



CARROLL STANDS
BY DECISION TO
PASS FOOTBALL/1B



Drunk driver knocks
house off foundation
REGION/3A

EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2015

139th Year, No. 78 WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD One dollar



Oregon Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R-John Day, speaks to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources during the opening day of the Oregon legislative session, Monday in Salem.

AP photo by Don Ryan

Fuel standard goes forward despite GOP opposition

By HILLARY BORRUD
EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group

SALEM — Democrats in the Oregon Legislature pushed ahead Monday with a low-carbon fuel standard bill, despite objections from Republicans who said they should wait for an investigation into first lady Cylvia Hayes' paid work for a group that supports the standard.

Senate Majority Leader Sen. Diane Rosenbaum, D-Portland, said the low-carbon fuels legislation remains a top priority that Democrats want to pass early in the session, and controversy surrounding Hayes' contracts will not derail the bill.

"We think that there's a process for dealing with that and it will work its way through," Rosenbaum said of questions surrounding whether Hayes

and Kitzhaber misused their public positions to benefit Hayes' consulting business. The Oregon Government Ethics Commission is considering whether to launch a formal investigation of Hayes and Kitzhaber, and a decision is expected in March.

The EO Media Group/Pamplin Media Group Capital Bureau reported

See FUEL/8A

Thinning plan cuts forestry divide

By GEORGE PLAIVEN
East Oregonian

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest wants to thin densely overgrown tree stands along the east face of the Elkhorn Mountains south of La Grande in an area that would include the popular Anthony Lakes Recreation Area.

Part of a broad and unique public-private partnership, the East Face Vegetation Management Project would treat 47,621 acres where foresters worry conditions are ripe for large, potentially destructive wildfires.

The public has until Friday, Feb. 13 to comment on the proposal, which calls for both commercial and non-commercial logging of nearly 17,100 acres and reopening 105 miles of roads for access into the project area. Some logging would aim to reduce forest fire fuels around the Anthony Lakes ski area, campground and Floodwater Flats Recreation Tract.

La Grande District Ranger Bill Gamble said the East Face Vegetation plan would complement work already being done by private landowners to reduce the threat of wildfires on their own property, which has been funded collaboratively through the U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service. Their effort is driven by the federal Cohesive Wildfire Strategy, which aims to reduce forest fire fuels, maintain landscapes and improve fire response.

See FOREST/8A



ABOVE: Three Athena firefighters work together during a Burn to Learn exercise Saturday at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport in Pendleton.

RIGHT: Pendleton Fire Chief Jason Walker briefs firefighters taking part in the Burn to Learn training near the airport.

Staff photos by Kathy Aney



PENDLETON

Safe, sound and burned to the ground

Area firefighters put in the prep before setting condemned houses ablaze

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

While a "safe" house fire is a misnomer, the Pendleton Fire Department tried to get close for their Burn to Learn training event Saturday.

Burn to Learn, a relatively infrequent training that sees the fire department intentionally set fire to a condemned structure, is a way for firefighters to practice quelling blazes without worrying about imperiled occupants or a rapidly deteriorating building.

The casual atmosphere among the dozens of firefighters from across Umatilla and Morrow counties belied the heavy preparation that went into readying the three condemned houses near the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport for demolition by fire.

In anticipation of the Burn to Learn, the Pendleton Fire Department removed asbestos from the houses, notified the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and cut off all utilities.

Controlled burns within Pendleton city limits aren't a common occurrence. Assistant Chief Matt Benedict estimated the last Burn to Learn event was three years ago on Tutuilla Road.

With the airport offering mostly industrial surroundings, Benedict said the area was desirable to start an intentional fire.

Even so, the airport presented unique challenges for fire staff, including constant communication with the airport's control tower and the National Weather Service.

After fire crews gathered early Saturday morning, ranging from aspiring firefighters from Blue Mountain Community College's EMT and Fire Sciences program to 20-year veterans, participants were instructed with more precautions.

"We're not going to fre lance today, because this is a real fire scene," said Pendleton fire department Capt. Dave Baty.

Before starting any fires, a small group of firefighters were walked through each house to know the exact layout of the structure they would be setting ablaze.

Baty advised the firefighters to silently tap on their helmets if they started to feel overwhelmed by the fire. Each of the firefighters had access to an ambulance, an on-scene doctor and a recovery unity with food and water.

As the firefighters prepared for the first fire of the day, Baty led a walkthrough, periodically quizzing his group about how to control a fire.

After running through instructions, Benedict set fire to some cardboard and newspaper stuffed at the base of the house's walls.

Benedict said the fire was lit to allow the smoke to filter from the bottom up, creating an implosive rather than explosive effect.

A small trickle of white

See FIRE/2A

UMATILLA

Free lunch program growing in popularity

USDA has some ideas on how to get kids to eat their veggies

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Students in Umatilla are eating more hot meals than ever thanks to the Umatilla School District's decision to offer free lunch to every student this year.

Rikkilynn Larsen, Umatilla's child nutrition director, said the district is serving an average of 1,100 hot lunches a day in a district of about 1,300 students.

"Most of them have been taking advantage of it," she

said. "We still have a few bringing lunches from home but not many."

The district also offers free breakfast in the mornings. It gets reimbursed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for meals served in both programs.

Larsen said the school served 19,900 lunches last month, an extra 2,700 lunches compared to January 2013.

"Every month we've just seen participation go up and up," she said.

Kevin Concannon, the US-

DA's undersecretary of food, nutrition and consumer services, said Umatilla is a good example of a district where the department's new Community Eligibility Program is working how it should.

The CEP program allows high-poverty districts to forgo the high volumes of paperwork and staff time needed to keep track of income-based free and reduced lunch programs in favor of offering free meals to every student.

See LUNCH/2A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Students at McNary Heights Elementary School eat free school lunch in September in Umatilla.

