

THE ECHO

Created by incarcerated people

NEWS
FROM
THE
INSIDE

WINNER OF AMERICAN PENAL PRESS AWARD FOR BEST NEWSLETTER 2025

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EASTERN OREGON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

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REPLACING THE EAST AND WEST FIELDS

Contract Being Finalized

Written by Alex Dewhurst with contributions from
Jamil Chavis and Phillip Luna

“We are moving forward with replacing both fields,” said Assistant Superintendent Bryan Clark. “We just need to get the contract finalized.”

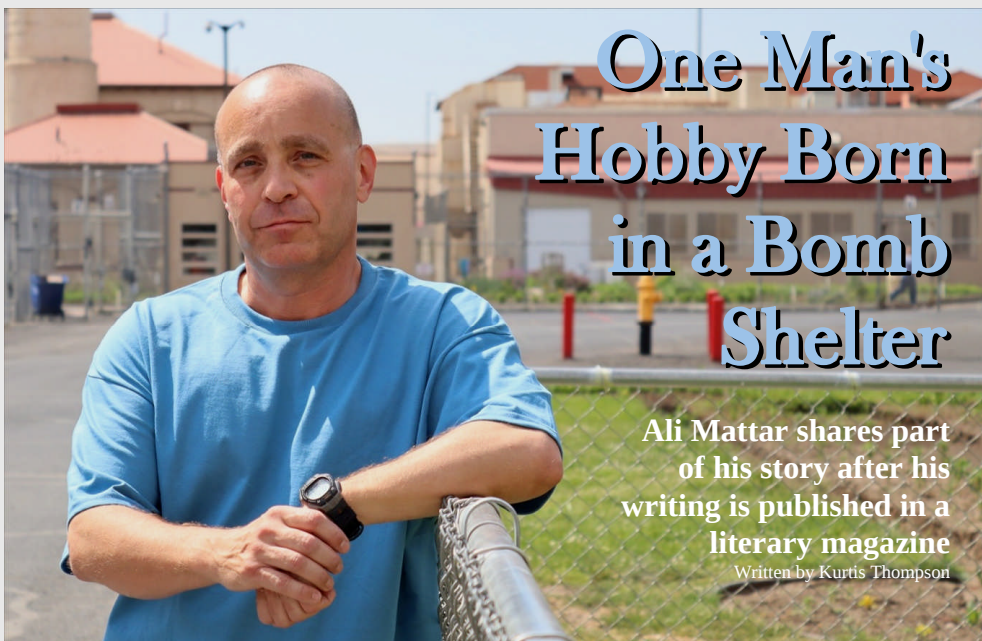
Prison administrators met with contractors to discuss replacing the east and west fields of EOCI on March 26. Since then, negotiations have continued and administrators are closing on a deal. Simultaneously, prison staff are working to provide supplemental activities while the fields are being replaced.

Clark said the fields will be leveled with a power rake and the grass will be replanted using a process called hydroseeding.

“It’s our one big thing for this biennium,” he said.

Although budget cuts have been a constraint on facility functions, Clark said the fields would be

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One Man's Hobby Born in a Bomb Shelter

Ali Mattar shares part
of his story after his
writing is published in a
literary magazine

Written by Kurtis Thompson

Photo by Kurtis Thompson/The Echo

Ali Mattar poses for a photo on May 27, 2026, at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution where he is housed. Mattar was recently published in the second edition of the Quill, a Umatilla County Literary Magazine.

Ali Mattar, resident of EOCI, was published in the Quill of Umatilla County Literary Magazine’s second edition. The magazine, created by Pendleton Public Library, accepted his essay in May. Mattar credits his success partly to his childhood environment, where his writing was born.

“Melja!” he said his mother would scream.

This is Arabic for “bomb shelter.” During the Lebanese civil war, Mattar and his family would rush to the base-

ment of a 22-floor apartment building to escape waves of heavy missile strikes in the civilian suburbs.

“I was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon, so as we lived in the bomb shelters during skirmishes, I learned to write,” he said. “I learned to write voraciously because that’s the only thing you could do.”

Beirut was occupied by Syrian forces from 1976 to 2005. Lebanon-based Hizballah militia car bombings,

See *THE QUILL* page 4

The Echo Team

Phillip Luna | Editor-in-Chief

Kurtis Thompson | Associate Editor

Chris Ainsworth | Writer-at-Large

Logan Gimbel | Design and Layout

Brian Daniel Bement | Correspondent

Alex Dewhurst | Correspondent

Jamil Chavis | Correspondent

ODOC Staff Support

Ray Peters | Supervising Editor

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.

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

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AROUND EOCI

REPLACING FIELDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

replaced out of the adult in custody welfare fund, which is not part of the statewide budget restrictions.

He said the fund collects monies from disciplinary fines, not counting restitution, and from commissary purchases. The welfare fund also pays for cable service, holiday treats and sports equipment, for example.

Incarcerated people are mostly positive about the impending replacement, primarily because of the condition of the fields.

"I feel like it's long overdue," said AIC Adrian Coleman about replacing the fields.

"The fields have so many holes and uneven spots," said AIC Troy Kirk.

While the fields are being replaced, soccer and softball are canceled for 2026.

"As a sports lover, I'm upset I can't play softball and soccer, but I've adjusted," said AIC Sean Reid.

The recreation department is also adjusting to the fields being replaced. In April, the department kicked off the EOCI Cup, a prison-wide competition in which AICs can earn points for their housing unit by winning games organized by the recreation department.

At the end the competition the unit with the most points will win a prize, according to the recreation department.

"I think they did a great job replacing staple events and giving everyone a chance to get involved," Reid said.

So far, the recreation department has offered a 4-on-4 basketball tournament, cornhole tournament, and multiple game nights. | **ECHO**

THIRD ANNUAL CAREER FAIR

More Than 30 Vendors Invited to Second Chance Career Fair

Written by Kurtis Thompson

The Second Chance Career Fair is returning to EOCI Aug. 7.

This will be EOCI's third-annual career fair, created by Opportunity Oregon co-founder and Executive Director Nancy Pance.

According to Pance, more than 30 employers and transitional resource providers have been invited to this event.

Last year, the career fair featured many felon-friendly employers, such as the Iron Workers Union and All Star Staffing. The career fair also had organizations that help support people exiting prison.

"It's a great opportunity for people to learn what's available outside the

walls," said Tami Clark, office specialist for Institution Work Programs. "It's also a great way to network with potential employers and resources before people transition back to society."

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

More information about the career fair and how to sign up will be posted in the July Echo and on housing unit bulletin boards. | **ECHO**

ODOC ANSWERS QUESTIONS ON DIGITAL TABLET PROGRAM

Public Submits More Than 70 Questions

Written by Kurtis Thompson

The Oregon Department of Corrections plans to provide digital tablets for all adults in custody by September 2026.

Since that April announcement, the public submitted more than 70 questions to the department's online FAQ. Those questions varied, but more than half focused on three topics: how will mail be impacted, will communication methods or prices change and what can the tablets do?

How Mail Will be Impacted?

Questions about mail processing were the most popular. The department said apart from publications, authorized packages and legal mail, all incoming AIC mail will be scanned by a third-party company for viewing on tablets. This process, however, raised several concerns with the public.

One concern was only certain mail is considered legal or official, which could impact how original documents are handled. For example, lawyer correspondence could be legal mail, but power of attorney documents sent by family cannot be stamped legal or official. In that case, the document would be scanned.

"We will be looking into options around printing requests and appropriate mail to allow for physical copies to be printed and received," the department said about original documents.

In another response, however, the department said package authorizations would still be permitted. AICs use package authorizations to seek approval for delivery of non-standard mail items. This could allow original document delivery, but the process can take a week or more.

Scanning, on the other hand, could

take much longer. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, data shows mail processed through third-party companies sometimes added a month in delivery time. PPI also said document loss has been an issue in other states.

"In places where there is no printout option, losing access to the tablet means losing access to your letters, and such loss is not uncommon," they said.

And mail-scanning companies do not keep original documents indefinitely. Digital items can outlast physical ones, but storage time and space limitations for scans have yet to be determined.

The department said, "The vendor keeps the originals for a set period of time and then disposes of them. This initial retention period is to ensure that no issues exist with the scans."

"The mail processing process is still under development," they said. "As new processes get established, communication clarifying the changes will be shared."

They also said that scanning mail is not expected to start in September.

Will Communication Methods or Prices Change?

While much of the rollout is still under development, prices for phone calls and video visits will remain the same, the department said. However, the tablet's existing messaging application, called Getting Out, is still being evaluated.

To AICs, the messaging application appears similar to text messaging found in cell phones. For the outside person, it is more like email. The AIC pays four cents per minute to use the application while outside people pay 25 cents per message.

"We will be exploring options for moving the messaging application out of the pay-per-minute side, which would result in a pay-per-message model," the department said. They also said this "would allow unlimited viewing of received items at no additional cost for the AIC."

