

# GATORS, BADGERS NAB SPOTS IN FINAL FOUR / B1



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MID-VALLEY SUNDAY

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## Itching to Innovate



A half-century ago, a yard full of poison oak lit the fuse on an Albany-based pharmaceutical power

BY JENNIFER MOODY  
ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD

Evelyn Smith of Corvallis had two things in 1962 that helped to change the world: small children and a yard full of poison oak.

The wife of chemist Robert Smith, a former executive with Mead Johnson, Evelyn was tired of the two youngest of her five children coming in from the yard and developing itchy rashes. So she went out one day and, barehanded, yanked up each plant.

She cleaned up with a waterless skin cleanser originally meant to remove the radioactive dust from nuclear fallout. It had been sitting around the house since Robert had invented it. Afterward, she told a neighbor about her efforts.

The neighbor wanted to know: Did the poison oak affect her, too?

Actually, Evelyn said, it hadn't. Later, she told her husband about the yardwork and mentioned the cleanser.

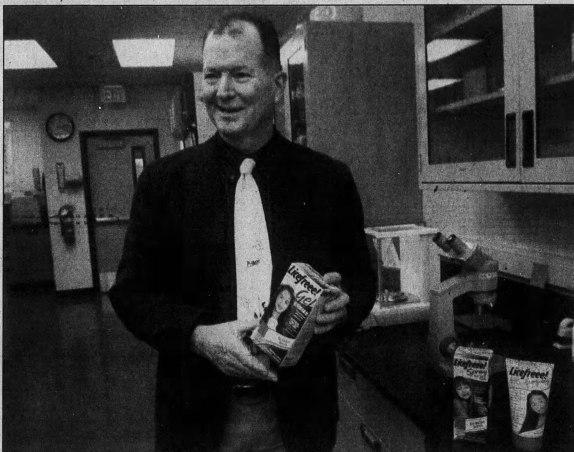
According to Tec Labs lore, Robert initially brushed off the whole incident as a case of "puny" poison oak, not nearly as potent as the plants in their native Iowa. To prove it, he rubbed a patch on his arm.

Gary Burris, Tec Labs' director of public relations, doesn't have on record whether Robert ended up saying anything along the lines of, "I'm sorry, dear, you were right."

But his arm did break out in a rash. And he did test the cleanser on a new patch of skin.

And that's how Tec Labs' signature product, Tecnu, was born.

Robert found the product kept the oil in both poison oak and poison ivy from bonding with skin, which meant it not only kept the rash from spreading, but could keep it from forming in the first place.



CEO Steve Smith shows Licefreee, the newest member of the lineup produced by Tec Labs, whose headquarters across Allen Lane from Linn-Benton Community College, are shown at top. Below, new packaging for the Tecnu line is shown.



HOW THE MID-VALLEY CHANGED THE WORLD



This story is part of a series that began Friday.

### Out of the garage

Over the next nearly four decades, Tecnu helped Tec Laboratories grow from its home in the Smith garage in Corvallis to a 53,000-square-foot building in Albany. It now employs 35 people

full time; more during the summer season.

The pharmaceutical manufacturer now has six products under the flagship Tecnu brand, and another three under its increasingly popular LiceFreee line.

Burris estimates Tec Labs has sold some 53.3 million units of its various products since 1977, and can find its products in more than 47,000 stores. Chief Executive Officer Steve Smith — Robert's son and brother of Vernon Smith,

the company's vice president of operations — is proud to note at least one Tec Labs product is on the shelf of every chain drug store in the United States.

See INNOVATE on A4

# Online sex sting sparks debate

Some say proactive enforcement borders on entrapment, violates free speech

BY CANDIA FRIKHA  
CORVALLIS GAZETTE-TIMES

The patrol cars flew into the Terminus restaurant parking lot.

Guns drawn, a half-dozen officers swooped in and arrested a man who had been sitting in a pickup, smartphone in hand.

He had been messaging someone through a dating website and

planned to meet her in person in Corvallis. She posed online as a 14-year-old girl, but in real life, "she" was Corvallis Police Detective Bryan Rehnberg.

"They came out like gangbusters — you should have seen it," Tom said about his May 2013 arrest.

The charges, Tom said, were

bogus, but he entered into a plea agreement to avoid the possibility of 10 months in jail.

His real name was in the news for days while he was incarcerated for soliciting a child online.

He only agreed to an interview with the Gazette-Times on the condition that his real name not be used.

