



**PENDLETON'S
4 PITCHERS
SOFTBALL/1B**

**New skate park
could roll into
Hermiston 3A**

EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2015

139th Year, No. 125

WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

County awaits drought request

Umatilla wetter than south, central Oregon counties

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

Streams are flowing low and reservoirs are yet to be filled across the Umatilla Basin, with perilous little snow in the Blue Mountains to count on for summertime relief.

Yet conditions are wringing-wet compared to other areas in the state — primarily south and central Oregon — where Gov. Kate Brown has already declared a drought emergency.

On Monday, Brown expanded her drought declaration into Crook, Harney and Klamath counties, joining Malheur and Lake counties in qualifying for assistance

See **DROUGHT/8A**

Hayes got involved in policy with gov's blessing

PORTLAND (AP)—The 94,000 emails between former first lady Cylvia Hayes and staff in the governor's office show Hayes regularly inserted herself in policy discussions with the blessing of her fiancée, then-Gov. John Kitzhaber.

The emails also show that few staffers pushed back, and Hayes regularly adopted a supervisory tone when addressing employees in the governor's office.

Those are among the findings of *The Oregonian's* review of many of the emails, which were released last week by Gov. Kate Brown, who succeeded Kitzhaber after his decision to step down in February. The Portland newspaper says more than 20 reporters and editors pitched in to review the massive trove of documents.

Throughout his 2014 re-election campaign and after his fourth inauguration in

See **HAYES/8A**



Soil scientist Stewart Wuest gestures to the varying heights of wheat growth in a test plot on Wednesday at Columbia Plateau Conservation Research Center outside of Mission. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Ag research headed for threshing

Pendleton station stands to lose \$911,000 in Obama's budget

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, is lobbying Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to maintain support of the Columbia Plateau Conservation Research Center north of Pendleton.

The station stands to lose \$911,000 — nearly half its annual funding — in President Barack Obama's 2016 budget. Such deep cuts would force the center to end its research into no-till farming for winter wheat and lay off three staff scientists.

Established in 1970, the station is part of the federal Agricultural Research Service, or ARS, which serves as the USDA's principal in-

house research agency. Located on Tubbs Ranch Road, the Pendleton center shares a building with Oregon State University's Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center, though they are two different programs.

In a letter sent Tuesday to Vilsack, Wyden said the President's budget would end critical research on cropping systems for the Columbia Plateau, one of the largest wheat producing areas in the Pacific Northwest.

Wyden also hopes to save forage and turf grass research on the ARS chopping block in Corvallis.

"The research developed in Oregon will have lasting impacts on advances in precision agriculture and have clear benefits to farm produc-



Soil scientist Stewart Wuest holds a thermometer he uses to measure soil temperatures below the surface of a crop. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

tivity and profitability of wheat production nationwide," Wyden said.

Wyden had proposed a budget amendment to continue funding

for all agricultural research through 2025, though it was not adopted

See **RESEARCH/8A**



Bryson Bronson holds the U.S. flag while riding Chinook under a crescent moon during the opening ceremony of the Pendleton PBR Classic at the Happy Canyon Arena in 2013. EO file photo

Happy Canyon horse and rider headed to Las Vegas World Cup

Fireworks, rock music, and strobes don't ruffle Chinook

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Another star is headed to Vegas. This time around, the celebrity has four fetlocks, a black mane and a whinny.

A paint horse named Chinook is well known to spectators at Pendleton's Professional Bull Riding event and Happy Canyon Indian Pageant and Wild West Show. Each night, Chinook clomps up a steep wooden ramp to a platform high above the open-air Happy Canyon Arena where he and rider Bryson Bronson form a tableau during the singing of the national anthem.

Bronson, dressed in leather leggings, a feather bonnet and a beaded chest plate, sits bareback and holds an oversized flag as Chinook poses unflinchingly during a rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" that is peppered with fireworks and a barrage of loud pops.

Now, the regal pair will go on the road. The paint horse, along with Bronson and trainer/owner Rusty Black, will set

out Tuesday for an 850-mile drive to Las Vegas for an April 18 appearance at the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) World Cup. Presenting the colors at the international dressage and jumping event is something of a trial run for a possible appearance at the National Finals Rodeo in December.

Black isn't worried about Chinook losing his composure during the FEI appearance. Though event organizers asked how he would react to the glare of a spotlight, 16-year-old Chinook keeps his cool even around strobe lights and driving rock music, said Black.

"He's been in a lot of strange environments," she said. "Darkness with a spotlight won't bother him in the least."

Black said Chinook, the great-grandson of Secretariat, got his name because of the warm Chinook wind that blew on the day of his birth, melting six inches of ice and snow. Besides appearing at Happy Canyon, the paint leads the Pendleton Round-Up Westward Ho! Parade.

Jason Hill, president of the Happy Canyon Board of Directors, said conversations

See **CHINOOK/8A**

**"We're confident
Chinook will impress.
The endgame is for
Chinook and Bryson
to present the colors
at the NFR."**

— **Carl Culham,**
Pendleton Round-Up director