Outside of messaging and scanned mail, the tablets will not support video visits or calls, the department said.

"For security reasons, mobile camera devices are not permitted within DOC facilities," they said. "Video visitation will continue to be conducted using secure, fixed-location equipment."

The department also said if there were any changes to existing communication devices, it will be announced separately. One future announcement could be operating times changing.

"Hours of [tablet] availability will likely be established and enforced," they said. The department added that hours of availability "will likely be established at each site." Since daily operations vary between facilities, network availability times may also vary.

What Can the Tablets Do?

When it comes to functionality, tablets will be the same between facilities. Previously, the department said "tablets will continue to support the communication, programming, entertainment and approved digital content" AICs currently access. However, other department responses indicate there may be some changes in what is available.

"Depending on final contract terms, tablets may provide access to approved communication tools, educational programs, ODOC content and information, and certain entertainment features such as games, movies, magazines and books," the department said. They added, "We will communicate more information closer to implementation."

| ECHO

AROUND EOCI

THE QUILL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Israeli invasion and indiscriminate strikes by Lebanon's own government were part of Mattar's childhood. From '76 to '93, Mattar sometimes spent months underground.

He said between the ages of 10 and 12 in the '80s were the worst for him, and writing was his escape.

"I wrote anything a kid would write," he said. "At the same time, I'd write about the sounds I'd hear, the bombings and what have you, how that scared me ... I'd write about it just to try and forget, to help process it all the best I could."

The fighting was so intense that at one point a bomb partially penetrated the bunker he and his family were in.

“One year, the bombing was so close to our building that the concussion blasted through almost 10 feet of concrete ... I’ve had ringing in my ears ever since.”

- Ali Mattar,
on the bombings he lived
through as a child in Lebanon

"My mother gave us earmuffs to put on to drown out the sounds, but sometimes it wasn't enough," he said. "One year, the bombing was so close to our building that the concussion blasted through almost 10 feet of concrete. I didn't have my earmuffs on all the way, and it blasted me with the concus-

sion. I've had ringing in my ears ever since."

But weathering wartime horrors wouldn't be the only application for his writing. Mattar's craft, born in a bunker beneath bombs, bullets and Lebanon's smoke-filled sky, now gets him through a different kind of concrete container.

Mattar was incarcerated in 2001, just eight years after escaping war by moving to the U.S. He is serving a life sentence, without the possibility of parole.

In his work, "Fuel," Mattar said writing has been a "way of mentally escaping this aquarium of madness." The work he submitted to the Quill, however, is a relatively new form of writing to him.

"I've only been doing poetry for the last year and a half," he said. "I usually do essays on several subjects I write about, but this poem was very fun in the moment."

And despite being a lifelong writer, Mattar's experience was not a factor for the Quill. In fact, all the submissions were selected through a blind reading.

"The library is thrilled to introduce this collection to Umatilla County residents," Library Director Jennifer Johnson told Columbia Basin News. "The community is full of talented creators, some of which will be published for the first time through the Quill."

Institution Work Program Coordinator Ray Peters had encouraged Mattar to participate in the Quill's submission request.

Peters said, "I'd seen some of his poetry and thought he should try submitting. He's not just someone interested in writing - he actually writes."

"Peters has read some of my writing

“A lot of my inspiration comes from me sitting on my bunk and looking out my window.”

- Ali Mattar

and asked if I wanted to give it a shot," Mattar said. "I'd told him I publish elsewhere whenever I can, so I said, 'Why not?'"

But rather than weeks of refining, Mattar relied on a moment's inspiration for his work.

"After I was approached about this contest, I glanced out my window and wrote about the city of Pendleton," he said. "It just kind of came to me on Friday, then I worked on it Saturday and Sunday to turn in on Monday."

Much of Mattar's writing comes from similar inspiration. His environment continues to play a role in his craft.

"A lot of my inspiration and everything I get is from me sitting on my bunk and looking out the window," he said.

Back in Lebanon, writing was his window to the outside.

"It helped me get through that moment," he said. "Every time we went to the bomb shelter, when we had to segregate ourselves from the conflict, writing came to mind. So, I just stuck with it. All that caused me to focus on writing."

But when first asked about why he entered the Quill's submission request, he said, "Well, my writing is my hobby."

What a hobby. | ECHO

PENDLETON WINDOW

Essay by Ali Matter, to be published in The Quill

If God had an art piece, it might be Pendleton. One unforgettable town that I would love to see close-up, the place and time to be determined.

As of now, I live in Pendleton, Oregon. From my bedroom window, I have a live action view of a place that feels both peaceful and alive. When I look through my "Pendleton Window," I see something rare. A rarity that includes true nature, everyday structures, and wildlife, all sharing the same space. Daily bread for the eyes.

The crystal-clear Umatilla River moves steadily below, sometimes calm, sometimes fierce. Crossing the river, is a rustic weather worn steel bridge that contains ancient freight train tracks where graffiti-covered box cars rumble through the arch shaped structure several times a day. All the while, shrieking, a piercing whistle horn that refuses to be ignored. In the distance, blue tinted hills resembling waves of Pacific Ocean stretch as far as the eye can capture, rising like mini mountains. Homes, churches, schools, hotels, and restaurants pock those slopes, blending civilian life into the landscape.

Wildlife is also part of the daily environment. Birds of prey, seagulls, great blue heron, and Canadian geese fill the sky. Rock chucks and grey squirrels, along with animals too difficult to identify, move through the quiet open areas. At times, Pendleton can feel like a living zoo that's balanced and calm.

One of my favorite yearly events is watching the organized herd of goats shepherded in to clear brush and help prevent wild fires. Watching these voracious weed eaters do their thing is oddly inspiring, productive members of the community in their own way.

The trees, an arboreal signature of Pendleton, inhabit an area almost forest-like, and the seasons show themselves clearly. Spring and Summer glow with deep emerald green, the true color of Oregon. Fall and Winter shift the palette, yet the view remains the same beautiful, flaming, orange and red.

If I ever get the chance to explore Pendleton freely, it will feel like stepping into a favorite live action movie. A movie that I have been viewing through my glass portrait for years.

The place and time still to be determined.

On Edovo

Also available on Edovo are The Echo and 1664. Locate either by typing the publication name into the search box on the Edovo application.

More than 1,000 prisons in the United States have access to Edovo. In many cases, readers can access these publications and others regardless of what prison they are held in.



JOURNALISM



Photo by Phillip Luna/The Echo

Berit Thorson with her awards for ODOC's Outstanding Volunteer Award and Operations Division Volunteer of the Year. Thorson has volunteered as an advisor for EOCI's journalism department since August 2024.

EXEMPLIFYING EXCELLENCE

Berit Thorson, Advisor for EOCI's Journalism Program, Wins Multiple Statewide Awards from ODOC

Written by Logan Gimbel and Phillip Luna

Article also published in the East Oregonian newspaper

In May, the Oregon Department of Corrections showered Berit Thorson with praise and accolades for her volunteer work in a prison journalism program.

Thorson, a reporter for the East Oregonian newspaper, was selected as ODOC's Outstanding Volunteer and the Operations Division Volunteer of the Year on May 22. She was also recognized as EOCI's Volunteer of the Year on May 6, which made her eligible for consideration in the statewide awards.

Thorson is an advisor for EOCI's journalism department. The department produces The Echo and 1664, award-winning publications created by incarcerated writers at the prison.

"I feel honored and humbled to be recognized," said Thorson. "I am hoping that what the awards highlight are more important than me winning."

Programs for adults in custody, ODOC's term for incarcerated people, are often supported by outside volunteers. In Oregon's state prisons there

are about a thousand volunteers supporting programming that includes religious services, 12-step programs and vocational or job skill classes. Thorson's awards are the highest honors that ODOC can give a volunteer.

She started working with the prison's journalism department in August 2024. Since her involvement, the publications have earned national recognition.

"With her leadership and enthusiasm, both The Echo and 1664 have

received several awards in the American Penal Press Awards and more recently the Stillwater Awards,” said Sarah Cunha, supervising executive assistant for EOCI.

In September 2025, EOCI’s newsroom competed against 20 other prison newsrooms across nine states in the American Penal Press Awards. The Echo and 1664 were selected as best newsletter and magazine, respectively. Additionally, some of the writers won individual awards.

The newsroom has also placed in several categories in the 2024 and 2025 Stillwater Awards, an annual contest sponsored by the Society of Professional Journalists and the Prison Journalism Project.

As an advisor, Thorson visits the prison twice monthly. In that role, she has led journalism workshops, mentored incarcerated reporters and leveraged her educational and professional connections to arrange training opportunities with industry experts.

“She brings guest speakers, leads workshops and invests deeply in the work the AIC journalists produce,” said Cunha. “Her guidance helps shape not just better writers, but more confident storytellers. She doesn’t simply support the mission of the Oregon Department of Corrections — she exemplifies it.”