Tom became the first of seven men arrested by the Corvallis Police Department in an ongoing online sting aimed at taking sexual predators off the streets and making others think twice before using the Internet to lure children for sex.

See SEX STING on A3

## FIRST LOOK



## Rising to the challenge

Kelly Boyd of Albany jogged around the dog show ring at the Linn County Fair & Expo Center with Ziva, her Siberian husky. The energetic and friendly canine wound up winning best in breed — and earned enough points to be called a grand champion.

Moments later, Boyd was scrolling through her cell phone to proudly show off photos of the white-haired Ziva dirty as all get out.

"A lot of people think these dogs don't do anything but go to shows. They're family pets," Boyd said.

"The rest of the time, they are on your couch, on your bed, digging in the mud," the 35-year-old added. **A8**

## WEST Foundations damaged in California earthquake

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A moderate earthquake that rattled a swath of Southern California forced several dozen people in one community out of their homes after firefighters discovered foundation problems that made the buildings unsafe to enter, authorities said Saturday.

Fire crews red-tagged 20 apartment units in a building in the Orange County city of Fullerton after finding a major foundation crack. Structural woes, including broken chimneys and leaning, were uncovered in half a dozen single-family houses, which were also deemed unsafe to occupy until building inspectors clear the structures. The damage displaced 83 residents. **A2**

## Mudslide debris work pauses to honor the lost

DARRINGTON, Wash. (AP) — The search by heavy equipment, dogs and bare hands for victims from the deadly Washington mudslide was going "all the way to the dirt" as crews looked for anything to provide answers for family and friends a week after a small mountainside community was destroyed.

All work on the debris field halted briefly Saturday for a moment of silence to honor those lost. Gov. Jay Inslee had asked people across Washington to pause at 10:37 a.m., the time the huge slide struck on March 22, destroying a neighborhood in the community of Oso north of Seattle. Authorities say they have found at least 25 bodies and 30 remain missing. **A2**

**Fighting cancer via nutrition / B12**

**INSIDE**

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16th year No. 30

**The Weather Beaver says**  
Look for the rain to let up a bit today / **A4**

# Sex sting

Continued from A1

Detective Rehnberg, who runs the undercover operation, said that as young people gain more and more unfettered access to the Internet, the instances of sexual predation grow. That's why the department is taking a proactive approach to singling out those who troll the web for children to prey upon.

But defense attorneys question the arrests of people who, in some cases, may be role playing in the fantasy atmosphere of the Internet with no intent to victimize children. Critics also have raised questions of entrapment and have questioned a law that allows people to be arrested on a felony solely for things they say in a chat room.

## 'Protect our children'

Rehnberg has been with the Corvallis Police Department for 13 years, and a detective for the past four years focusing on person-on-person offenses such as child abuse and sex crimes. He initiated the online sting operation in May 2013.

"After seeing a common theme in a lot of my investigations of the past few years — to meet or engage the victim in conversation — I decided that we needed to do something proactive," he said. "We needed to protect our kids, and that's really what it came down to, to protect our children."

Since Rehnberg started the work, three of the six men arrested, including Tom, have been convicted. Three cases are pending.

When Rehnberg sets up an undercover online account of a young teenage girl and converses with potential predators, he said he's careful to use only the best practices developed over the years by the U.S. Department of Justice.

"That includes letting the suspect do most of the talking."

"I do not go out and pursue any person; and pursue me," he said. "Initial conversation is introduced by the suspect, sexual conversation is introduced by the suspect and a meeting is introduced by the suspect. That is not introduced by me — never."

The undercover accounts feature innocent photos of a smiling, young-looking female — who, by the way, is not real. The department uses a software program to alter the appearance of what began as photos of an actual person.

Before initiating the online sting, Rehnberg sought guidance from agencies like the FBI and Department of Justice, and he enrolled in outside training about Internet crimes involving children.

He also consulted with Benton County District Attorney John Haroldson, who says the three cases his office has prosecuted and the three pending cases were conducted with no hint of entrapment.

"The crimes are ones which involve a clear, independent intent to sexually prey upon children," Haroldson said, emphasizing that the idea of sexual contact is never initiated brought up by the detective.

## Entrapment defense

Defense attorneys don't necessarily see it that way. But, first, here's what you need to understand about entrapment: Leaving an expensive car unlocked and then arresting a car thief is not, by legal definition, entrapment. And neither is opening a decoy account of an underage girl on a website and waiting to be approached by sexual predators.

Entrapment requires an extra push — an element of coaxing or persuasion — to move someone to do something that they ordinarily would not.

