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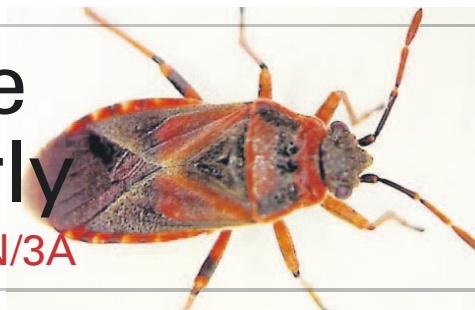
KNIGHTS WIN THIRD STRAIGHT TITLE

BOYS HOOPS/1B



Bugs are back early

REGION/3A



EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2015

139th Year, No. 93

WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Eastern Oregon bridges not on state's retrofit list

No plan for funding on state's ailing highways, bridges

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Oregon Department of Transportation warned in a 2014 report that the state must find the money to shore up Oregon's bridges before a catastrophic earthquake hits. But the Umatilla Bridge where I-82 crosses the Columbia River isn't part of that plan.

That's because while Washington and Oregon each have a 50 percent share in the bridge and split the cost of maintenance between them, Washington state plans and implements maintenance for the bridge.

None of Eastern Oregon's other bridges are part of ODOT's plan, either. The five-phase plan known as the Highways Seismic Plus Report, calls for pouring \$5 billion into 718 bridges over the next 50 years. But the plan only includes bridges west of Bend, the geographic area considered most likely to be affected by a major earthquake.

Washington's program to retrofit bridges against earthquake damage also focuses on the western half of the state and doesn't currently include the I-82 Columbia River crossing.

The Umatilla Bridge, as it's most commonly known around the state, is actually two bridges. The steel truss eastbound bridge that directs traffic into Oregon was built in 1955 and the concrete westbound bridge carrying vehicles away from Umatilla opened in 1988.

The average Oregon bridge is 39 years old.

A 2012 ODOT report rated both bridges as in "fair" structural condition, placing them directly in the middle of a five-tier ranking

See BRIDGES/6A



A work crew from the Washington State Department of Transportation Bridge Preservation Office inspects the steel cross beam on the southbound Interstate 82 bridge spanning the Columbia River. The bridge was damaged in 2008 when a oversized semi-truck carrying a log loader crane hit the beam.

Ethics reforms take on urgency

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon's new Gov. Kate Brown says her first priorities in office will include broad ethics and public records reforms.

That includes yet-to-be-drafted legislation to strengthen the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. The commission's dealings with former Gov. John Kitzhaber reveal some of its weaknesses.

In 2014, the ethics commission pitched a concept for legislation to be introduced in 2015 to expand transparency in the governor's office. The bill would have required more of the governor's advisers to disclose their financial interests on documents filed with the ethics commission. Staff in the Kitzhaber's office shot down that idea.

Ron Bersin, the ethics commission's executive director, told commissioners at a Nov. 7 meeting that staff in the Governor's Office sent the message "please don't write a (concept for the bill)." Bersin said Wednesday that the request came from Kitzhaber's staff attorney Li-an Reeves. Reeves could not be reached for comment.

There's heightened interest in the financial interests of governor's advisers because of the influence-peddling scandal around Kitzhaber and his fiancée, Cylvia Hayes.

Hayes, who served as a powerful adviser to the governor on energy and economic development, never filed the financial disclosures required of Oregon public officials. Hayes was not on the state payroll, but emails have revealed she directed the work of state employees, including the chief operating officer.

Although Kitzhaber disclosed



Brown

More inside: Federal probe of Kitzhaber, Hayes is one of three active investigations into couple
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PENDLETON

Designer's line inspired by Eastern Oregon

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

He may have a showroom in New York City, but designer Rian Berry has never forgotten his Eastern Oregon roots.

When Urban Outfitters contacted him in 2008 about creating a new line of handbags, he paid homage to his upbringing by naming the line Poverty Flats after the homestead east of Pendleton where his parents Doug and Coleen Berry raised him.

Berry's handbags and scarves are for sale across the country at retail chains like Nordstrom's. But the first store to carry his brand was Marla June's Clothing Com-



Marla June, left, was the first person to carry handbags designed by Rian Berry, right, displayed on the table. Staff photo by Jade McDowell

pany in Pendleton.

"We focus on a global scale now, because our customer base is so much larger, but the inspiration

is definitely still rooted here," Berry said at Marla June's Saturday, where he was signing handbags while home for a visit with his

parents.

Berry started his training with longtime Pendleton art teacher Marjorie Kennedy, who took Berry on as a student at age seven.

"I got some pretty interesting exposure and experience and I still use some of those basic illustration skills," Berry said.

Later, after Berry met his wife Julie, the couple tried to figure how they could combine his talent for painting with her marketing background. They eventually settled on the idea of selling art on some sort of fashion item. Berry said the T-shirt market seemed "oversaturated" so they created a line of canvas handbags with col-

See HANDBAGS/6A

Bill would ban 'gay conversion therapy'

By SHEILA V KUMAR
Associated Press

SALEM — An Oregon gay rights group asked the state Legislature on Monday to outlaw therapy that seeks to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of young people, arguing the practice often does more harm than good.

A state House panel heard testimony on the measure, which is being promoted by Basic Rights Oregon, a nonprofit gay and transgender advocacy group from Portland.

The measure is part of a national push to prevent mental health care providers from practicing so-called conversion

See THERAPY/6A



Creek congregation
A great blue heron and some mallards congregate in McKay Creek on Monday near Community Park in Pendleton.

HERMISTON Council may increase price of electricity

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Hermiston Energy Services customers are likely to see an increase in their electric bill starting in May.

The Hermiston city council will consider a recommendation at its next meeting that would raise rates by 10.95 percent, costing the average residential customer about \$11.50 a month.

HES superintendent Nate Rivera said in 2003 the industry expected deregulation would increase the cost of power and so HES increased its rates in preparation. Instead, Bonneville Power Administration, which sells HES its electricity, actually decreased its prices for a few years, allowing HES to build up a large reserve with the extra revenue it was collecting. As BPA's prices increased again, Rivera said HES has been operating at a loss since

See ENERGY/6A



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