For AICs, working in the journalism department allows them to develop job skills and a pathway towards gainful employment after exiting prison.

“The journalism training by Ms. Thorson opened my eyes to the possibilities of having a career in writing,” said Brian Daniel Bement, reporter for The Echo.

Alex Dewhurst, also for The Echo, said she has given him an education he never thought possible in prison.

“It is like attending a real college class,” he said. “This level of instruc-

tion costs thousands of dollars at a university.”

Thorson’s professional life started at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she completed her Bachelor of Science degree in 2020. She worked as a writing tutor for college students, and eventually volunteered with Odyssey Behind Bars — a prison education program focused on writing.

“I believe in access to education for everyone,” said Thorson, “including and especially for people who are incarcerated.”

She said her interest in writing developed into a passion for journalism after witnessing the impact of journalists during the Coronavirus pandemic and from coverage of the George Floyd murder and subsequent protests.

Thorson relocated to the Pacific Northwest to pursue training in journalism. She earned her Master’s degree from the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication in 2023. After graduating, she moved to

Pendleton and began her work with the East Oregonian.

As a journalist, Thorson is known for her coverage of agriculture industries, public affairs and communities in Umatilla and Morrow counties. Her articles often spotlight local traditions, small businesses and residents working to improve life in the community.

Thorson is also an award-winning photojournalist. In 2026, she received the Jacqueline Brown People’s Choice Award at the Open Regional Photography Exhibition for her work highlighting indigenous culture.

But one of the more unique aspects of her career remains her involvement with prison journalism programs. In this capacity, she supports rehabilitation through education and the power of the press.

Thorson said she had not considered working with a prison newsroom before, but when the opportunity came she jumped at the chance.

“It just felt really perfect,” she said.

| ECHO



Photo provided by ODOC

Berit Thorson, right, poses with EOCI Superintendent Dave Pedro and human resources rep. Cynthia Rodarte while receiving the volunteer of the year award for EOCI on May 6, 2026. Thorson later received statewide awards from ODOC for her volunteer work in prison journalism.

EDUCATION

COLLEGE CLASS FUNDING EXPANDS AT EOCI

Second Chance Pell Grants Available Starting in September

Written by Chris Ainsworth



Photo by Phillip Luna/Stock, The Echo

An empty classroom in EOCI's education department waits for students.

“I see a huge difference from when I first meet with guys about getting their GED to when they start going to classes,” said Brenda Davis, education intake manager. “The change is even more drastic when they walk out a graduate – let alone when they return to college.”

In 1973, the U.S. government established grants for students in financial need. For more than 20 years, Pell Grants were a significant source of funding for prison college programs. Then, the 1994 Crime Bill banned incarcerated students from accessing federal grants for education.

With the absence of Pell Grants, the New Directions Education Project was created to allow Oregon's incarcerated students to attend college. The program accepts about 20 AICs at a time.

In 2016, however, Pell Grants for incarcerated people were restored when the Department of Education started the Second Chance Pell Experimental Sites Initiative as a pilot program. The grants cover tuition so incarcerated students and their families avoid the financial burden.

A study published by the Vera Institute of Justice shows each dollar invested in prison-based education yields more than \$4 in taxpayer savings by reducing recidivism and costs associated with incarceration.

The FAFSA Simplification Act expanded access starting July 1, 2023. The program will transition into a permanent source of funding known as the Prison Education Program. After an extensive application process, EOCI's education department will be able to use grants as early as September.

“I thought I was too old for school ... But I think no matter where you are in your life there is always room for improvement.”

- Cenobio Jauregui,
college student

“I had my reservations. I didn't think that I would be able to do it. I thought I was too old for school. I thought, ‘Why take up a chair that someone else could use?’” incarcerated student Cenobio Jauregui said. “But I think no matter where you are in your life there is always room for improvement.”

NDEP classes are offered for \$10 per credit to the student, while the program pays the remaining tuition. Students are limited to one class per term. Pell Grants will increase the number of available classes for incarcerated college students.

“I think expanded courses is going to be amazing because you guys are going to be able to get your degrees a little bit faster,” Davis said. “That's a huge bonus for you guys. And we would be able to get more AICs through.”

Currently, earning an associate degree through New Directions takes between five and eight years.

AICs not selected for the New Directions program can attend college classes by paying the full tuition. Tuition at Treasure Valley Community College, EOCI's education partner, is \$136 per credit and classes are three to five credits each. AICs who self-pay for courses spend between \$400 to \$680 per class.

"On a good month, I take home around \$87," said Jauregui. "With the nominal amount of money we make, paying for classes requires prioritizing what you need versus what you want. School is definitely a need."

Attending school without the help of

New Directions is financially difficult unless a student receives help from loved ones.

"I am fortunate enough that my dad and stepmom were willing to help out however they could," incarcerated student Mathew Gilbert said.

Gilbert's family paid for all his schooling until he was accepted into New Directions.

Gilbert said his father recently had some medical issues and he offered to stop taking classes so his family would not have to pay for tuition.

"The Pell Grants will be a blessing," Gilbert said. "All of that money that was going into my education can start being used to make sure the medical bills are paid."

AICs who attended school prior to incarceration could have loans in default. Having a loan in default would make an applicant ineligible for Pell Grants. However, there are options available for AICs with loans in default.

Send a communication form to EOCI's Education Department to apply for a Pell Grant, to get help finding out the status of a student loan or how to get a loan out of default.

"I feel like the guys who come up and attend college have a different view on life. It gives people hope," said Davis. "It is literally why I come to work every day. We are releasing better people into the community. That is huge." | **ECHO**

EOCI'S TUTORS RECEIVE STANDARDIZED TRAINING

Eleven Tutors Work Towards Earning Tutoring Certificate From CAST UDL

Written by Alex Dewhurst

Several prison educators and 11 incarcerated tutors at EOCI started training to become certified in CAST's Universal Design for Learning program on May 12.

The training is designed to strengthen a tutor's ability to adapt to their student's needs. Ultimately, UDL training is meant to standardize education between different prisons in Oregon, according to administrative specialist Ann Fitzjarrel.

"To be certified as a UDL tutor will allow one to move within the Department of Corrections and still maintain the same occupation, should transfers take place," said education director Greg Jones.

Jones said the training is not a statewide initiative yet, but there are five other facilities in Oregon also participating.

At EOCI, the training began with a six-hour seminar in the Education Department. Afterward, trainees were given an assignment to demonstrate their learning. After around five weeks of work and review from CAST instructors, trainees should receive their certifications in early June.

"Typically, when you are at school, a lot of times teachers will dictate to you, or they'll present something in one way and hope you figure it out," Fitzjarrel said. "UDL teaches us that there's many different ways to get information to people."

Adult in custody and tutor Matthew Gilbert said his assignment is working with a student who has a learning disability.

"The plan is to center the lessons on goals and work together to overcome barriers," he said.

Gilbert said the training solidified the practices he already uses in the classroom, but taught him how to adapt to different types of learners.

"It's something positive that will stay with me forever," said Gilbert. "Part of the training was how to present this certification on a resumé."

Fitzjarrel said she hopes the training reduces the chance her tutors and learners come back to prison.

"There is a life outside of here," she said. "The more education you have, the less time you'll be here."

According to the U.S. Department of Education, attending school while incarcerated reduces recidivism by 29%.

"Every dollar spent on education returned more than two dollars to the citizens in reduced prison costs," they said. | **ECHO**

AROUND EOCI

THE LOOP EXPLAINED

Free Magazine Publishes Incarcerated People's Work

Written by Alex Dewhurst

The Loop is a free, interactive magazine which features incarcerated writers, available on Edovo and in print. According to Matthew Hippen, a program specialist for the magazine's publisher Shining Light, 395 incarcerated people at EOCI have engaged with the magazine through Edovo as of April 23.

Kelly Beltran, editor-in-chief of The Loop, said the magazine publishes articles and prompts designed to help incarcerated people develop practical prosocial skills and character strengths. More than half of the magazine's content is by incarcerated people, she said. The remainder is written by the Shining Light staff in collaboration with the VIA Institute on Character.

The institute provides peer-reviewed sources from psychology fields.

"This is the difference between [The Loop] and whatever you've seen," said Shannon Schuette, an educator at EOCI. "You are homing in on people's



The Loop magazines sit on a table in May 2026.

Photo by Logan Gimbel/The Echo

strengths. That's why I think people here at EOCI will jump on this – because it's different."

For example, the first article in every issue is "What Went Right." It features submissions from incarcerated people about what accomplishments they are proud of and what they are grateful for.

"Since 2024, I have been waiting for my juvenile lifer resentencing," said Daniel M., in the most recent issue of 2026. "I am proud to announce, on

Feb. 2, I was told I am being paroled after [more than] 35 years. I want to thank The Loop for publishing my words and art over the years."

The Loop publishes every 10 to 12 weeks and is free upon request.