In 2006, for example, a California judge threw out a case against Joseph Roisman, who was arrested in an online predator sting. After hearing six days of the prosecution's trial testimony — before the defense presented and before consideration by the jury — the judge dis-

## NO PROGRAM IN ALBANY

The Albany Police Department just doesn't have the money and manpower to have a program similar to the one in Corvallis, said Albany Police Capt. Eric Carter.

"If we had resources and staffing, we certainly would because we know that it's a problem," Carter said. "But if we're made aware of something, we'll go out and see if we can confirm it."

The agency has conducted similar online prostitution stings over the years, Carter said, targeting those soliciting and those offering sex for money. Minors were not on either end of those stings, he said.

"That has not been something we've uncovered in any operations we've had over the last couple years," he said.

missed the case and accused Perverted Justice, the online watchdog group that set up the online decoy, of entrapment.

Roisman was the only one to be acquitted of the 20 men arrested in a three-day sting in August 2006 in Petaluma, Calif., for the now-canceled reality television series, "To Catch a Predator," which spun off from the news show "Dateline NBC."

Defense attorney L. Stephen Turer said his client, who was 21 at the time, had never talked about having sex with the fictitious 13-year-old, only chatting while watching movies, even though the decoy kept trying to move the conversation in that direction.

"In reading the transcript, it became obvious that they had an agenda that they professionally moved along," he said, adding that "Dateline NBC" paid Perverted Justice \$100,000 per episode to provide actors who spoke on the phone and initially met the suspects in a location with hidden cameras.

Turer, who has not represented any of the Corvallis defendants, argues that police sometimes introduce sex into the equation by the very nature of opening an account on an adult dating website.

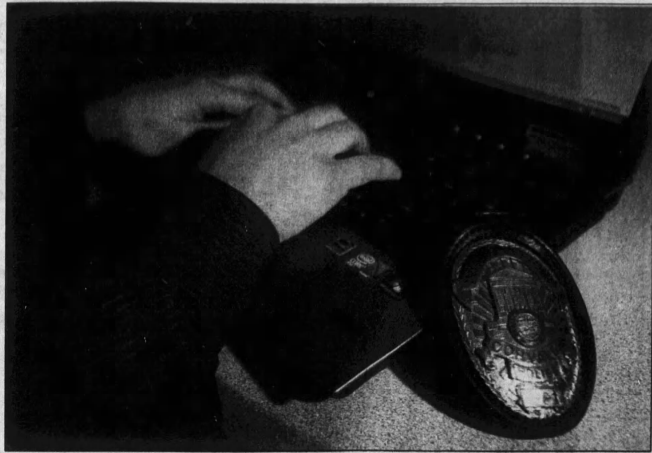
Though Rehnberg characterizes the websites he uses in his investigations as social media sites, some of the ones he has used are adult dating websites in which members are required to be at least 18 years old.

Turer recalled that in some of his cases, the Perverted Justice watchdog group — which worked with law enforcement agencies and "Dateline NBC" — fished for potential predators on adult dating websites.

"When adults go to a teen chat line, they're clearly there for that purpose" of exploitation, Turer said, "but these people went on adult sites saying they were young."

## Looking for adults

Before his arrest, Tom, 65, had used his smartphone for



The Corvallis Police Department has been catching sexual predators by posing as underage girls on the Internet.

months to meet women on adult dating websites for sex — but he was looking for adults, he said, and the ones he met were close to his age.

Last May, a photo from the undercover account popped up on his screen to indicate that "she" had looked at his profile, he said. That was the first electronic contact between the two. Though her profile indicated she was a minor, he perused her photos and then initiated a conversation.

"It said on there that the gal was 14 but I had been looking on these sites for months, and I was finding out that women, as well as men, didn't tell the truth about anything," Tom said. "In order to be on them, you have to be age 18 or older, naturally. Seeing this age 14, I knew that was a lie." He suspected, he said, that his contact was a female adult who was lying about her age.

Turer, the attorney, said that Tom's assumption often is true in the online fantasy world. "You're on an adult chat line so you assume they're adults — so when they say they're younger you assume they're just role playing," he said.

These chat lines, for some people, are an outlet or form of recreation, Turer said.

"When you go online for five minutes and you're talking about sex, that's not the way people talk in real life," he said. "When you see things like that online, it makes you wonder, is that person being who they are or are they role playing?"

Six days after Tom contacted the undercover account, the website removed the account because users are required to be 18. Rehnberg worked with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the website to create a new undercover account with the same name and a different email account so the contact with Tom could continue.

