

SRCI prepares for 20th anniversary

By William Anderson
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ONTARIO—Many may not remember when the Snake River Correctional Institution began breaking ground and building off of Stanton Boulevard, just north of Ontario.

But for those who do remember, SRCI has become a staple in the communities of the western Treasure Valley.

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the opening of SRCI, with a celebration to come in September.

During the first phase of the construction, some 648 total beds were included in the construction, including 576 medium security beds and 72 minimum security beds.

With the first phase completed, some 290 total staff were employed to run the facility.

The facility itself included the housing units, a dining facility, including a production kitchen, an intake/physical plant, warehouse, administration building, gate house, part of the minimum facility and one water tank.

Only four years after the opening of the institution, phase II kicked off and two more “complexes” were constructed.

Phase II was completed in 1998 and included expanding the physical plant and laundry, increasing the warehouse, expanding the minimum facility by adding a administration area and a second dorm, adding a training facility, a visiting center/master control, special housing units, central health services area and the addition of a second water tank.

With the completion of the two phases, SRCI became the largest single public works project in Oregon’s history.

The campus of the correctional institution is over 100 total acres and the buildings square footage is over 1,000,000 square feet, which equals nearly 25 acres of buildings.

The inmate capacity at the time of the completion of phase II, grew to 2,996.

Currently there are 2,860 inmates in the main facility and 192 in the minimum facility for a total of 3,052 inmates, out of a 3,142 total capacity.

The staff has risen to 887 Oregon Department of Corrections employees, 19 contract employees, from Treasure Valley Community College and Pathfinders and six Oregon Corrections Enterprises staff members.

Over the years SRCI has seen five Superintendents, beginning with Edward Gates from 1990-1994, Daniel Johnson, 1994-1998, Robert O. Lampert, 1998-2002, Jean Hill, 2002-2007 to the current Superintendent, Mark Nooth, who began in 2007.

At the time the construction began to build the complex, Barbara Roberts was Governor of Oregon, Fred Pearce was the Director of the Oregon Department of Corrections. The architects for the complex were Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall, while Hoffman Construction of Oregon was the contractor.

<http://www.argusobserver.com/articles/2011/08/07/news/doc4e3e1bab7a87e443120739.txt>

SRCI plays a large role in community

By William Anderson
Argus Observer
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ONTARIO — More than 20 years ago, construction began on Snake River Correctional Institution outside of Ontario. While there were many supporters of the project, during that time, many people feared what was to come along with the facility.

Regardless of the side of the fence residents in the area sat on at the time, since its completion, the prison has had a definite impact on the community.

"It has provided some good-paying jobs in the community and the surrounding communities as a whole," Ontario Mayor Joe Dominick said. "They have done a good job of supporting the community as well. They have become a good partner.

"I think they have been accepted as part of the community," Dominick said. "There are not serious problems, that we are aware of. The management has done a good job of keeping things under control."

As a part of the community, the leadership at Snake River Correctional Institution has encouraged employees to become involved in the communities in which they live.

Many have taken that advice and have volunteered in many different parts of the community. Many of those employed with SRCI have served as community coaches for the Ontario Recreation Department.

Recently, SRCI Superintendent Mark Nooth teamed up with Oregon Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to help current deployed soldiers find employment upon returning back home, in some cases even interviewing for positions before returning home from deployment.

Dominick said one of the most memorable events that SRCI has provided in community support was in response to the devastating tsunami in Japan.

Dominick said that a clothing company, Osh Kosh B'Gosh, announced it would donate an article of children's clothing to tsunami victims for each paper crane produced.

"SRCI jumped in and did over 50,000 cranes," Dominick said. "They honored that. It was huge for a community."

Dominick also said SRCI officials really cooperate well with the city and the Public Works Department. He said the facility is connected to the water and sewer systems, and city staff have always been able to talk with the directors, making sure things are working smoothly.

"They are willing to work with us," Dominick said. "Especially with the employees being community involved. It is a good thing."