Submissions and subscription requests for The Loop go to PO Box 267, Annville, PA 17003.

The Loop is on the Edovo app along with more than 25 courses and resources from Shining Light. **| ECHO**

PILOT PROGRAM FOR CARE PACKAGES

ODOC Introduces Pilot Program at Two Facilities

Written by Phillip Luna

The Oregon Department of Corrections launched a care package pilot program on March 27.

The program, called Friends & Family Commissary Ordering Pilot Program, was limited to two facilities – Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and Powder River Correctional Facility. It allowed people outside of prison to order items from a catalog for an adult in custody, up to \$120 worth and only if they were on the AIC's approved visitor list.

Orders were placed online through Access Securepak or by phone. The orders were delivered to the ODOC commissary warehouse and then to the facility for hand out.

According to the ODOC website, the pilot is limited to two facilities to help "test the program logistics, ordering processes, security protocols and communication workflows before considering a broader rollout."

Some residents of EOCI may re-

member receiving care packages in June 2021. At that time, friends and family were able to order items for their loved one through the vendor Union Supply. More than a thousand packages were delivered to the facility, but the program did not continue for logistical reasons.

For this time around, however, ODOC hopes the pilot program can identify and resolve any logistical concerns before including other facilities.

"If the pilot proves successful, DOC has stated the ultimate goal is a state-wide rollout, but only after evaluating the operational results from CCCF and PRCF," the website said. **| ECHO**

ELIMINATED VIRUS RETURNS AFTER 26 YEARS

More Than 1,500 Measles Cases Confirmed in the US, Oregon Prisons Unaffected

Written by Alex Dewhurst

The measles virus was officially eliminated from the United States in 2000, but according to the Centers for Disease Control more than 1,500 cases have been confirmed in 2026. Although prisons in Oregon have been largely unaffected, detention facilities in the U.S. have reported more than 100 cases in 2026, according to the CDC.

“Measles is highly contagious,” said the CDC on their website. “If one person has it, up to 9 out of 10 people nearby will become infected if they are not protected.”

Measles symptoms appear seven to 14 days after contact with the virus and common symptoms include: high fever, cough, runny nose, watery eyes and a distinctive rash. Additional complications can include ear infections,

pneumonia and brain swelling.

At EOCI, around half of the 1,300-person population lives in dormitories. Each dorm has around 80 to 100 people. Dorms also have open bay toilets and showers without dividers.

“There are four people within six feet at just about all times,” said Eric Porter, an incarcerated person who lives on a dorm. “For example, our beds are only 24 inches apart.”

The CDC said the virus spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

“You can get measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been,” said the CDC.

The CDC said there is more measles activity right now because the national vaccination rate among kindergarteners

has decreased below the 95% coverage target to achieve herd immunity. Additionally, fewer people are receiving both doses of the vaccine. Although one dose is 93% effective, the CDC recommends the second additional dose, which increases the effectiveness of preventing measles to 97%.

While the vaccine is mostly effective, the risks are higher for people who cannot rely on their immune system. That includes pregnant people, children under 5 and individuals with a weakened immune system.

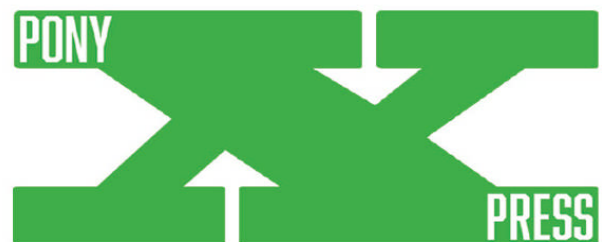
In early 2026, fliers about measles were posted on housing unit bulletin boards at EOCI. It recommended people get vaccinated, wash their hands, cover their mouths when they cough and stay home from work when sick. Contact the health service department for more information. |ECHO

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GRADUATION

SEVEN STUDENTS GRADUATE PARENTING INSIDE OUT

Program Hopes to Help Incarcerated Dads Be Better Parents

Written by Brian Daniel Bement



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Seven Parenting Inside Out graduates pose for a photo on May 13, 2026. Top left to right: Enrique Hernandez-Cortez, Gerald Carver, Marco Delgado-Carter and Louie Moore. Bottom left to right: Luke Neet, Arlen Arcoren and Spencer Bliss.

“I wanted to do better for the kids. I didn’t want to see them go through the things I went through.”

- Luke Neet,
Parenting Inside
Out Graduate

A **Parenting Inside Out** graduation was held at EOCI on May 13.

Parenting Inside Out is a skill-based course on parenting from Oregon Social Learning Center’s Parenting Management Training. The course is also taught outside of prison and the organization works within communities and schools.

Seven students celebrated the completion of the 12-week Pathfinders parenting class.

Parenting Inside Out is a Pathfinders program – a cognitive and evidence-based service addressing the issues of having children while incarcerated. Pathfinders was introduced to the Oregon Department of Corrections around 2000.

The class met three times a week covering parenting techniques and sharing personal experiences. For example, students role played as child and parent. Also, part of the training requires the students to parent a teddy bear in lieu of a child. Throughout the 12-weeks, they carry the bear everywhere they go in prison.

Normally, parenting graduations are held in the institution’s visiting room and the students’ families can attend. Due to a clerical error, however, family was unable to attend the ceremony.

One graduate, Spencer Bliss, was expecting his daughter to attend. Fortunately, Bliss’ family was contacted before they made the four-hour drive to EOCI.

Unfortunately, Bliss had arranged for the graduation cake to have “Happy Birthday Audryanna” written on it, because it was his daughter’s fourth birthday. Still, the graduating students arranged for a small consolation. Staff recorded them singing “Happy Birthday” in front of the cake and sent the video to Bliss’ Family.

Pathfinders facilitator Heather Nestalhi, Two Rivers Correctional Institution Pathfinders facilitator Tamara Chorey and corrections counselor Joe Byrnes took the celebration to the classroom.

Graduates gave speeches praising facilitators, counselors and teacher Brittany Bergh, who was absent for graduation.

While students celebrated with cake, Nestalhi gave a speech and told graduates how proud Bergh was of them and her disappointment at being unable to attend. Then, graduates received a certificate of completion.

“This class makes a big difference on how I parent my daughter from inside prison,” graduate Marco Dalgado-Carter said.

He said the teacher taught him techniques such as emotional regulation, giving him more insight into parenthood.

“I knew something needed to change,” said graduate Louie Moore.

Luke Neet, another graduate, said he had a rough childhood.

“I wanted to do better for the kids,” he said. “I didn’t want to see them go through the things I went through.”

After the ceremony, the teddy bears carried during the 12-week class as a parenting tool and their completed workbook, referred to as a Dad Book, were sent to student’s families.

Dalgado-Carter said the class can bring families closer together.

“Nobody is going to help bring people back into your life but you.”

“Nobody is going to help bring people back into your life but you,” said Delgado-Carter. “Instead of going to segregation, I would rather be doing programs to repair the damage I caused to family.” | **ECHO**



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

Three graduates line up to receive cake while others enjoy a piece during the Parenting Inside Out graduation on May 13, 2026. The parenting class is 12 weeks long.



Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

The birthday cake made for the Parenting Inside Out graduation sits on a table during the May 13, 2026 event. The bakery wrote “Happy Birthday Audryanna” on the cake, because it was Spencer Bliss’ daughter’s birthday. Unfortunately, families were unable to attend the graduation due to a clerical error.

SIGN UP FOR PARENTING INSIDE OUT

To participate in Parenting Inside Out, send a communication form to Ms. Bergh, Pathfinders.

IN SPORTS

TEAMS EARN POINTS TOWARDS EOCI CUP AT GAME NIGHT

Residents Played Magic: The Gathering, 3-point Contest, Cornhole and Ping Pong

Written by Alex Dewhurst with contributions from Jamil Chavis



Photo by Phillip Luna/Stock, The Echo

Residents of EOCI play Magic: The Gathering in the multi-purpose building.

On May 13, around 50 incarcerated people at EOCI's gymnasium competed in a game night from 6 to 8 p.m.

Games included Magic: The Gathering, a 3-point shootout, singles cornhole and ping pong. After the scheduled games finished, additional challenges emerged for extra rewards.

The winner of each game and challenge won points towards the EOCI Cup. The cup is a new prison-wide competition in which adults in custody can win points for their housing unit by winning games provided by the prison's recreation department.

At the end of the summer-long competition, the unit with the most points will win a prize, according to the prison's recreation specialists.

Magic: The Gathering

In the quiet corner of the gymnasium, around 20 people across six white fold-out tables competed in a game of strategy. All the while, a familiar face watched the competition. AIC Charles Thornberry, the April 2024 game night champion of Magic.

"I've seen people you wouldn't even think play Magic – the kind of guys on the weight pile," he said. "You have all sorts of groups, not just the nerds."

Even though Thornberry was knocked out in the semi-finals this time, he said he likes that game nights foster a positive energy and a chance to see friends he does not normally see.

