

**ROMERO PLAYER
OF THE YEAR
BASKETBALL/1B**



**Cirque Zuma
Zuma comes
to Hermiston
REGION/3A**



EAST OREGONIAN

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2015

139th Year, No. 91

WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Your Weekend



- **Luke Price and the Callenders fiddle show "Dryland" screening fundraiser at SAGE**
- **Winter barbecue and auction in Pendleton**

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

Catch a movie



AP Photo/Disney, Ron Phillips

Kevin Costner stars in Disney's heart-warming "McFarland, USA."

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

Weekend Weather

Fri	Sat	Sun
52/34	45/22	37/20

Watch a game

Columbia Basin Conference District Basketball Tournament

Friday and Saturday at the Pendleton Convention Center

PENDLETON

UAS Range sees progress in FAA proposal

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

A recent set of regulations for drone operation proposed by the Federal Aviation Administration is an encouraging sign for the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range.

The 195-page document, released Sunday, applies to non-recreational drones under 55 pounds and includes language about height restrictions, operator certification and aircraft registration.

Under the FAA's proposal, a UAS operator would have to be at least 17 years old, pass an aeronautical knowledge test and obtain an operator certificate from the FAA.

When piloting a drone, an operator cannot fly the vehicle higher than 500 feet and no faster than 100 miles per

See **DRONE/10A**

IRRIGON

Two sides 'closer' to library deal

OTLD OKs agreement, city to meet next week

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

The Oregon Trail Library District is prepared to sign an agreement with the city of Irrigon that would finally reopen the community's \$1.2 million public library attached to

city hall.

Patrons have waited eight months for the library to move into its new home while the district and city officials wrestle over the management of shared spaces in the building, including a joint meeting room, restrooms and common entrance.

Those obligations must be detailed in a revised intergovernmental agreement between the city and library district, which have swapped several proposals through their law-

yers. All the while, Irrigon Public Library remains closed and a construction loan is inching dangerously close to default.

A deal now appears to be in sight after the library board met Wednesday night in Heppner and voted to accept the city's most recent proposal with just a few additional changes. About 15 Irrigon residents made the trip where they applauded the board's action, but also demanded more openness and transparency

moving forward.

"I think we are closer to an agreement, for sure," said OTLD vice chairman John Anderson. "We can all cross our fingers, because it sounds very positive."

Irrigon City Council will call for a special meeting Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 6:30 p.m. If all goes well, Mayor Sam Heath could sign the agreement that night and begin the

See **LIBRARY/10A**

HERMISTON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Afternoon disc jockey Martin "El Hombre Fuego" Villanueva reads a dedication on the air while doing his radio show Thursday at La Ley radio station in Hermiston.

¡Ole, La Ley!

Radio station forms bridge to Hispanic community

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

When it comes to promoting Hermiston's first Spanish-language radio station, Martin Villanueva is a man on fire.

In fact, that's his on-air nickname — "El Hombre Fuego." Villanueva gets it from his frequent, enthusiastic screams of "Fuego!" or "Fire!" as he works as the afternoon disc jockey for La Ley, 99.5 FM.

Outside of the booth he displays the same kind of passion when talking about his work.

"Radio is magic," he said.

Villanueva and station manager Gaudencio Felipe Sanchez — who is known around the station as "The General of the Air" — spend long hours each day at the station, which broadcasts from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"Sometimes I stay another hour because I didn't get to all the songs requested," Villanueva said, noting



The La Ley radio station staff General Manager Gaudencio Felipe, morning host Rafael Cardenas and afternoon host Martin Villanueva.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

the switchboard is usually lit up "like a Christmas tree" in the afternoons.

"This is one of the best radio stations I've ever worked for," he said.

Villanueva said the station's employees are close, avoiding words like "boss" and "employee" and preferring to think of themselves as a family.

They have integrated themselves into the wider Hispanic community

too, providing support for a march for immigration reform, taking a significant role in the city's Cinco de Mayo festival and helping bring Latino Music Night to the Umatilla County Fair.

When a measure supporting driver's cards for illegal immigrants failed in the November election, the station's headquarters

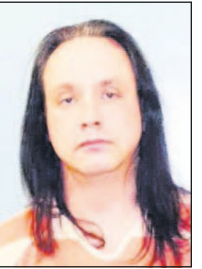
See **RADIO/10A**

PENDLETON

Aryan gang member may take deal

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

A key member of a white supremacist gang that operated in Pendleton is heading toward a plea bargain. Court records show Gregory Tinnell, 43, who faces 21 counts in all, has a hearing Friday morning at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton, to change his not guilty plea.



Tinnell

The Umatilla County District Attorney's Office accused Tinnell of operating as a member of the United Aryan Empire and charged him with racketeering, plotting to kill two people including fellow gang member Warren Browning, weapons crimes and more. He is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, along with Browning, 35, Jeremiah Mauer, 30, and other co-defendants. Mauer and Browning face the same or similar charges as Tinnell and have pleaded not guilty. Pendleton police Chief Stuart Roberts has stated that Mauer founded the racist gang.

Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus is out of the office. Primus, though, tends not to comment about cases that are pending. And there were no records Thursday that detailed Tinnell's change of plea.

Aside from pleading guilty, a defendant can change a plea to no contest, which is not an admission of guilt, though that is how a judge will treat it. Or a defendant can offer an Alford plea — claiming innocence while admitting the state has enough evidence to prove guilt at trial.

Mauer, Tinnell, Browning, and Steven Grangood, 22, plotted on Nov. 23, 2014, to kill another man in Pendleton, according to police and grand jury indictments. And then on Dec. 24, 2014, Mauer, Tinnell, and Grangood conspired to kill Browning.

Another co-defendant, Matthew Reed, 24, already cut a deal. Court documents show he pleaded guilty on Feb. 11 to attempted first-degree assault for trying to use a weapon to seriously harm another man. The state in exchange dismissed a conspiracy to murder charge against him. Reed is serving a sentence of three years probation, including 160 hours of community service, for the attempted assault.

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Oregonians could see a \$349 million tax 'kicker'

By **PETER WONG**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon taxpayers could see up to \$349 million credited against their 2015 taxes next year under an economic and revenue forecast released Thursday.

But despite the amount of the projected "kicker," state economists say future economic growth they forecast may cushion most

of its effects on the next two-year state budget.

"These are the salad days for Oregon's economy," state economist Mark McMullen told lawmakers on the House and Senate revenue committees.

The net effect could be a reduction of just \$21 million, once a higher ending balance from the current 2013-15 budget and projected increases in income taxes for the 2015-17 cycle

are taken into account.

The budget framework proposed by the Legislature's chief budget writers is at \$18.5 billion in spending from the tax-supported general fund and lottery proceeds. Those are the most flexible sources available to lawmakers.

Under a law that dates back to 1979, taxpayers receive excess amounts — known as the "kicker" — when actual collections

exceed projections by 2 percent or more for the budget period.

The most recent kicker was in 2007, when the state rebated \$1.1 billion to individual taxpayers. Another \$340 million scheduled to go back to businesses went into the creation of a general reserve fund.

There are two more forecasts scheduled before

See **KICKER/10A**



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