. | **ECHO**

TWO AFFORDABLE GAMES, SOME ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

Game Reviews: Mon-Yu Defeat Monsters and Astria Ascending

Written by Kurtis Thompson

Two affordable games from Fully Loaded Electronics – Mon-Yu Defeat Monsters for \$58 and Astria Ascending for \$46 – are not the top performers of their genres, but they do offer some replay ability and entertaining combat systems.

Mon-Yu Defeat Monsters is a dungeon role-playing game developed by Experience Inc. and released September 2023. The game objective is to defeat all the dungeons contained in a giant tower and free the land of Tir Na Balc from the Devil King.

Gamers create simple custom characters to explore these grid-style 3D dungeons in first-person perspective. There are eight classes and 80 2D images to choose from for character creation, and players may have up to six party members on a team at once.

Combat is turn-based and awards experience, gold, equipment and items upon victory. Characters gain skill-points with certain consumable items or upon leveling up, which can be spent on learning or improving techniques and spells. Stat points are also acquired this way and are used to improve base traits such as strength, vitality and more.

Mon-Yu is a fairly simplistic game with little story. But, being able to create new characters and different skill combinations at any time increases replay value. Those who enjoy grindy games or old-school dungeon divers will probably find some enjoyment here.

Estimated play time: approximately 27+ hours for speed run, 45+ hours for 100% completion.

Astria Ascending, a side-scroller Japanese role-playing game, was originally released under a different title for



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Astria Ascending, left, is \$46 and Mon-Yu Defeat monsters is \$58 through Fully Loaded Electronics.

iOS in 2015, then was revamped for consoles by Artisan Studio in September 2021.

In this game a group of eight demigods are tasked with protecting the land of Orcanon. A mysterious group of antagonists disrupts harmony between the races, which the demigods must investigate. Players will explore multiple locations to complete quests, fighting many unique creatures and solving puzzles along the way.

Each character begins with a set class, but later on up to three additional classes (called jobs) may be added to each demigod. Each class has a skill tree where skill points may be spent to unlock new abilities or improve character stats.

Combat is turn-based which incorporates a Focus Point system used by both the player and enemies. When a weakness is struck by either party, two FP is added to their 10-point-cap pool which

can be used to power up moves. If a resistance is struck, two FP is deducted from their pool. There are some bosses based on zodiac signs, called Astrae, which may summoned in future battles after the player defeats them. Each Astrae has unique abilities and is controlled in place of the normal party during their summon.

The storyline will probably be strange to the average Westerner. When characters become demigods in this world their lifespan gets drastically cut, but their aloofness makes it unreal. However, the art in Astria Ascending is impressive for being in 2D – quite detailed and is manipulated to appear almost 3D. Combat is probably the most entertaining portion of this game. JRPG enthusiasts will probably enjoy this title.

Estimated play time: approximately 25 hours for speed run, 91+ hours for 100% completion. **ECHO**

MUSICIAN SPOTLIGHT



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

On Aug. 29, 2025, Luis Del Rio poses for a photo on the east compound of Eastern Oregon Correctional Facility. Del Rio often performs at open mic nights with spoken word or performance poetry.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Spoken Word Musician Luis Del Rio Shares Part of His Story

Written by Brian Bement

Luis Del Rio, a 40-year-old man of Bolivian descent, was an artist performer and talent promoter in Salem prior to incarceration. He became known by peers for his poetry during incarceration, performing on stage during Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution's open mic nights.

Del Rio writes and performs spoken word, hip-hop, slam-poetry and performance poetry about popular culture and politics. He said his artistic inspiration is Jesus, something he believes came from a rough start in life.

Not Far Enough

In 1989, 4-year-old Del Rio and his mother left Bolivia for the United

states and stayed at his aunt's house. They were trying to escape his father — a disturbed and violent man, he said.

It turned out the U.S. was not far enough.

One day, Del Rio's mother was driving without him in the car on a highway when her brakes suddenly went out. She flung herself from the vehicle and died. When police investigated, they found evidence her brakes had been cut. His father, who was found in Arizona, was placed under investigation.

He fled the country.

Later, Del Rio was sent back to Bolivia for four years. A family adopted him and brought Del Rio back to Oregon; his Bolivian relatives were believed

to be deceased.

Decades later, he would find out that was untrue.

Past Promotes a Future

An artist community named One Tribe contacted Del Rio when he was 31. They had a photograph of someone who looked related to him singing on stage in Bolivia. One Tribe thought it might be his brother, but the photograph was of his father who had passed after the photo was taken. These clues led Del Rio to find out he had a huge Bolivian family who had been looking for him.

"My family is performers and artists, my brother is a famous flamenco singer in Bolivia," said Del Rio. "My father was a celebrity and at one time was considered the voice of Bolivia."