This night's winner was AIC Logan Gimbel.

"I've been playing since 2010," said Gimbel. "This was a culmination of 16 years of encyclopedic knowledge."

Gimbel said he has competed in three other game night Magic competitions, but was knocked out before making it to the championship round.

"At one point I only had one life left, but that's the only life that matters," he said. "It's something I never thought I would participate in while incarcerated, but the fact I can get a Friday Night Magic experience while

incarcerated is cool."

Friday Night Magic are social and competitive events held outside of prison at local game stores.

3-point shootout

Across from the Magic tables, around 15 people dribbled basketballs for the 3-point shootout. Participants got 10 attempts to make as many 3-pointers as possible. The winner, AIC Edgar Contreras Garcia, made eight.

Garcia's final shot was a swoosh. He yelled and ran a victory lap around the gymnasium.

"It makes us feel like we're not locked up," Garcia said. "It brings everybody out to bring us together."

After the shootout concluded, a spe-



Photo by Phillip Luna/Stock, The Echo

Cornhole bags sit on a board in the multi-purpose building.

cial challenge was offered to the top three shooters for 10 points. A half court throw of a football into a basketball hoop. Garcia and AIC Eric Evans, who was runner up in the shootout, made the half-court shots.

"I am trying to be the best at everything to help my unit win the EOCI Cup," Evans said.

Singles Cornhole

Near the front of the building, four sets of cornhole buckets sprawled the width of the gymnasium.

Around 10 people flung and splashed bean bags at the wooden targets. This game was organized differently than the others however.

Competitors were allowed to play as many games as they liked – as long as it was against a different opponent each time. Each win awarded points to their respective unit.

"I scored 18 points for my unit tonight," said AIC Justin Denney.

AIC Luis Del Rio, however, won the most games.

After the games concluded, recreation specialists moved the buckets further apart for a chance at more points. Across nearly half the length of the gym, Denney made the only official half-court cornhole toss.

"I feel the EOCI Cup is unfair because on regular units we have a bunch of Level 1's and 2's," said Dale Reely. "Things are going to be lopsided."

Ping Pong

In the center of all the organized chaos were a handful of ping pong players.

"Everyone likes a little healthy competition," said referee Christopher Bickford about game night.

Bickford said he enjoys how sports bring people together.

"I want to thank the guys who I practice with at activities," AIC John Damron said after his victory. "You get a level of competition here you wouldn't get normally."

Damron said game nights are a positive space to compete in prison. | **ECHO**

EOCI CUP STANDINGS

As of May 28, 2026

The EOCI cup is a prison-wide competition in which adults in custody can win points for their housing unit by winning games provided by the prison's recreation department. At the end of the summer-long competition the unit with the most points will win a prize, according to the prison's recreation specialists.

The standings were recorded on May 28, and are as follows:

G4 – 88 points

H2 – 48 points

A1 – 36 points

B1 – 25 points

E3 – 15 points

B3 – 14 points

A3 – 10 points

F3 – 9 points

C1 – 7 points

H1 – 6 points

B2 – 5 points

A2 – 4 points

E2 – 4 points

E4 – 2 points

F2 – 1 points

So far, the recreation department has offered a 4-on-4 basketball tournament, cornhole tournament, and multiple game nights. Event sign ups will be posted on housing unit bulletin boards. | **ECHO**

Letters to the Editor

The Echo publishes letters to the editor on occasion.

If you have a questions, comment or something you would like to share, send a communication form to IWP, Journalism Department and let us know.

INTERVIEWS



Mychael Lee, 41, has spent most of his adult life incarcerated. He is a secondary dog trainer, attends NA, co-facilitates GOGI groups and has completed the newly-created emotional intelligence class. His goal is to work with other AICs and reduce their chances of returning to prison.

Photo by Chris Ainsworth/The Echo

I would describe myself as... caring. I want to be loved and love other people. I have been a criminal my entire life, a violent criminal. I hated that person. Now I want to be who I really am. I want to help people. I hope other people would describe me as sincere and effective.

The mentor program is... hope. Hope has to have a foundation to build off of and that is what we are. The program is a group of contact officers, run by Lt. Booker, and a group of AICs that decided they wanted a change. They wanted hope. We have been gang members or experienced some sort of trauma. We all have lived experience. We are trying to create change so that when people get out they don't come back.

Being a mentor has taught me... that opinions don't matter. Everybody has a reason for being who they are, a valid reason. Being a mentor has taught me how to relate to people I would never relate to before.

I started out as a mentee and worked my way up to a mentor. I spent a year and a half as a Level 1, fighting, drugs, everything. I went from that to being in a program. John Yeager was my mentor. We set some short-term goals that were a catalyst for my change. I was a GOGI facilitator

for almost a year before I moved housing units. Now I am in the dog program. If I can do it, anyone can do it.

As a mentor I like to... set short-term goals. As we meet those goals we will set longer-term goals. I am really big on classes. I want all my mentees to take GOGI. If eligible, I would also like them to take a Behavioral Health Services class, so I try to set them up with that. And I want them to submit an Opportunity Oregon application, regardless of how much time they have.

If I was your mentor I would... be on call whenever you needed me. I like to start out with a motivational interview where we figure out what you are trying to accomplish with the program and set goals to achieve that.

If we run into a roadblock, I can discuss solutions with a contact officer. There are also other mentors I can talk to. I can get their opinion or even bring another mentor into the conversation with my mentee so we can find the best path.

To get involved in the mentor program AICs can speak with a contact officer, or send a communication form to Lt. Amethyst Booker. Potential mentees can request a specific mentor or fill out a survey and be matched with a mentor.

| ECHO

POKÉMON FRANCHISE TURNS 30

Despite Massive Success, Pokémon Almost Failed to Reach the US

Written by Logan Gimbel



Photo by B.Robinson/Shutterstock

Pokémon, one of the highest grossing media franchises in history, turned 30 this year. Praised for bringing people together, its positive impact on mental health and helping children learn to read, Pokémon can be found everywhere around the world – including here in EOCI.

“It’s interesting to see a bunch of supposedly ‘hardened criminals’ playing Pokémon and talking about it,” said incarcerated person Kory Sturgess.

Created by Satoshi Tajiri, who was inspired by his love of bug catching as a young boy, Pokémon requires players to seek out and capture various different types of fictional creatures. Development for the two original games, Pokémon Red and Green, began in 1989, but were shelved by 1990 after the developer, Game Freak, cited difficulties.

Tajiri returned to Red and Green in 1994 and by February 1996, the games

were released. By releasing two separate games, each with their own exclusive Pokémon, Tajiri encouraged players to trade with each other. This was possible using the Game Boy’s Game Link Cable – a practice still used today, but with modern internet and Bluetooth.

When Red and Green were released, they boasted a total of 151 different Pokémon for players to catch.

Currently, there are over 1,000 unique Pokémon species across nine generations. The newest Pokémon game to be announced is Pokémon Winds and Waves, set to be released in 2027.

Aside from a popular video game series, Pokémon has a long-running animated show. As of 2026, there are 28 seasons with more than 1,300 episodes. The story originally revolved around main character Ash Ketchum and his Pokémon, Pikachu. But after 25

seasons and finally becoming a Pokémon champion, Ash and Pikachu were retired. Season 26 introduced two new characters, Liko and Roy.

Despite Pokémon’s notoriety, it almost never reached the U.S. Pokémon was widely popular in Japan, but Nintendo believed Pokémon were too cute and not cool enough to spark interest in the U.S. However, Alfred Kahn, the CEO of 4Kids Entertainment, believed in Pokémon’s potential.

After spending close to \$50 million, the equivalent of \$98.76 million in 2025, changing the name from Pocket Monsters to Pokémon and creating the slogan “Gotta Catch ‘em All,” the show aired September 1998. By December, it was the highest-rated children’s show.

Following the show’s launch, Pokémon Red and Blue were released in the U.S. in September 1998, with the card game following shortly afterwards.

Nintendo contracted with Wizards of the Coast, the creators of Magic: The Gathering, to localize the Pokémon card game. In January 1999 the cards were released. By April 1999, Pokémon had swept across the U.S. in a craze called “Pokémonia.”

Stores could not keep up with the demand. A representative of Wizards told the Washington Post they had “exhausted most of the card-printing capacity in the United States.” As of March 2025, 75 billion Pokémon cards have been printed and 489 million Pokémon games have been sold worldwide.

“There used to be a stigma on things like this, like cartoons are for kids. The show was a cool stepping stone that made people feel free to play this stuff in the open,” said incarcerated person Glen Wheeler.

“Today, you can find dudes with tattoos of Pokémon,” Wheeler added. “The show and games allowed that culture to come alive in the U.S.” | **ECHO**

FINANCE

A MODERN LAY-AWAY PLAN

Buy Now, Pay Later Plans Can Be Used For Everything

Written by Alex Dewhurst



Photo by stoatphoto/Shutterstock

People can use Buy Now, Pay Later plans to buy almost anything – including fast food burritos – in installments. But, according to Investopedia, BNPLs can be financially risky. People exiting prison who lack financial education, are more vulnerable to BNPLs according to Corrections1, an information platform for public safety.

