

PENDLETON



Staff photo by Antonio Sierra

Sister’s Cafe co-owner Rosemary Garcia is flanked by employees MaRanda Soliz, left, and Sacha Nevarez at the restaurant’s new location Friday.

Sister’s finds larger home on Main Street

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

On Main Street, moving down the block can make all the difference. It did for Rosemary Garcia and Diana Quezada, the titular owners of Sister’s Cafe. Over the winter, Garcia and Quezada closed their old location at 380 S. Main St. and moved their restaurant to 308 S. Main St., formerly Maurices. Their next challenge was to convert a space designed for a clothing store into a functional restaurant. “There was always another ‘but,’” Garcia said about meeting city code. To make the restaurant more inviting, the sisters stripped away the plaster on the walls and the carpet from the floor, revealing a more attractive brick wall and wooden floor underneath. Garcia and Quezada’s efforts culminated in the new

Sister’s Cafe opening March 2. The new location offers twice the room as the old restaurant, which was located at the ground floor of the St. George Plaza, with the option to expand further once an overhead sprinkler system is added. The new spot also allowed the sisters to expand their menu to include hamburgers, more appetizers and pastas, as well as a small bar with beer on tap and cocktails. And with more space comes more employees. Thanks to the relocation, Garcia said she was able to hire five new employees. Business has been bustling since the Sister’s opening, with Garcia saying they’re not only retained their old customers, but are attracting new ones as well. Sister’s Cafe is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sundays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

HERMISTON

EOT bringing ultra-fast Internet

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Internet in Hermiston is about to get a whole lot faster. Eastern Oregon Telecom has announced it is bringing a fiber broadband network — boasting speeds 100 times faster than the average broadband Internet — to Hermiston and parts of Umatilla, Irrigon and Boardman. The telecommunications company estimates the ultra-fast Internet will connect to about 8,000 homes and businesses by the end of 2016. CEO Joseph Franell said about 200 homes in Hermiston and Umatilla’s Main Street are already hooked up, with a second phase of 550 homes in the works. The new Internet speeds,

which can download an entire high-definition movie in 36 seconds, will help fill a demand for more Internet capacity that Franell said has skyrocketed in the last six years. More and more people are using the Internet to watch television and play games, but Franell said it’s about more than just entertainment. The fiber broadband will improve residents’ ability to do everything from paying bills to taking college courses online. It will also increase efficiency for businesses and government entities that spend all day uploading and downloading data. Franell said once the project is done, all of Hermiston, as well as the commercial corridor of Umatilla, Irrigon and Boardman, will have bet-

ter Internet connectivity than Portland and Salem. He said when Google Fiber rolled out fiber connectivity in Kansas City the prices of homes connected to the lightning-fast Internet increased by 17 percent and business start-ups flocked to the area. “When you start looking for economic development in the region, robust telecommunications is certainly going to help our economy continue to grow,” he said. Eastern Oregon Telecom was created by Umatilla Electric Cooperative about 13 years ago to help the community, and Franell said the company is as focused on serving the community as it is on profits. That’s why it is reinvesting so much revenue into cutting-edge technology for the Hermiston area.

EOT is working with a Texas-based tech company called Huawei to create the infrastructure (known as Gigabit Passive Optical Network) necessary to bring Internet speeds of 1,000 mbps to the area. Bill Gerski, Vice President of Sales for Huawei USA, said in a news release that the company was excited to bring its technology to the Hermiston area. “Rural communities in America, which are typically under-served by broadband, are beginning to recognize the economic and social benefits of having fast and reliable connectivity,” he said. “Huawei is committed to working with rural carriers and communities across the U.S. to help them get connected.”

HERMISTON

New home decor shop encourages shoppers to ‘Indulge’

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

A long-empty storefront on Hermiston’s Main Street is full once more after Indulge, a home decor store, opened its doors this week. Owner Debbie Westwood said she looked at other locations but decided on giving the former pet store at 158 E. Main Street a floor-to-ceiling makeover because she wanted to help revitalize Hermiston’s downtown. “I figure if I get going people will stop in other places too,” she said. Indulge carries candles, fountains, paintings, mirrors, planters and rustic-themed knick knacks of all sorts to

decorate a home. Westwood also sells bottles of wine from regional vineyards and hopes to eventually host wine tastings at the shop. Westwood, a former florist, said she opened the store because she was interested in getting back into a similar line of work but at a less hectic pace. So she came up with the idea for Indulge and set her hours at Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. “I love doing this kind of stuff, but I want this to be a little more like retirement,” she said. Westwood said she chose the name Indulge because she wants people to feel like they can “come in and relax and enjoy themselves in here.”



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Debbie Westwood stands in front of a display in her new home decor shop Indulge at 158 E. Main St. in Hermiston.

BRIEFLY

Pendleton Rite Aid remodels, adds health food

PENDLETON — To reflect the company’s new focus on health and wellness, Rite Aid recently reopened after a significant remodeling effort. Along with the usual aspects of a renovation — new floors, better lighting, wider aisles — the drugstore also has an expanded health food section and a revamped pharmacy. New features at the pharmacy include new rooms for immunization and consultation and a larger waiting area.

Oil is on its way down again; will gas prices follow?

NEW YORK (AP) — The price of oil is tumbling again, rattling an already-shaken oil industry and heralding lower prices for consumers. The price of oil fell 10 percent this week, approaching its lowest price in six years. Many expect it to fall further in the coming weeks because supplies are rising and the summer driving season is still months away. The lower crude prices will mean gasoline prices will slide lower in the coming weeks, and many drivers will likely pay under \$2 a gallon in the summertime for the first time since 2004.

Toyota signs as Olympic sponsor

TOKYO (AP) — The world’s biggest automaker is driving onto the world’s biggest sports stage. Toyota Motor Corp. signed on as a global Olympic sponsor Friday in a landmark deal reportedly worth nearly \$1 billion, becoming the first car company to join the IOC’s top-tier marketing program. The eight-year deal underlines Asia’s growing influence in the Olympics, bolsters the IOC’s long-term financial security and gives Toyota a worldwide platform that shuts out rival auto manufacturers.

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