

**GONZAGA
IN ELITE 8
NCAA/1B**



Historic
Corvallis
pioneer
home **1C**



REGION:
TRCI inmate dies
in infirmary **3A**
ENTERTAINMENT:
Visual artist moves
to Pendleton **3C**

EAST OREGONIAN

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\$1.50



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Sen. Bill Hansell laughs while answering a question during a town hall meeting with Rep. Greg Barreto during the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce luncheon on Friday.

Hansell, Barreto decry 'job killers'

Lawmakers field questions at Pendleton chamber luncheon

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

Two of Eastern Oregon's state legislators stood together Friday at the Pendleton Convention Center to discuss measures they will support — and those they will oppose — through the remainder of the 2015 session.

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, and Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove, provided an update from Salem

and fielded questions from the crowd of about 65 people during a town hall luncheon hosted by the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce.

Both lawmakers railed against a list of bills pegged by Oregon industry and small business advocates as "job killers," including a measure to raise the state minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2018.

Other bills on the "job killers" list would increase workers' compensation costs by nearly 5 percent, and require employers provide flexible work schedules upon employee request.

Barreto, who serves on the House Business and

See **TOWN HALL/12A**

Feds celebrate sage grouse deal with ranchers

By **JEFF BARNARD**
Associated Press

The Obama administration and Gov. Kate Brown joined with Oregon ranchers to celebrate agreements they all hope will help keep the sage grouse off the endangered species list.

The agreements announced Friday in Bend, Oregon, give ranchers incentives to protect sage grouse and their habitat on 5,500 square miles of private land in central and southeastern Oregon.

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, the governor, and Agriculture Deputy Undersecretary Ann Mills praised the spirit of cooperation the agreements represent, and expressed their hopes that both sage grouse and family ranches would thrive.

"To quote an Oregon rancher, 'What's good for the bird is good for the herd,'" Jewell said.

Brown noted her budget has \$4 million committed for sage grouse programs, adding, "This plan not only assures the wellbeing of a small bird that makes its home in the high desert of central Oregon, but also the wellbeing of the people and communities that share that home."

Lake County Rancher John O'Keefe, president elect of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said the agreements would help his family ranch continue into the fourth and fifth generations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says the agreements signed last week with soil and water conservation districts covering Crook, Deschutes, Lake, Union, Grant, Baker, Harney and Malheur counties are the first for such a wide area.

The Obama administration has been announcing a variety of conservation agreements as the Sept. 30 deadline approaches for deciding whether to propose the sage grouse for Endangered Species Act protection. Conservation agreements

See **SAGE GROUSE/10A**

Salvation Army feeding program, four others suffer blow



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Cook Melinda Dennis puts a CAPECO shipment of frozen meats into a walk-in freezer on Wednesday at the Salvation Army in Pendleton.

United Way forced to cut funding

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

A couple weeks ago, Cricket Nicholson swallowed hard and punched in the phone number for the Umatilla County Salvation Army.

Nicholson, executive director of United Way of Umatilla and

Morrow Counties, had a tough message to deliver. United Way wouldn't continue funding the Salvation Army's feeding program. United Way's review board had rejected Salvation Army's funding request.

United Way support of the local Salvation Army has eroded over the past several years.

Last year, Salvation Army got \$11,000. In 2013, it was \$18,000.

This year? Zero — except for donations specifically earmarked by individual donors.

Susan Lamb answered Nicholson's call at the Salvation Army office on Southeast Emigrant Street in Pendleton. She listened as Nicholson explained

with obvious pain that United Way wasn't able to provide funds for the coming year. Lamb was stunned.

"It was tearful," said Lamb, Salvation Army volunteer coordinator. "There was a lot of emotion."

See **UNITED WAY/12A**

Diesel dump spelled doom for Pendleton home

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A crew uses excavators to demolish the home at 515 N.W. Furnish Ave. on Friday in Pendleton. An employee from Pendleton Grain Growers mistakenly dumped 150 gallons of diesel fuel into the basement of the home Nov. 24, 2014.

Demolition began Thursday on a Pendleton couple's home in the wake of a local company dumping 150 gallons of diesel into their basement.

Pendleton Grain Growers made a mistake Nov. 24, 2014, when it delivered the fuel to 515 N.W. Furnish Ave., Pendleton, home to Brent Merriman and Michele Lowary. The mess finally meant the end to the three-story home that Merriman owned for 28 years. Crews started tearing down the house Thursday and were in full swing again Friday.

Merriman said they moved out of the house and rented a home across the street. Friday morning the couple watched as workers in two excavators smashed and grabbed chunks of the structure and dropped those into a semitrailer. Merriman

said the materials filled two trailer loads Thursday.

The couple said they had to take it in stride, and PGG's insurance is covering the cost of the demolition work and to rebuild a new, larger house in the same location. Rebuilding, though, can only commence after testing the site for contamination.

A Pendleton Grain Growers spokeswoman last year said a driver for the agricultural co-operative was confused about where to deliver the fuel. The house used heating oil some years ago, and the driver pumped the diesel into the basement. She said the company would work with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and contractors to clean up the mess, and PGG would take steps to make sure employees do not repeat the mistake.

A spokesperson from Pendleton Grain Growers did not return a call Friday.



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