



**BUCKS HOST  
DAWGS IN CRC  
FINALE BASEBALL/1B**



**Dog, owner reunited after four years** 3A

# EAST OREGONIAN

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2015

139th Year, No. 151

WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

## Your Weekend



- **Bark for Life, Saturday at McKenzie Park**
- **Pendleton Underground Tour comes alive**
- **"The Orphans" at the Bob Clapp Theatre**

For times and places see **Coming Events, 5A**

## Catch a movie



Courtesy Warner Bros. Pictures via AP  
**Tom Hardy, Charlize Theron star in the action-packed "Mad Max: Fury Road."**

For showtime, **Page 5A**  
For review, **Weekend EO**

## Weekend Weather

Fri	Sat	Sun
71/52	73/46	71/47

## HERMISTON City budget promotes beautification

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
*East Oregonian*

A new paint job for Hermiston's water tower is one of several community enhancement projects built into the city's 2015-2016 budget.

The budget committee spent three hours going over the \$57 million budget Wednesday night before approving it for recommendation to the Hermiston City Council.

The \$40,000 set aside for a more aesthetically pleasing paint job on the water tower was representative of the city's goals for a more visually appealing city. The budget also included a \$100,000 reserve fund for projects by the Community Enhancement Committee formed a year ago.

The committee released a list of priorities recently that included a "downtown gateway" at the intersection of Southeast Second Street

See **HERMISTON/12A**

# Oregon families should get \$284 in tax rebates next year

By **SHEILA V KUMAR**  
*Associated Press*

SALEM — Oregon families should get an average of \$284 in tax rebates next year, state economists said Thursday, citing a strong economy and a bump in job growth.

Economists say the rebates will total nearly \$473 million, or \$123 million more than was predicted

in February, when economists said taxpayers would receive nearly \$350 million in tax rebates.

The steady economic improvements have led the state to collect slightly more than projected in both corporate and personal income taxes.

Unlike previous rebates, which used to be distributed as a check in the mail around Christmas,

## More inside:

**PSD superintendent cautiously optimistic about state revenue forecast** **Page 12A**

Oregonians will instead receive a tax credit and pay less when they file their returns in April 2016, said Josh Lehner, senior economist at

the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis

"It's a credit on the tax return so you don't get the check in the mail, you just get lower taxes to pay in April," he said.

Oregon's one-of-a-kind "kicker" law is triggered when tax collections exceed projections by at

See **REBATES/12A**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**Sunridge Middle School sixth-graders take an art class on the banks of Buck Creek at the Pendleton School District's Outdoor School Thursday in the Blue Mountains east of Pendleton.**

# Nurtured by nature

## Coalition wants statewide funding for Outdoor School

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
*East Oregonian*

Preserving Outdoor School in Pendleton and Hermiston hasn't always been easy.

On more than one occasion, budget cuts have forced the districts to write Outdoor School off the books. But each time, dedicated parents and community members have stepped up to raise the money needed to keep it operating.

Now, a statewide coalition of parents, educators and local government officials is working to secure state funding to provide Outdoor

School for all fifth-graders in Oregon, with a pair of bills currently before lawmakers in Salem.

The Oregon Outdoor Education Coalition formed over the last year to give advocates of Outdoor School a single unifying voice, urging the importance of the program that was first established in 1958 in Crook County.

Outdoor School first came to Pendleton in 1971, and has been run continuously since — despite a few close calls along the way. Caroline Fitchett, who coordinates the state-

See **SCHOOL/10A**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**Biological research technician Tami Johlke, with the USDA Agricultural Research Center, teaches a class on soil erosion Thursday at the Pendleton School District's Outdoor School in the Blue Mountains east of Pendleton.**

# County drought requests head to governor

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
*East Oregonian*



**Brown**

The Oregon Drought Council will forward eight more requests from counties seeking an emergency drought declaration to Gov. Kate Brown, including requests from Umatilla, Morrow and Grant counties in Eastern Oregon.

Keith Mills, state engineer for the Water Resources Depart-

ment in Salem, said there was little disagreement among the Water Availability Committee at Thursday's meeting.

"We have no snow," Mills said. "We don't expect conditions to recover throughout the state."

Requests from Lane, Deschutes, Josephine, Jackson and Wasco counties will also be sent to the governor. Brown has already declared drought

emergencies in Klamath, Lake, Harney, Malheur, Baker, Crook and Wheeler counties.

If Brown signs off on all the requests, the 15 counties in a declared state of drought would far surpass last year's total of nine as brutally dry conditions creep north across the state. Snowpack is almost entirely melted in the Umatilla, Walla Walla, Willow Creek and John Day basins, with less-than-av-

erage total precipitation to boot.

That has left streams and reservoirs dangerously low for both farms and fish in the area. Water releases started out of McKay Reservoir near Pendleton on April 21, about two months ahead of schedule, while fisheries managers began trucking spring chinook up the Umatilla River.

See **DROUGHT/12A**



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