These plans are similar to lay-a-ways and allows people to pay for store products in installments.

With lay-a-ways, buyers would receive the item after completing payments. This changed in the '90s when companies such as Rent-A-Center and Aaron's started giving consumers their item immediately.

The tradeoff – buyers pay more than the item's retail value across installments.

For example, consumers could purchase a couch and pay for it across 12 months. From Aaron's, a couch which retailed for \$500 could cost \$600 at \$50 per month.

Now, consumers can use BNPLs to purchase practically anything, anywhere and at any time. And interest rates on long-term plans may reach as high as 36%. At that rate, a \$15 Chipotle burrito could cost more than \$20 on a payment plan.

And since many BNPLs do not explicitly show their risks, those lacking financial education are more vulnerable. People previously incarcerated fall in this category.

In fact, the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that more than 60% of incarcerated people have little to no financial education.

"Those who leave prison with the ability to manage money are less likely to rely on public assistance and more likely to contribute to their communities and local economies. Financial literacy benefits more than just the individual," Corrections1 said.

They said a pilot program by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice reported a 28% decrease in financial-

related parole violations following financial education.

Modern-day financial education covers topics related to BNPLs, such as automatic payments. Unlike lay-a-way plans – which were often paid by mail or in person – BNPLs link to a person's bank account to automatically siphon payments when due.

Also, Investopedia said BNPLs are easy to acquire, and some consumers end up in "loan-stacking" debt. According to a Consumer Reports study, "owing four or more loans at once makes you twice as likely to miss a payment."

BNPLs have become a popular alternative to credit cards, especially through online retailers. They are often advertised at virtual check-outs as, "pay in four interest-free installments."

The plans created an industry bubble in the last decade. BNPL purchases increased from \$2 billion in 2019 to \$120 billion in 2023, according to the New York Times Magazine.

In that time, BNPLs have settled into a legal gray area. Since they are installment plans, they avoid credit and loan laws, such as the Truth in Lending Act. The act protects buyers by making lenders be clear about their interest and fees. This, however, does not apply to installment plans.

The Federal Reserve said people who use BNPLs often have a lower financial well-being than their peers.

In 2021, Rohit Chopra, director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, at a hearing about BNPLs, requested the same regulations.

However, one week into Donald Trump's second term, Chopra was removed from his post. Although it is normal for a new administration to replace staff, the bureau then put out material downplaying the risks of BNPLs.

ECHO

EDOVO RESOURCES FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

A Memoir, Educational Videos, Yoga and Pathway Academy

Written by Brian Daniel Bement

Prison Policy Initiative reports more than 49% of people in Oregon prisons had a substance use disorder prior to incarceration.

David Nelson, a resident at EOIC, said before he came to prison he was underweight, his teeth were brown and falling out and his skin black and blue from drug injection punctures.

“I had already been in jail a few times,” he said. “They got sick of me coming in and out, so they sent me to prison.”

Nelson said he struggled with drug use for years. When he arrived at prison in 2026, he started looking for treatment programs, but there was a waiting list for Narcotic Anonymous. While he waited for NA, his friend introduced him to recovery programs on institution tablets through the Edovo application.

Edovo, an information and education application, has resources for substance use disorder. The applications is available on institution tablets.

Here are features on Edovo:

My Addiction & Recovery

This is a memoir about Ed Kressy overcoming addiction, mental health challenges and ultimately becoming a journalist and writing articles for The Washington Post.

According to a review on Edovo, New York Times bestselling author Anna David said Kressy’s memoir was one of the best addiction recovery memoirs she has read.

Recovery First Aid

This is a series of educational videos on substance misuse, the impact on the work force, family and how to recognize substance use in family situations.

They touch on how to talk to someone in need and approach a family member struggling with substance use disorder.

The Phoenix – Yoga & Recovery

The Phoenix has a series of classes on yoga, meditation, fitness workouts, active recovery and breathing techniques to overcome relapse. There are challenges in each video such as workouts and meditations. The instructors are people who have found sobriety.

Pathway Academy – Recovery Overcoming Barriers

This recovery course offers certificates and information on physical health and emotional healing. Their goal is to teach people positive decision making and address underlying issues. They break down thought patterns, how people relapse and staying sober. | **ECHO**

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Roots of Success is an environmental literacy program that teaches the concepts of the green economy, environmental and social justice, and global health issues. In addition to focusing on environmental issues, students will participate in practical activities — such as writing a resume and mock job interviews.

Contact IWP to sign up.



IN JUNE

NATIONAL PTSD AWARENESS MONTH

Twenty-Four Percent of Incarcerated Men Meet Criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Written by Logan Gimbel

June heralds the beginning of summer, family barbeques, and holidays such as Juneteenth, Father's Day and Independence Day. June, however, is also National PTSD Awareness Month.

Of the 342 million people in the United States, 12 million, or 3.5%, are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, according to the National Center for PTSD. Research conducted by Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority found that 24% of incarcerated men met the criteria for PTSD.

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can affect anyone, not just veterans, who experienced life-threatening events such as car crashes, assaults or abuse. The two most common PTSD-causing events, however, are military combat and sexual assault. The National Center for PTSD said that getting injured during the event can make it more likely that PTSD will develop.

It is common to experience different types of physical or emotional stress, fear, anger and increased levels of alertness after a traumatic event. Most symptoms will abate with time as the mind and body recover. If symptoms last longer than a month, interfering with life and causing great distress, PTSD may be present.

There are four symptoms tied to PTSD: reliving the event, also called re-

-experiencing symptoms; avoiding reminders of the event; having more negative thoughts and feelings than before the event; and feeling on edge or keyed up, also called hyper arousal. A person must have each symptom to be diagnosed with PTSD, but individuals will experience symptoms differently.

Reliving the event, the first symptom, may include nightmares and flashbacks often tied to sensory trig-

gers. The second symptom, avoiding reminders, may include staying active to avoid thinking or talking about the trauma.

Feeling numb, shame, guilt, lack of trust and memory loss are all tied to the third symptom, negative thoughts.

The final symptom, hyperarousal, manifests in several different ways. Some people may become more aggressive or irritable, while others may have difficulties sleeping, find it hard to concentrate or be easily startled.

PTSD can also affect children, but the symptoms may have different signs depending on the age of the child. For children up to age 11, the most common symptom is to act out their trauma through play, stories or drawings. Some children may experience nightmares, aggression and irritability and difficulties sleeping, similar to adults.

Children 12 or older may show signs of depression, anxiety and are more likely to engage in reckless behavior such as substance use.

"When you study prison populations, you see a common preponderance of childhood trauma and mental illness. The two go together," said Dr. Gabor Mate, a substance abuse and trauma expert. "So, what we have in prisons are the most traumatized people in our society."

Aggression and substance use are often related to criminal behavior. According to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, research has shown a link between trauma and criminality. A survey conducted by ICJIA found 90% of male prisoners had experienced at least one traumatic event in their life.

The prevalence of PTSD among the incarcerated population is often as high as the rate of PTSD among combat veterans. | **ECHO**



Photo by scoutori/Shutterstock

SIXTY-SIX YEARS TO THE MOON

Rapid Advancements in Flight Made in a Short Time

Written by Logan Gimbel

For more than two millennia, humanity has been interested in flight. Ancient China used man-lifting kites for military and civil purposes. In the ninth century a man named Abbas ibn Firnas attempted to fly by covering himself in vulture feathers and attaching wings to his arms. Leonardo da Vinci designed several flying machines in the 15th century. It was not until 1900s, however, that true flight was achieved.

In 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright achieved the impossible – the first manned, heavier-than-air flight that was sustained and controlled. By 1969, humanity was on the moon – only 66 years after the Wright brothers' flight. Between 1903 and 1969, scientists and pioneers made several advancements.

In 1939, the world's first jet aircraft, the Heinkel He 178, was piloted by Erich Warsitz from Germany. Then in October 1947, Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier piloting the Bell X-1.

In 1961, humanity left the Earth's atmosphere. Yuri Gagarin was the first person in space, completing a 108-



The Artemis II takes flight for its round-the-moon trip in 2026.

Photo by rawpixel.com/Shutterstock

minute orbit around Earth aboard the Vostok 1.

Then in 1967, two years before Apollo 11, an air speed record was set. The X-15 flew 4,534 miles per hour or Mach 6.1. It was not until 2004 that this record was broken by the X-43A which reached Mach 9.68 or 6,755 miles per hour.

By 1969, people had finally landed on the moon and 1972 was the last year human beings set foot on the moon. Now, more than 50 years later, people are returning.