## 'I can just drive away'

Four of the six Corvallis defendants were arrested after physically showing up at a rendezvous point, but Turer suggested that maybe the defendants just wanted

## BIRTH OF A FEDERAL TASK FORCE

To address online sexual exploitation of children — including child pornography — Congress in 1998 voted to provide funds to the U.S. Department of Justice to create the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. Among other things, the task force provides training and grants to local police departments for programs to locate and arrest online predators.

A 2010 Department of Justice report prepared for Congress said that from 2004 through 2008, there were sharp increases in the number of online enticement incidents reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline and the number of documented enticement complaints processed by task force investigators. The report admitted, however, that the increased reporting rates may not be related to increased incidents; it could be a matter of increased awareness.

to see with whom they had been conversing online.

Tom offered a similar explanation.

When he pulled into the empty parking lot and the decoy had messaged that she'd walk to him, he said he figured he'd wait and see what she actually looked like.

"I was thinking 'I'm going to watch and if I see someone get closer, if that person looks like they might be that age (a minor) or if that person smokes or looks like someone on drugs — even if they were of age — I thought, I can just drive away.'"

Tom denies being a sexual predator.

"If I'd have showed up at a house and I saw a 14-year-old and went behind the curtain — that, to me, would have been different," he said. "That would have proved something. To me, they went too extreme (in my arrest)."

The law requires that the prosecution prove that the defendant believed the person to be a child, and much of the proof, according to Rehnberg and Haroldson, can be found in the conversations.

At one point, Tom told the decoy that it's OK that she's not 18, he'd still like to get to know her, according to transcripts. He followed up with, "This probably isn't the best site for us to be talking on, any suggestions?"

Suspects talk about the legal consequences and try to get around them, Rehnberg said. They also learn about potential victims by inquiring about their family, home and school situations. "They want to know

quires taking an additional "substantial step" to physically meet that person — such as showing up to a rendezvous point or, in one of the cases, purchasing a motor home while indicating plans to pick up the teenager and take her to Idaho.

The Newport Police Department arrested that man at his home because Rehnberg was afraid that the suspect would leave the state before being apprehended. According to the police report, the defendant in that case immediately launched into sexually explicit conversations online, sent nude photos of himself and spoke about a dozen times of ways he could meet up with the girl, such as wiring her money for bus fare and making it look like she ran away.

In that case, the defendant's court-appointed attorney, John Rich, argued in a motion to dismiss that the Oregon child corruption law is unconstitutional because it suppresses speech even in cases in which the speech does not cause harm.

See SEX STING on A4

### Blackberry Junction

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**FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR THE MID-VALLEY**

Today	Tonight	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Cloudy with a passing shower	Partly to mostly cloudy with a shower	Partly cloudy with a couple of showers	Mostly cloudy	Periods of sun with showers	Cloudy with a chance of rain
55°	39°	56°/40°	57°/40°	60°/43°	57°/43°

Dark Area West of the South 6/10 PM '14

**REGIONAL WEATHER**  
 Coastal Oregon: Cloudy today with a couple of showers in central parts. A shower tonight.  
 Eastern and Central Oregon: Partly sunny today with a shower in places, mostly cloudy in the upper Tule Valley.  
 Cascades: Mostly of showers today. Mostly cloudy tonight. Showers tomorrow.

**ACCUWEATHER UV INDEX™**  
 UV Index for the times indicated tomorrow:  
 8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m.  
 0-2, Low; 3-5, Moderate; 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme  
 Values indicate the exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays.

**REAL FEEL TEMPERATURE™**  
 The perceived AccuWeather.com RealFeel Temperature is an exclusive index of effective temperature based on eight weather factors. Shown is the highest value of the day.  
 8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m.  
 37° 42° 46° 53° 61°

**SUN AND MOON**  
 Sunrise today: 6:57 a.m.  
 Sunset tonight: 7:27 p.m.  
 Moonrise today: 6:47 a.m.  
 Moonset today: 6:00 p.m.

