



EAST OREGONIAN

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139th Year, No. 141

WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Your Weekend



- **Farmers' market opens for season in Pendleton**
- **Inland Northwest Orchestra Concert**
- **Pendleton Adult Prom at Recreation Center**

For times and places see **Coming Events, 5A**

Catch a movie



Jay Maidment/Disney/Marvel via AP

The highly anticipated Marvel sequel, "Avengers: Age of Ultron."

For showtime, **Page 5A**
For review, **Weekend EO**

Weekend Weather

Fri	Sat	Sun
78/45	72/42	73/41

Navy to accompany U.S.-flagged ships in Gulf

By **ROBERT BURNS**
AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. Navy ships will begin accompanying U.S. commercial ships during their transit through the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf to ensure they encounter no interference from Iran, U.S. defense officials said Thursday.

The new policy, which has not yet been announced officially, was adopted in response to what Washington views as provocative Iranian behavior. Earlier this week Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps naval vessels reportedly fired warning shots near a Marshall Islands-flagged cargo ship and have detained it and its crew.

Iran says it intervened with the Maersk Tigris because the Maersk shipping line owes it money awarded in a lawsuit.

Iranian naval patrol boats also surrounded a U.S. cargo vessel in the strait last Friday

See **NAVY/10A**

State must keep promise to retirees

Court rules Oregon can't change COLA formula for retirees; current employees subject to negotiation

By **PETER WONG**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon Supreme Court ruled Thursday that a cost-of-living adjustment for public retirees cannot be changed retroactively.

The decision strikes down a change made by the Legislature in

2013 to reduce the system's long-term liability.

The court, in a long-awaited decision, also ruled that lawmakers can change how that cost-of-living increase is applied to employees who retire after the changes were made.

The court also rejected appeals by out-of-state retirees of the

Legislature's decision to discontinue payments granted years ago to help retirees offset state income taxes.

The decision has no immediate effect on the contribution rates of the Oregon government employers that cover 95 percent of the public workforce. The Public Employee Retirement Board set the rates last fall for the 2015-17 budget cycle, which starts July 1.

But it is unclear how the decision will affect the system's future liability,

which lawmakers tried to pare with their 2013 changes.

The system has about 128,000 retirees.

Retirees and public employee unions went to court to challenge those changes. They argued that the changes violated the contract between government employers and workers.

"We conclude that petitioners

See **RETIREES/9A**



Photo courtesy of Harriet Isom

Harriet Isom stands near the shrine of 13th century Persian poet Saadi in Shiraz.

Isom in Iran

'Iran has been a bit of a mystery'

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Iran.

We associate the name with hard-edged things like nuclear weapons negotiations, a death-to-America attitude and long-bearded Ayatollahs.

But a Pendleton woman recently experienced the softer side of Iran. Harriet Isom traveled to the country earlier this month with nine other American tourists under the auspices of the World Affairs Council of Pennsylvania. Starting in the capital city of Tehran, she soaked in impressions and let preconceptions float away.

Those acquainted with the articulate Isom know she can be downright encyclopedic when she shares insights gained during her world travels, but she is also capable of elegant simplicity. When asked to describe the sights and sounds of Iran, she let it flow.

"Poets and picnics," she said. "Gardens and carpets. Cedars and saffron. Squares and squinches."

Isom elaborated.

Regarding poetry, she said



Photo by Harriet Isom

A young Iranian family walks on the grounds of the 18th century Golestan Palace in Tehran.

she was immediately aware of its presence.

"You're not there very long before you understand the reverence for Persian poets," she said. "They build them elaborate shrines and quote their poetry in daily life. I've never been to a country with more emphasis on poetry."

Iranians also seem to love picnics and gardens. Isom noticed multitudes of people sitting outside sharing pastries, kabobs, basmati rice, yogurt, flatbread and other food. The tour group also visited elaborate Persian gardens with lush

plantings, trees, pathways, pools and pavilions. Isom noted admiration for trees, especially the stately cedar that "is symbolic of man's strength and dignity." She saw exquisite handwoven Persian carpets all around.

Then, there were the squares and squinches. Historic buildings were built square to honor the sacred elements of earth, water, fire and wind. The arched squinches were invented by Iranians as a way to attach

See **IRAN/9A**

State Senate bans hunting with drones

Bill passes unanimously

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

Oregon lawmakers have approved a statewide ban on using drones to hunt, fish and trap wildlife.

The Senate unanimously passed House Bill 2534 on Thursday, which also prohibits flying drones to scout animals or interfere with other hunters.

Previously, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife allowed tracking big game with unmanned aircraft, but stipulated sportsmen couldn't go hunting within eight hours after doing so.

Brian Jennings, Oregon state coordinator for Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, said they felt the regulation was too vague and difficult to enforce. The group backed HB2534 as a way to solve the issue and promote fair chase.

Rep. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, took up the bill and it was met with universal approval at the Capitol. It passed the House 59-0, with Rep. Jessica Vega Pederson, D-Portland, excused from voting.

See **HUNTING/10A**

PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A work crew from Pioneer Construction of Mission repaved the surface of Southwest Nye Avenue on Thursday in Pendleton.

Council, citizens talk infrastructure

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

Pendleton city officials got what they bargained for at their first "listening session" on the city's flagging infrastructure at the Pendleton Convention Center Wednesday night.

The first of several scheduled gatherings around the city, the meeting wasn't lacking in proposed fixes from the audience, which was composed of the entire Pendleton City Council and a handful of community members.

The problem lies in a lack of funding. According to a presentation led by Public Works Director Bob Patterson, the city would need an additional \$7.4 million per year to cover needed maintenance and improvements to the city's infrastructure.

The roughly \$5 million in property taxes the city takes in per year doesn't even completely cover public safety costs, much less infrastructure.

Of the \$7.4 million in infrastructure costs, \$4.8 million is needed for water, sewer and storm water drainage utilities.

The city is considering a series of rate hikes and system development charges to cover utilities and a bond to cover the \$850,000 a year needed to keep city facilities in operation. That leaves \$1.7 million in street

See **PENDLETON/10A**



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