<http://www.argusobserver.com/articles/2011/08/14/news/doc4e47521c41bbe458465650.txt>

Second Chance helps train dogs

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The Second Chance Animal Shelter is training dogs for the community in partnership with the Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario.

The training program costs \$150. Dogs will live at the prison for two weeks and receive basic obedience training from specially selected inmates.

When the dog has completed the training, the owner will attend a 60 minute class at SRCI to learn how to work with the dog and get him to obey commands.

"Busy people with dogs are looking for training assistance, so we developed the idea to offer training to the public," said Barb Hutchinson, president of Second chance, in a news release.

The Pen Pals Program at SRCI has been operating for three and a half years where shelter dogs with behavior problems are trained by inmates. The dogs then go on to be adopted. Approximately 150 dogs have gone through the training since its inception.

"We have had many requests from the public to train their dogs out in the Pen Pals Program," said Hutchinson.

For more information about the Pen Pals Program or to request an application and information packet call Hutchinson at (208) 707-4663 or e-mail to IdahoAnimals@hotmail.com.

<http://www.argusobserver.com/articles/2011/07/27/indent/news/doc4e3073f107486857436586.txt>

Strongest guys on the block

By Scott Davis
East Oregonian

Posted: Wednesday, August 10, 2011 9:16 am | Updated: 9:54 am, Wed Aug 10, 2011.

Three Umatilla County men set sights on becoming strongest in Oregon



Staff photo by E.J. Harris



Local strong men Josh Patterson, Jorge Morfin and Jerame Linnell train for competitions in Linnell's backyard gym at his home in Hermiston.

Drive by Jerame Linnell's home in Hermiston, and you might catch the Umatilla native pulling a parked pickup truck with his bare hands. Flipping over 1,100-pound tractor tires, he lifts a 336-pound Atlas Stone 50 inches high, cleans and presses 300-pound steel logs and carries 260-pound concrete blocks while walking across his lawn.

Already one of Eastern Oregon's strongest residents, Linnell, 30, aspires to become the World's Strongest Man.

"You have to be willing to die for it, willing to risk it all," he said. "One year I almost dropped 600 pounds on my neck during competition doing a bench press. The spotters caught the bar centimeters from my esophagus."

One of three corrections officers at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution training for strongman competitions, Linnell is joined in Hermiston by 34-year-old Josh Patterson and 35-year-old Jorge Morfin of Pendleton. All three are state champion lifters, and Patterson placed third in his first-ever strongman competition in Portland last December.

Distinct from conventional strength sports like powerlifting, strongman competitions are eclectic, involving feats like pulling trains, toting refrigerators and heaving oversized kegs. The most famous strongman competition is the World's Strongest Man, which pools athletes from across the globe.

"I like knowing I'm the strongest person in any room," said Patterson, who broke the Oregon deadlifting record of 733 pounds with a 777-pound lift at the Northwest Regional Powerlifting Championships in May. "When I'm in competition mode I don't even think they're in my league — I don't care how big they are."

Standing at 6 foot 3, 320 pounds, Patterson set an American Powerlifting Association world record 785 pounds in the deadlift in 2008, bench pressed 605 and squatted 820. He ingests at least 5,000 calories per day and has broken chairs and sofas simply by sitting on them.

"This guy kills an all-you-can-eat buffet," said Linnell, pointing to Patterson. "He goes to the Wildhorse seafood thing — eats several plates, just puts the hurting on them — and they see him coming a mile away and get scared."

Linnell, who weighed a mere 170 pounds in high school, stands at 5 foot 10 and tips the scale at 270 pounds — a lightweight by strongman standards. A powerlifter of 10 years, he lifts tens of thousands of pounds twice a week, and in 2006 won state in bench pressing with a 630-pound press.

"I can't even remember how many state records I've had," Linnell said. "Between deadlift and bench, I probably have about nine different state records and three or four are still standing."