Del Rio's writing and performing has been therapeutic for him because of its connection to his family. When he discovered his artistic roots, Del Rio was inspired to creativity.

"If we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change," said Del Rio.

In 7th grade, Del Rio's teacher taught similes and metaphors. This encouraged him to spend hours writing. At about 15 or 16, further inspiration would come after he heard rap artist Eminem.

"Eminem's raps blew my mind," said Del Rio. "Here was this white guy machine gunning words."

MUSICIAN SPOTLIGHT

Inspired by Eminem, Del Rio performed rap until he was 30. He said he moved away from the performing arts for a while because he was raising a family and “making lame excuses not to perform.”

A few years later, he was on a vacation in Reno, Nevada. He discovered Art Town, an art festival with live music, movies and comedy shows. The festival reignited his creative drive.

Del Rio returned home and started performing again, helping artists book shows and managing their acts. The experience at Art Town was a sign from God, he said. His beliefs and art are intertwined.

“Most of my life I was selfish. I was lost from not knowing who I was,” he said. “Now, it’s about getting myself out of the way ... in everything I do, I glorify God.”

Instead of living for himself, Del Rio said he wants to exhibit the love, kindness and generosity of Jesus Christ in his work, he said. He believes his salvation through the grace of Jesus made it possible for him to have the opportu-

nities he did to grow as an artist.

Cultivating the Craft

At one time, he only identified with hip-hop. While incarcerated, Del Rio joined PonyXpress and discovered spoken word poetry. Del Rio said the multipurpose building had a song writing workshop ran by Recreation Specialist Jerrad Templin which really helped him continue developing his craft. Now he is also a spoken word poet.

Del Rio learned writing techniques through countless hours of practice and lessons. He is often found with a pen, paper, rhymers’ dictionary and his Bible, letting creativity surge.

“Writing and performing, I feel like a live wire and the electricity is intense,” said Del Rio.

Del Rio credits God for his talent and thanks Templin and PonyXpress for providing a platform for learning at EOCI. He said he writes “a rhyme a day to stay polished.”

“Art has impacted my life so much. I see art in everyone,” said Del Rio. **THE ECHO**



Luis Del Rio performs at an open mic night in February 2025.

Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

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

NOTICES

FINANCIAL SERVICES INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING

What is the Transitional Savings Account?

Funds in the TRSA are protected from debt/obligation collection and garnishment.

Established per SB844/ORS 423.105 as a means for AICs to save funds for release from ODOC custody.

5% of each eligible deposit is applied into an AIC’s TRSA until the account reaches \$500.

AIC’s may elect to transfer funds into their TRSA by submitting a Trust Account Transfer Request form (CD1832) up to \$500.

AICs may continue a 5% deduction of their eligible deposits beyond \$500 if court-ordered financial obligations are satisfied.

Funds in the TRSA are not available to AICs until reentry into the community, no exceptions.

What is the General Savings Account?

Funds in the GS Trust Account are not protected from debt/obligation collection or garnishment.

Established as an optional means for AICs to save funds outside of the TRSA.

AICs may elect to transfer funds into the GS Trust Account once per calendar month by submitting a Trust Account Transfer Request Form (CD1832).

Funds in this account are not available until the AIC releases from ODOC custody; an exception may be granted by the CFO or designee per OAR 291 Div. 158.

What About External Savings Accounts?

AICs may have accounts with external banking institutions however, ODOC staff are not able to facilitate. AICs may not have unauthorized money items in their possession

Note: Trust Account Transfer Request Forms (CD1832) are available on AIC housing units or through Business Services. If the amount being transferred is excessive, it will be limited. The minimum transfer amount is \$5.00.

Please address any questions to Business Services by submitting an AIC communication, available electronically on the tablet.

CAD DRAFTER — OCE WORK OPPORTUNITY

NOW HIRING

The OCE CAD Department at OSP is seeking motivated AICs to support real-world projects through drafting, cost

estimating, and design services for OCE’s manufacturing and sales operations. This is a unique opportunity to work in a professional, team-oriented environment, using modern, industry-standard software to produce high quality

work. You'll gain valuable skills that are in demand across multiple industries.

Desired Experience:

- Experience with CAD software (AutoCAD/Inventor)
- Background in manufacturing or construction
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel)

- Strong collaboration and problem-solving skills

Applicants must meet the following qualifications:

- Must have a valid social security number or equivalent
- Have at least 6months’ time incarcerated with clear conduct.
- Have NO program failures in the past 6 months.
- Must have a release date after September 2028.
- Cannot be in any programs/activities which would conflict with the assigned shift.
- Be willing to sign an Eighteen (24) month retention agreement – anyone leaving the assignment either by termination or resignation before

serving the full retention period will be returned to the sending institution and receive a program failure

- All applicants will need to pass a DOC/OCE security screening and OCE interview before being considered for the position.