**ALMANAC**  
 Corvallis today 1 p.m. yesterday:  
 Corvallis Temperature: 52°  
 High: 56°  
 Low: 46°  
 Normal High: 59°  
 Normal Low: 39°

**VALLEY PRECIPITATION**  
 24 hr end: 1 p.m. Eugene: 0.06"  
 24 hr end: 1 p.m. Salem: 0.25"  
 Eugene month to date: 6.03"  
 Salem month to date: 7.07"  
 Eugene year to date: 15.89"  
 Salem year to date: 16.34"

**REGIONAL CITIES**

City	Today	Mon.	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Albany	52	43	54	41	52	40
Baker	51	35	54	27	50	30
48	32	50	33	21	48	30
Brookings	53	43	51	37	49	35
49	39	50	37	27	48	30
Burns	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Eugene	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Madras	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Medford	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Newport	53	42	50	36	48	34
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
North Bend	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Olympia	53	42	50	36	48	34
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Ontario	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Pendleton	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Prineville	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Redmond	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Seaside	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
St. Helens	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Tillamook	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Union	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Waldport	55	45	53	39	51	37
50	40	52	37	27	49	35
Yreka	50	39	50	34	48	32

**WORLD CITIES**

City	Today	Mon.	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Atlanta	62	48	64	45	62	43
72	52	64	45	32	60	41
Boston	61	39	52	36	50	34
75	58	79	61	41	75	54
Hong Kong	78	72	78	61	78	61
83	68	81	64	46	80	63
London	51	43	51	31	49	29
53	43	51	31	21	49	29
Los Angeles	77	52	77	51	75	51
43	32	52	32	21	49	29
Paris	59	47	59	40	57	40
58	46	58	40	30	56	39
Rome	58	46	58	40	56	39
58	46	58	40	30	56	39
Sydney	77	65	77	65	75	63
57	44	57	44	34	55	42
Toronto	49	39	52	32	50	40
57	44	57	44	34	55	42
Zurich	59	39	59	39	57	37

Weather (W) is sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, I-I-thunderstorms, PM, after-hour storms, snow, ice.

# Sex sting

Continued from A3

The second-degree charge, he said, doesn't even require the defendant to have intent to follow through with meeting the person on the other end of the computer. The statute makes being aroused by online sex talk a crime, he said.

Rich argued in the motion: "The online sexual corruption statute does not require any harm; it does not require any sexual contact; it does not require an attempt at sexual contact; it does not require that the invitation of sexual contact be sincere; and it does not require that the defendant be actually communicating with a minor."

Rich declined an interview request from the Gazette-Times, in part because he still is working on one of the six cases.

Benton County Deputy District Attorney Mike Flinn responded that the words used in such online communications are not protected speech because they are being used to commit a crime — soliciting a child and having sexual contact with a child.

Additionally, Flinn argued, an adult having sexually explicit online communications with children causes mental harm.

Rehnbeg agrees. Some predators show up to meet children to have sex, while others stay behind a computer or smartphone. In Rehnbeg's view, however, they both exploit children.

Benton County Circuit Court Judge Matthew Dinehour ruled that the statutes are constitutional because they focus on preventing or regulating harm, something within the state's rights, and the statutes restrict adults from soliciting children for sexual purposes. In the wake of the ruling, the defendant entered into a plea deal and was sentenced to 18 months in prison.

## ABOUT THE CRIMES

The six defendants in this sting operation were convicted of or currently face these felony charges.

**First-degree online sexual corruption of a child:**  
 Using an online communication to solicit a child (or someone defendant believes to be a child) for sexual gratification, and then taking a substantial step toward physically meeting.

Presumptive sentence ranges from probation to 3 years and 9 months in prison, depending on factors like severity of the crime and criminal history.

**Second-degree online sexual corruption of a child:**  
 Using an online communication to solicit a child (or someone defendant believes to be a child) for sexual gratification and offering to meet in person.

Presumptive sentence ranges from probation up to 2 years and 6 months in prison, depending on factors like severity of the crime and criminal history.

They're embarrassed and ashamed, and they may not come forward" to authorities.

## 'The ultimate goal'

"Our goal is ultimately always to protect children," Rehnbeg said, and he added that he's "thankful" when his targets are communicating with him, because "they're not communicating with a child, they're not meeting with a child. The ultimate goal is prevention."

Tom took a plea deal so he could retain his benefits as a military veteran; he served 10 days and is on probation. As a felon and a registered sex offender, he's not allowed to see his grandkids or use the internet, and he had to give up target shooting and give away his reloading equipment and 27 firearms.

Additionally, his 2007 Ford F250 was seized because he used the pickup in the commission of the crime.

The results of his full-disclosure sexual history polygraph test were inconclusive, but he's hopeful that when he takes the test again, he will pass and be allowed to see his grandkids.

"I got the shaft in this whole deal," he said.

Meanwhile, Rehnbeg wants to do even more to prevent online child exploitation. He has given one presentation so far and plans to give more — to parents, to teachers, to students — about the dangers online.