As for Morfin, the Toppenish, Wash., native won Oregon in the bench press in 1999 and 2000. The smallest of his Hermiston workout group, he weighs 205 pounds and bench presses 405 pounds on \$1,100 equipment. He said his size helps when working around the inmates at EOCI.

"Being as big as us, not a lot of people try to pick fights," he said. "It pretty much avoids a lot of problems."

An unavoidable problem in their sport, all three of the Eastern Oregon strongmen have endured serious injuries. Patterson once separated his collar bone on the bench press and tore his groin under 545 pounds of pressure; Linnell tore his bicep and quadriceps and suffers from tendinitis and bursitis; Morfin's shoulder snapped, requiring a bone to be shaven and six months of recuperation.

"What's concerning is one of our idols, Jesse Marunde, who was Washington's strongest man and went to the World's Strongest Man on ESPN, died from doing 20-rep squats like we did last squat day at 27 years old," Patterson said. "A valve in his heart went out and bled into his chest."

Patterson, Linnell and Morfin often go into "panic mode" after their two- to three-hour strongman workouts, losing oxygen to the point of a splitting headache and depleting internal organs. They described it as the best and worst feelings in the world at the same time.

"There's plenty of vomiting after a really good workout," said Linnell. "Any doctor always tells us to stop, but all of us are addicted. Our chiropractor is our best friend. It's like, 'Sorry, if I can still walk I can still strongman.'"

Just beginning to feel normal after their latest injuries, Linnell and Patterson said they will not compete in strongman until next year's state championship. Morfin, a family man who takes care of foster children, started training with them about six months ago and is an up-and-comer.

None of the three are about to give up their hardcore strongman lifestyle anytime soon.

"We'll do this until our bodies fall apart at 60," Patterson said. "It's funny, I don't know of any other strongmen in Eastern Oregon. We post online but haven't gotten responses. It's probably just as good because it has crippled people. If you don't love it, you shouldn't even do it."

http://www.eastoregonian.com/sports/strongest-guys-on-the-block/article_539996ce-c36c-11e0-ad4d-001cc4c03286.html

Inmates hosting powwow at Deer Ridge

By Dave McMechan
Spiluy Tymo

Next month, Native American inmates at the Deer Ridge Correctional Facility will host a powwow in an outdoor area at the facility. This will be the first powwow hosted by the inmates at Deer Ridge.

There are five inmates from Warm Springs currently serving time at the minimum-security state prison. Another 30 or so are Native Americans from other tribes. Total inmate population at Deer Ridge is 760.

The inmates have been working for the past several months on making gifts to give away during the powwow. They have hand-drums, jewelry, drawings, beadwork and other items for the giveaway. They've raised funding for the event by hosting Indian taco sales in the prison.

At the powwow there will be traditional drumming and dancing, a salmon bake and barbecue.

The inmates are planning the powwow for Friday, Sept. 23. The time will be from about 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The inmates are inviting Warm Springs community members to



Inmates—Clarence Bryant, Daniel Lawrence, Stuart Smith, Clifford Arthur and Floyd Tewee—have been making gifts to give away at the powwow.

come and share in event. Dancers, drummers, elders, spiritual leaders and all others are welcome.

A person can attend if he or she has not been incarcerated and charged with a crime in the past five years.

Anyone wishing more information on how to attend the Deer Ridge powwow, call the facility at 541-325-5999.

Chaplain Tim Woods is a contact person. He can be reached by email at: tim.n.woods@doc.state.or.us

The deadline to request permission from Deer Ridge to attend the powwow is two and a half weeks before the Sept. 23 powwow date.

Up to 250 guests can attend. "This will be a way for us to celebrate life in

a positive way," said Daniel Lawrence. "If anyone wants to come and celebrate, they are more than welcome."

The Deer Ridge inmates are also hoping more people from the Warm Springs community, especially sweat lodge and cultural leaders and language speakers, can visit during the regular visiting days.

