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**DAWGS MEET BUCKS
IN QUARTERFINALS
GIRLS BASKETBALL/1B**



**Quilts on
display
REGION/3A**



EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2015

139th Year, No. 104

WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

PENDLETON

Round-Up ends property tax challenge

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Pendleton Round-Up Association will no longer challenge its 2014-2015 property tax assessment.

The Round-Up Association filed 16 appeals to Umatilla County in late December, asking the county to list its property as having no value. That would include the Round-Up Grounds,

which currently has an assessed value of \$5.2 million and tax burden of \$82,122.

George Murdock, chairman of the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners and board of property tax appeals, said the withdrawal means the Round-Up Association's tax burden for 2014-15 "is what it is."

That's about \$107,000 in all, according to county property tax records. Jolene Meadows,

clerk for the tax appeals board, also confirmed the Round-Up's withdrawal from the tax board's March 12 hearing.

Murdock said the Round-Up discussed its property tax value with the county "for a year or better." Round-Up President Bill Quesenberry said the association pulled back in order to reassess the situation.

He said the Round-Up plans to bring in an independent and unbi-

ased assessor, preferably someone with knowledge of event sites, to value the properties. That will take a while, he said, and the Round-Up board wants the assessment complete before it moves forward.

Quesenberry also said the Round-Up is considering how more organizations and events could use its facilities to generate revenue.

See ROUND-UP/8A

BOARDMAN

Port offers to purchase portion of depot land

Port of Morrow would pay \$1 million for 640 acres

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

The Port of Morrow has offered to buy a chunk of land on the Umatilla Chemical Depot in order to convince the Army to transfer more than 9,000-plus of the former weapons base to a local development group.

Army officials had intended to give the property to the Columbia Development Authority free of charge, but began backtracking in January. Now, the port says it will pay \$1 million for approximately 640 acres to keep the deal on track.

The authority — which consists of the ports of Morrow and Umatilla, Umatilla and Morrow counties and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation — plans to use different areas of the depot to lure industry and agriculture, with 5,600 acres set aside for a wildlife preserve. Another 7,500 acres would go to the

See PORT/8A

PENDLETON

District delves into grad rate

71 seniors didn't graduate from PHS in 4 years

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

After promising to "put faces" to the 77 seniors that failed to graduate from the Pendleton School District last year, the resulting report delivered by Superintendent Jon Peterson revealed a mixed message.

On one hand, a reporting error on the numbers delivered to the Oregon Department of Education meant that only 71 seniors didn't graduate, boosting the district's overall graduation rate from 72 percent to 73 percent.

On the other hand, roughly half of those 71 seniors were dropouts and are no longer continuing their education.

The district superintendent shared the report at a Pendleton School Board meeting Monday.

Peterson said district staff worked hard to try to keep the 36 dropouts in the school system, to no avail. Many times, outside factors led to their dropped enrollment.

"Some of them don't necessarily have the best support system," he said. "It's hard to get them to go to school. Some of them are in a different place — working a full-time job, have kids, supporting a family, providing daycare opportunities. The things that make you kind of scratch your head. They're infuriating, but that's the reality."

In other instances, academically struggling students come from smaller districts to

See GRADUATION/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Horseshoes and shamrocks

The Jackson Sundown dress-up artists have struck again, casting the historical bronze in a Saint Patrick's Day motif on Tuesday in Pendleton.

Traditional textbooks becoming old school

Electronic texts easier, cheaper for students

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Kevin Hawman's backpack is a little lighter these days.

Hawman, a Blue Mountain Community College student, discovered he wouldn't need to drop \$200 on a textbook for his business marketing class. His instructor, Velda Arnaud, had informed her students that readings were available free online. That was a relief for the sophomore.

Open-source textbooks

are free or low-cost electronic texts that have been placed in the public domain. Instructors may rearrange materials to best suit their courses, mixing and matching and attaching videos. Students download required readings to their laptops. They can use a virtual highlighter to mark text.

Not all of his instructors use open-source textbooks, but Hawman can envision the day when students won't need to lug heavy books. Even better, they won't have to empty their bank accounts to buy them.

"Some textbooks are pretty

See BOOKS/7A

Head Start program gets \$780K grant

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

An extra 50 children in Eastern Oregon will receive Early Head Start services thanks to a \$780,000 annual grant from the federal government

The grant, awarded to Umatilla Morrow Head Start by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will also help increase the quality of care available for all children in the region.

"This is a really exciting venture," UMHS executive director Maureen McGrath said. "There was so much competition. This is quite a coup to receive a grant of this size and merit."

The grant will pay to forge new partnerships between Head Start and local childcare providers. Instead of adding new slots to its own classrooms, UMHS will train and certify daycare providers as Early Head Start teachers. It will then pay them to take on children in poverty who qualify for Early Head Start services but haven't been able to get a spot in a UMHS classroom. Children served under that contract will also have

See HEAD START/8A



BMCC student Kevin Hawman studies business marketing from his open-source textbook which he downloaded to his laptop for free. As the cost of traditional textbooks and tuition escalates, open education resources (OERs) help keep the cost of education down.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



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