Artemis II and its crew flew around the moon in April, while Artemis III aims to land two on the moon in 2028.

| ECHO

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SEEKING

ARTISTS

FOR QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHT

The Echo will be featuring artwork from several artists in a quarterly spotlight. All forms of art are welcome, such as painting, pencil art, woodworking, metalworking and even photography.

If you are interested in sharing your most recent work, contact the IWP: Journalism Department.

PUZZLES

See how many points
you can score in one word!

Scrabble Board: June 2026

Scrabble Basic Rules

No proper nouns like names
or places

No contractions like “it’s” or
“that’s”

No abbreviations like “app”
or “spec”

Board Scores

TW = Triple Word Score

DW = Double Word Score

TL = Triple Letter Score

DL = Double Letter Score

TW			DL					TW				DL			TW
	DW				TL				TL					DW	
		DW				DL	R ¹	DL				DW			
			DW				O ¹					M ³	I ¹	N ¹	I ¹
V ⁴	I ¹	S ¹	A ¹	DW			C ³	R ¹	A ¹	Z ¹⁰	E ¹				
	TL		C ¹	L ¹	O ¹	C ³	K ⁵		TL		A ¹		TL		
		DL	E ¹			DL	E ¹	DL			D ²	DL			
TW			DL				T ¹				O ¹				TW
		DL				DL		DL			W ⁴	DL			
	TL				TL				TL					TL	
				DW						DW					
DL			DW				DL				DW			DL	
		DW				DL		DL				DW			
	DW				TL				TL				DW		
TW			DL								DL				TW

PLAYER 1

A ¹	F ⁴	T ¹	R ¹	C ³	A ¹	T ¹
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PLAYER 2

B ³	I ¹	O ¹	N ¹	O ¹	L ¹	I ¹
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Will Shortz Presents Survival of the Fittest Sudoku

Puzzle 1: Demanding

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

Puzzle 2: Very Challenging

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

Theme: Taking Stock

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20					21					22				
23				24			25	26	27				28	29
30							31					32		
				33		34		35			36		37	
38	39	40				41					42			
43					44				45					
46				47		48			49		50		51	52
54					55						56			
			57						58	59			60	
62	62						63	64				65		
66							67					68		
69							70					71		

Puzzle created by: Lynn Lempel

ACROSS

- 1 Spreader of news from 71-Across
- 5 Shelter grp.
- 9 Decorative scarf
- 14 Rubs the wrong way
- 15 Country renamed in 1935
- 16 Advisory group
- 17 Description of the stock market (Part 1)
- 19 An arm and a leg?
- 20 Sashimilike
- 21 Matador's boost
- 22 Novi Sad native
- 23 Succinct saying
- 25 Starting point
- 30 Jazzy woodwinds, briefly
- 31 Surf partner
- 32 Locale of a historic fall
- 33 "Deal or No Deal" aिरer
- 35 Roman date
- 37 End of a sequel's sequel
- 38 Description (Part 2)
- 43 Hoping for passage
- 44 Paint amateurishly
- 45 Kennel cry
- 46 Tightly stretched
- 48 Kennel cry
- 50 Some wild cats
- 54 Longest of long odds
- 56 Chilling?
- 57 Pinto or lima, e.g.
- 58 Debtor's letters
- 60 Trinity member

DOWN

- 61 Dentist's advice
63 Description (Part 3)
66 It's often glazed, informally
67 First name in daredevilry
68 James Bond classic
69 Scraping tools
70 Tuber used for poi
71 See 1-Across
- DOWN**
- 1 Royal coronets
2 Fighting fleet
3 Slick coat for the slopes
4 IRS requirement
5 Plant shelf, maybe
6 Miter wearer
7 Food drive collectible
8 2005 Best Director Lee
9 More competent
10 Evening gala
11 Angkor Wat locale
12 The sun, for one
13 Brief causes for some Bear hugs?
18 Rots
22 Without danger
24 Sometimes-spliced item
26 Petty complaint
27 Language similar to Hindi
28 Deutsch denial
29 "Idylls of the King" lady
34 Chalk alternative
36 Leave unobtrusively
38 Decides

DOWN CONT.

- 39 Mrs. Katzenjammer, e.g.
40 French Revolution targets
41 Hires an ambulance chaser, e.g.
42 Created a web site?
47 Prepares for a dive
49 Fresh coat of paint, sometimes
51 Cheapskates
52 Squirrel's stash
53 Gauge of heat or light, e.g.
55 Stays to the conclusion
59 Home of the Munch Museum
61 Creator of the SEC
62 Mauna ____
63 It may be placed before a window
64 Duke rival, for short
65 Dot follower, in some addresses

ANSWER KEYS

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

Puzzle 1

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

Puzzle 2

5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4
0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5
1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6
2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7
3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8
4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9
5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	9	8	7	6	5	4

NOW HIRING:

Law Library, Legal Assistant Trainee

The Law Library is accepting letters of interest and applications for Legal Assistant Trainees.



NOW HIRING: Law Library, Legal Assistant Trainee

The Law Library is accepting letters of interest and applications for Legal Assistant Trainees. To be considered, you must do all of the following by June 30, 2026:

Step 1 Review the minimum requirements to be sure you are eligible.

Minimum requirements:

- GED, High School Diploma
- Incentive Level 2 or 3
- One year misconduct free
- No record of staff assault
- No record of prior removal from library assignment that resulted in an adjudicated disciplinary report
- Minimum of 2 years' time remaining to be served
- Ability to follow directions
- Ability to communicate complicated instructions, interpretations, and maintain as much confidentiality as possible

Desired attributes may include:

- Fluent in English and Spanish, including legal terminology
- Knowledge of the Oregon and Federal legal system
- Legal research capabilities
- Legal writing skills
- Typing skills
- Ability to work independently
- Ability to work well on a team

Step 2 Send a kyte to Library coordinator indicating why you are interested in this opportunity to be trained as a legal assistant. This should be no longer than one page.

Step 3 Complete and submit a job application to IWP for Legal Assistant Trainee.

== == == == == == == ==

|| **Important note:** ||

|| A trainee position ||

|| does not guarantee ||

|| an assignment as a ||

|| Legal Assistant following ||

|| the 16-week training ||

|| program. PRAS points ||

|| will start at 12 during the ||

|| training. Legal Assistants ||

|| who have completed ||

|| training and are ||

|| assigned as Legal ||

|| Assistants will earn up ||

|| to 17 points. ||

== == == == == == == ==

APPLY BY JUNE 30

NEWS BRIEFS

NEWS BRIEFS

Time-Served Credit Calculation Under ORS 137.370(4)

— Offender Information and
Sentence Computation Unit

The Oregon Supreme Court's decision in *Torres-Lopez v. Fahrion* has significantly changed how the Oregon Department of Corrections calculates Time Served Credit under Oregon Revised Statute 137.370(4).

In July 2025, the Offender Information and Sentence Computation unit began reviewing sentences imposed on or after Aug. 1, 2015, to determine potential impacts from *Torres-Lopez v. Fahrion*. OISC worked closely with the Oregon Department of Justice to refine and establish DOC's policies regarding TSC calculations, ensuring they align with the Court's intent.

Key Points About This Review

Prioritization: Reviews will be prioritized based on projected release dates.

Eligibility: Only sentences imposed on or after August 1, 2015, will be reviewed.

Re-Review: Sentences reviewed under former TSC policies will be re-reviewed to ensure compliance with current policies.

Notification: If an Adult in Custody (AIC)'s projected release date changes, the AIC will be notified through written communication delivered via institutional mail to the AIC's housing unit. The notice will include:

- Updated projected release date
- An explanation of the change

AICs may submit an AIC Communication Form (CD214) to their Prison Term Analyst (PTA). The PTA can

provide a detailed breakdown of the sentence calculation, explain the application of TSC, and address any other questions related to the sentence.

If an AIC believes they are entitled to additional TSC under ORS 137.370 (4) or that their calculation is incorrect, options include:

- Working with legal counsel to obtain a corrected judgment
- Consult with a Legal Assistant in the facility's Legal Library
- Write to the sentencing court for the affected case(s)

Due to the volume and complexity of reviews, this process will take time, and not all reviews will result in a change to projected release dates.

Updates to Rules

— from the Administrative Rules Program

Below is the list of status changes made to DOC administrative rules since 3/31/2026.

PROPOSED RULES:

291-037 Request for Public Record

Amends rule to establish a process to collect credit card payments from individuals requesting public record.

Comment Period: Comments must be received by the Rules Office before 12:00PM (noon) on 6/17/2026.

PERMANENT RULES:

291-041 Searches (Institutions)

Amends rule to authorize and establish the department's policy and procedures for the implementation and use of electronic searches (body scanners) in Department of Corrections facilities for the searching of adults in custody.

Effective: 5/1/26

291-076 Suicide Prevention in

Correctional Facilities

Amends rule to replace “inmate” with the statutorily required term “adult in custody”; use person-first, gender-neutral, and community-accepted language and standard department definitions and terminology; clarify the rules or processes; and update processes.