They explain it this way: Drugs and alcohol can lead to prison; but once there and away from these influences, tradition and culture become most important.

Donations of powwow and song DVDs and CDs are also more than welcome.

Some general information

Deer Ridge is a men's prison with 644 minimum security beds and 1,223 medium security beds. The minimum security facility began receiving inmates in 2007. The medium security facility is not yet in operation.

The prison, on 200 acres, cost \$190 million to construct. Planning for the project began about 15 years ago. An inmate wishes to conclude this article with a say: "Live for tomorrow, because yesterday is gone and today is almost over."



Photos by JAYME FRASER/THE OREGONIAN



SMARTPHONE USERS: Use The Oregonian's Mobile Reader to read more Wilsonville news stories. Details Page A2.

Volunteer Mary Andonian (left) leads Nakeea Wood, Michelle Therrell and other inmates along the canvas labyrinth at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville. Participants in the labyrinth sessions discuss spirituality and practice walking meditation.

AMAZING JOURNEYS

Labyrinth Network Northwest helps Coffee Creek inmates walk a path of peace

By **CORNELIA SEIGNEUR**
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

When Michelle Therrell reflects on the labyrinth walks offered at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility every other Monday, she gets teary-eyed.

"A lot of people say when you come to prison you find God," said Therrell, 34, who was convicted of first-degree manslaughter in 2000 for stabbing a friend who later died. "But when I came here, I found myself, and the labyrinth was a part of that. I want to think about giving back when I get out." She is scheduled to be released in 3½ years.

Since January, members of the Labyrinth Network Northwest have volunteered twice a month to lead labyrinth

walks at Coffee Creek; starting next month, they will come weekly. The hourlong sessions affect participants and volunteers in different ways.

Emily Brault, chaplain at the prison since 2004, began the labyrinth program in 2005. "I had participated in labyrinths in my youth group in church in Minnesota," she said.

Volunteer Anita Trudeau led the walks from the start before succumbing to cancer in 2010. After she died, Brault asked Labyrinth Network Northwest to lead the sessions. Initially, about three inmates attended the walks; now 10 to 15 regulars come, out of the prison population of 1,095. The inmates first gather in a circle

Please see **LABYRINTH**, Page E2

Labyrinth Network Northwest

What: An organization that supports labyrinth activities and practices.

Why: Devotees believe the practice of walking a labyrinth clears the mind for prayer, meditation and spiritual reflection. The labyrinth, with its single circular path, is said to represent a journey to a person's center and back out into the world.

Information: labyrinthnetworknorthwest.org



Nakeea Wood prays before ringing the bell and exiting the labyrinth at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville.

Labyrinth

Continued from Page E1

to focus, and afterward they reflect.

The July meeting theme was flowers. Kay Kinneavy, founder of the labyrinth network, and Paula Starr, a founding board member, led the session, asking participants, "What do flowers tell us about God?"

In May, their focus was Mother's Day.

"I come to find that some of these women had two, three, even four

kids," Starr said. "The labyrinth offers an opportunity to help them deal with that ... to think on personal issues, and to perhaps work them out in their minds."

Out of more than 30 outreach programs Brault oversees as chaplain, the labyrinth program stands out as a rare multifaith effort. "It builds bridges," Brault said.

Nakeea Wood, 33, who has been convicted of first-degree robbery, identity theft and possession of methamphetamine, was invited by Therrell to attend and "got hooked."

"At the center of the labyrinth you let go of everything and it changes

you," Wood said. "There's a woman in here that I wouldn't talk to out there, but in here it's different. Now we acknowledge each other" outside the labyrinth sessions.

Volunteer Mary Andonian, author of "Bitsy's Labyrinth," a novel about a 13-year-old's experience with God and a labyrinth, said the power of a labyrinth is that "it forces you to slow down, to pray."

She told inmates during the reflection time, "I thought I had problems, then I came here and see you're all so joyful. Thank you."

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Cornelia Seigneur: cornelia@corneliaseigneur.com