Submittal process:

If you are interested in applying, please complete a DOC Inmate Work Application referencing OCE CAD Drafter as the position, and a cover letter describing you and your experience. Submit paperwork to your counselor or the OCE General Manager at your institution, for them to send to Nick Hankland at OSP CAD, 2605 State St, Salem, OR 97301.

Application must be received by Oct. 31, 2025.



**Everyone deserves a second chance.
At All Star Labor & Staffing, we're committed
to helping formerly incarcerated individuals
find the opportunities they deserve.**

**Opportunities may include permanent or
temporary positions in: Warehouse,
Landscaping, Janitorial, Production,
Clerical, Event Staff, and Manufacturing.**

Give us a call upon release and schedule an interview.

•Portland Branch (Mult/WA/Clack. County)

503-619-0811

•Salem Branch (Marion/Polk County)

971-209-7130

•Albany Branch (Linn-Benton County)

541-791-7928

•Eugene Branch (Linn-Lane County)

541-228-9751

•Bend Branch (Deschutes County)

541-389-1718

PUZZLES

See how many points
you can score in one word!

Scrabble Board: September, 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		A		TL				DW	
		DW				DL	D	DL				DW		
DL			DW				J	U	M	B	L	E		DL
				DW			U			DW				
	TL				TL		T		TL				TL	
		DL				DL	A	V	A	R	I	C	E	
TW			D	E	A	C	O	N				DL		TW
			R				DL	T	DL				DL	
	TL		A			TL				TL				TL
			G			DW					DW			
DL			O	DW				DL				DW		DL
			N				DL		DL				DW	
	DW					TL				TL				DW
TW			DL					TW				DL		TW

PLAYER 1

Y ⁴	T ¹	U ¹	F ⁴	I ¹	N ¹	Q ¹⁰
----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	-----------------

PLAYER 2

I ¹	U ¹	G ²	Z ¹⁰	T ¹	R ¹	G ²
----------------	----------------	----------------	-----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------

SUDOKU

Demanding

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

Very Challenging

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Theme: Color Wheel

38	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			

From USAtoday.com
Puzzle created by: Amy Greene

ACROSS

- 1 Toothed device
- 5 Footwear of yore
- 10 Morse symbols
- 14 Slim margin of victory
- 15 Take one’s time
- 16 Once again
- 17 Germany’s von Bismarck
- 18 Peculiar speech form
- 19 Defaulter’s loss, briefly
- 20 Sound of relief
- 21 Intellect, informally
- 23 Norton Sound city
- 25 Reverberated
- 26 Type of oil
- 29 Small speck
- 31 Viva voce
- 32 Reason for family gathering, perhaps
- 37 Yard holder

- 38 Irritable and impatient, e.g.
- 39 Word with act of gear
- 40 Keeps alive, e.g.
- 42 Succubus, e.g.
- 43 They’re often caught lying down
- 44 Daily ritual, below the border
- 45 Unwanted twist
- 49 Trumpeting bird
- 50 Bechamel, e.g.
- 53 Ballet finale
- 57 Freedom from hardship
- 58 Bicycle and then some
- 59 Jail ____
- 60 Off the coast, e.g.
- 61 ____ ear and out the other
- 62 Small Brook
- 64 Bivouac quarters
- 65 Some forest creatures

DOWN

- 1 Rough seas feature
- 2 Presidents pledge
- 3 Tiny arachnid
- 4 Power company problems
- 5 Mark of infamy
- 6 Military chaplain
- 7 “Si, Mi Chiamano Mimi,” e.g.
- 8 City to which Helen was abducted
- 9 Crossword grid feature
- 10 Honorific for Luke’s father
- 11 ____ a customer
- 12 Wickiup relative
- 13 Scimitar, e.g.
- 22 More than passed
- 24 Outmoded, e.g.
- 26 Tent city
- 27 Winglike
- 28 Investigatory aid
- 29 Grandma of art
- 30 cereal of the frisky?
- 32 Group of quail
- 33 Immigrant’s document
- 34 Intentions
- 35 Subject to debate
- 36 Sicilian peak
- 38 Send over the airwaves
- 41 Pennsylvania port city
- 42 Days in Durango
- 44 Subjects of Gustavus I
- 45 Blood and tears partner
- 46 Aspect
- 47 Stair part
- 48 Mr. T’s gang
- 49 Olfactory perception
- 51 First-class
- 52 On top of
- 54 Spicy stew
- 55 Hill companion
- 56 Is unwell

ANSWER KEYS

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

Puzzle 1:
Demanding

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

Puzzle 2:
Very
Challenging

ANSWER KEY

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

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.

The Echo grants permission for publications outside of the Department of Corrections to reprint articles, with appropriate credit given to the writer and the publication, except where articles are sourced from other publications.