"The Internet and the iPhones that our kids are getting at 12, 13 and sometimes younger are creating an avenue for criminals to get into their homes and into their bedrooms," he said. "We need parents' help and involvement in these cases with their kids in education and prevention."

Contact Canda Fuqua at canda.fuqua@lee.net.

# Health care tax penalty kicks in on Monday

BY COLLEEN DESKIN  
 THE RECORD (HACKENSACK, N.J.) (MCT)

HACKENSACK, N.J. — On Monday, the federal government shifts from being a cheerleader for the law requiring all Americans to buy health insurance to an enforcer with the power to tax those who don't comply.

Those who remain uninsured after that date and who don't fall into an exempt category, could face a tax penalty — and it may not be as small as they expect.

The oft-cited minimum tax penalty set by the Affordable Care Act is \$95 a year. But that's just the rate for single adults earning less than \$19,500 a year. Individuals and families earning above that could end up paying hundreds or even thousands of dollars if they don't buy a health insurance policy by the deadline on Monday.

The tax rate will double in 2015 and grow each year after that.

"The penalties can be bigger than a lot of people might realize," said Robert Williams of the non-partisan Urban Institute and Brookings Institution Tax Policy Center, whose organization has added an "ACA tax penalty calculator" to its website to help people determine their potential tax penalty.

Since the launch last year of the federal and state marketplaces for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, numerous advertisements and outreach events have attempted to educate the public about the benefits of buying policies under the law. The government has promoted its carrot — subsidies to help make the insurance affordable — in its attempt to get people to sign up for coverage. Now, it's time for the stick.

Williams encourages people to look at the overall financial benefit of having insurance to cushion themselves against unexpected health care costs rather than just comparing premiums and penalties. "The premiums are almost certainly bigger than the penalty, but if you pay the premium, you have insurance," he said.

The law calls for the IRS to take the penalty out of tax refunds. An individual who opts not to buy insurance can have as little as \$95 or potentially as much as \$3,000 deducted from his 2014 tax-year refund.

For families, the tax will be calculated not only on income, but on the number and ages of people in the household without insurance. An uninsured family of four earning \$85,000 would face a minimum fine of \$285, but that would increase to \$1,497 for a family earning \$170,000. The maximum penalty in 2014 is \$11,000.

Williams said his organization created the online calculator program because it believed that many people had only heard about the minimum penalty amounts and were unaware that the fine could equal 1 percent of their income in 2014.

# Innovate

Continued from A1

Steve Smith is careful about giving away any plans for future products, but the company is always on the lookout for new ideas.

Anytime Tec Labs hears from a customer who's pleased with one of its products, Steve said, "We'll ask, 'What other problems do you have?' We'll see if there's an opportunity there. Sometimes there is, sometimes there isn't."

Burriss said every employee who goes to a conference or a trade show is asked to come back with a list of ideas, maybe about something impressive they saw, or maybe about a perceived gap in possible service.

Regulatory Affairs Director Wendy Langley is one of those employees, although her idea came from first-hand experience.

In the late 1900s, Langley was among moms struggling with the haze of elementary school classrooms everywhere: head lice.

Available products at that time were runny, smelled like bug spray and didn't even work, as far as Langley was concerned. "I thought there just had to be another way."

Research took her to a folk remedy centered on sodium chloride: table salt. She worked to formulate the salt into a gel that would hold its place on a child's head, a

## ABOUT TEC LABS

Tec Labs has received Oregon Business Magazine's Hall of Fame Award for making the Oregon Top 100 Small Business list for 12 years.

While meant to prevent a rash from exposure to poison oak or poison ivy, Tecu Original, also has been proven effective in removing skunk oil from pets.

Tecu's name is short for "Technically New." The company's LiceFree product got its extra E because a standard spelling could not be trademarked.

Tecu First Aid gel contains no antibiotics and is used in some first-aid kits as a replacement for topical antibiotic gels.

Tec Labs maintains an "appreciation station" in a main hallway where people can attach thank-you notes for fellow employees, holds monthly "bagel meetings" for everyone to share news and ideas, and pays its employees a portion of its before-tax profit. Last year's per-employee share: more than \$9,000.

The company keeps an outdoor basketball hoop and was selected in 2008 as one of the "15 Fittest Companies in America," according to Men's Fitness magazine.

Mike Hutchison, left, samples the weight of a bottle while Tristen Russell packs LiceFree spray during production in July 2013.

Mark Yuen/Mid-Valley Sunday

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