OAR 291-076-0040 is under temporary adoption effective: 3/31/2026 through 9/26/2026

Effective: 4/24/26

291-139 Legal Affairs (AIC)

Amends rule to 1) allow the Legal Library to make copies of letters addressed to the Attorney General and the District Attorney, and 2) allow adults in custody to access secure network storage.

Effective: 5/1/26

291-158 Trust Accounts

Amends rule to change the term “inmate” to “AIC”; align the rules with current practices or with statutory definitions; codify current practice; clarify; update definitions or statutory references; establish guidelines for the assessment of fees to establish a trust account in accordance with ORS 421.125(2)(f); and clarify the AIC's responsibility associated with stop payment requests.

Effective: 5/1/26

Below is the list of status changes made to DOC administrative rules since 4/29/2026.

PROPOSED RULES:

291-048 Mental Health Special Housing

Amends rule to clarify or improve consistency, remove gendered language, update and align definitions and processes with current therapeutic and operational practices, replace “inmate” with “adult in custody,” and adopt a new rule establishing programming

levels for Behavioral Health Units.

Comment Period: Comments must be received by the Rules Office before 12:00PM (noon) on 7/20/2026.

291-082 Assessment, Assignment, and Supervision of AICs for Work Assignments and Unfenced Minimum Housing

Amends rule to update eligibility criteria for outside the perimeter work and lower security housing, revise the definition of escape, and update and clarify classification criteria, terminology, and processes, along with general clean up edits and removal of duplicative materials.

Comment Period: Comments must be received by the Rules Office before 12:00PM (noon) on 7/20/2026.

291-104 Classification

Amends rule to update eligibility criteria for outside the perimeter work, revise the definition of escape and related custody thresholds, remove obsolete ICE related overrides, and update classification criteria, terminology, and definitions. Also clarify the Classification Manager's role and refine key custody classification processes.

Comment Period: Comments must be received by the Rules Office before 12:00PM (noon) on 7/20/2026.

TEMPORARY RULES:

291-082 Assessment, Assignment, and Supervision of AICs for Work Assignments and Unfenced Minimum Housing

Amends rule to raise the time remaining threshold for outside the perimeter work, allow consideration of AICs with misdemeanor convictions, remove restrictions tied to Reckless Burning, and revise the definition of escape and related custody thresholds to expand eligibility for community

(continued on next page...)

NEWS BRIEFS

(...continued from previous page)

work and unfenced housing.

Effective: 5/26/2026 through 11/21/2026

291-104 Classification

Amends rule to raise the eligibility threshold for outside the perimeter work, revise the definition of escape, adjust custody levels to broaden access to community work and unfenced housing, and remove outdated ICE related override language to align with current DOC practices.

Effective: 5/26/2026 through 11/21/2026

PERMANENT RULES:

291-158 Trust Accounts

Statutory Minor Correction to fix rule citation in OAR 291-158-0081(1). The text references OAR 291-158-0015(6)(c) which no longer exists as it was consolidated. Corrected to reference OAR 291-158-0015(6)(b).

Effective: 5/14/2026

291-203 Cost of Care

Amends rule to change the term “inmate” to “adult in custody”, remove the requirement for the department to establish an ability to pay for each AIC; and allow DOC to pursue cost of care reimbursement from all adults in custody, not just those with determinate sentences.

Effective: 5/15/2026

Updating Next-of-Kin Contact

— The Echo

Administrators at EOCI have requested The Echo provide information about updating next-of-kin contact information. AICs can update this information by contacting their counselor.

Redaction for the May Echo

— The Echo

After we printed the May Echo, the

BHS department requested a partial redaction of “Peer Wellness Program Starts at EOCI.” Brian Kubesh, BHS manager, clarified one section, that should have read:

“There are seven BHS Qualified Mental Health Professionals at EOCI. Five are full time and two are part time. To meet the needs of 800 people, one QMHP would have to see more than six clients per day. QMHP appointments often last about an hour, with approximately another half an hour for chart notes.”

The information provided to The Echo listed five AICs as peer wellness specialists, but Kubesh said that there are 10 AICs.

Also, Kubesh said that the program is not open invitation.

Medication Refill Reminder

— from April Stills
Medical Services Manager, EOCI

A reminder about medication refill line. All refills are scheduled for general population between 8:30-9:30 a.m. You are expected to show up to your callout as scheduled. It is the expectation that you will make arrangements with your supervisor to attend refill line at your scheduled time. Only workers in OCE are scheduled for the 3:30 p.m. refill line. If you do not show up for your refill, you will be scheduled for the next day. Refills are not done on weekends.

Magazines and Book Reviews by Mailrooms

— from Bryan Stephen,
Chief of Security, ODOC

Books and magazines that come through ODOC’s mailrooms are each reviewed individually to determine if they meet the standards set forth in ODOC’s mail rule, which can be found at OAR Chapter 291, Division 131

“MAIL (AIC)”.

Under OAR 291-131-0037 8(b), “Vendors that repeatedly send prohibited content to adults in custody after multiple violation notices informing them of mail rule standards may be restricted.”

Currently, there are no magazine vendors prohibited based on this criterion. What this means is you can subscribe to any magazine you’d like, but each issue of the magazine will be reviewed as it arrives at the facility. If mailroom staff determine that a specific magazine issue violates the rule, it is marked in the system as “provisionally rejected” with the suspected violation noted for review by the mail rule central administrator. When magazine issues or books are provisionally rejected, they are held at each facility mailroom until the next steps of the review are taken. The central administrator will then either confirm the rejection or will disagree and the magazine issue will not be rejected. This is why a magazine issue may be ok one month, then the next issue rejected the next month.

There is an appeal process for these magazine issues or books that are provisionally rejected by the mailroom staff and confirmed for rejection by the central administrator. As written in the CD618A “Mail Violation Notice” the appeal is sent to the Functional Unit Manager at the facility where the violation notice was written. This is the Superintendent at the facility, who likely has a designee responsible for mail. The Functional Unit Manager has the latitude to review the material and determine if they want to allow a magazine issue or book that violates the rule into the facility they are responsible.

ODOC recently made changes to the mail rule to help mitigate the smuggling of drugs into facilities. The rules regarding pictorial or written content did not change, they are the same.

Note: Magazines change over time.

SRCI DATA Breach

— Notice from the Oregon
Department of Corrections

We would like to inform you of an unauthorized extraction of DOC data by a former employee. The following information was shared publicly this afternoon. Notification to impacted individuals will be done by first class mail as soon as possible.

What Happened: On or about Jan. 5, 2026, the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) discovered that a former Snake River Correctional Institution (SRCI) employee improperly acquired records between July 7, 2025, and early January 2026. DOC became aware of this data extraction because of an investigation into allegations of serious misconduct by this employee.

This data extraction resulted in unauthorized access to personal information. Staff, vendors, adults in custody (AICs), and visitors may be affected.

DOC Director Michael Reese made the following statement:

“The actions taken by this employee violated the professional and ethical standards expected of every person who works in our agency. They have been terminated, and we are working with our law enforcement partners to hold them accountable for this data extraction, as well as other serious misconduct. Our employees, adults in custody, and others whose data may have been illegally removed deserve transparency and responsible stewardship of sensitive information, and we are committed to delivering both.”

What Information Was Involved: The records contained over 7.5 GB of data, consisting of more than 33,000 files of various types.

What DOC Is Doing: DOC has contracted with a data forensics com-

pany to identify those impacted by this data extraction. Notification to these individuals will be done by first class mail. Due to the size of this data extraction and types of files involved, the data forensics work may take several weeks to complete.

DOC is also working closely with public safety partners to ensure this former employee is held accountable for their actions.

Your Rights and Recommendations: While the data forensics work is being completed, it is recommended you remain vigilant and consider the following steps:

- Monitor your personal records for any unusual activity.
- If you are a DOC employee, review your employment records for any unusual activity.
- Report suspicious identity theft or fraud to your financial institution or employer immediately.
- Consider placing a security freeze or fraud alert with credit reporting agencies if you believe you have been harmed.

For More Information: Information about this data extraction will be updated on a dedicated webpage as more becomes known.

Please go to <https://engage.doc.oregon.gov/srci-data-extraction> to sign up for updates and ask questions.

Notification to Authorities: DOC continues to work closely with the Oregon Department of Justice, Oregon State Police, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services, and local law enforcement agencies relating to the criminal investigation for the unauthorized access of personal data. DOC is grateful for their hard work and partnership.

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

THE ECHO, VOLUME IX - ISSUE 91, JUNE 2026

www.pollenpress.org/the-echo/

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

2500 Westgate

Pendleton, OR

97801

WHERE TO FIND THE ECHO AND 1664

ON EDOVO

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

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

ONLINE

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



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

ON UNITS

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

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

ON TABLETS

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

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



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

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

HOW TO DONATE

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

Donations can be made at www.polleninitiative.org.

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