

Gearing up for summer maintenance

Schools prepare to make renovations, repairs, upgrades

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Teachers and students may look forward to the end of the school year, but for school district employees who work in maintenance there is no such thing as summer vacation.

For them, summer is prime time to complete projects without students underfoot.

In Umatilla School District, for example, maintenance director Mike Botti said his staff plans to refinish the gym floors at the high school and middle school, complete several painting projects, fill in cracks in the tennis courts and spruce up the district offices.

“We’re pulling out a bunch of old, ugly shrubs and putting in some new landscaping,” he said.

In Morrow County School District, contractors will be working all summer to install energy-efficient upgrades to schools’ heating and cooling systems in partnership with Energy Trust of Oregon.

No one will be as busy as Pendleton School District, where a successful bond measure means the district is overseeing construction of two new elementary schools and an Early Learning Center this summer. As school wraps up, business services director Michelle Jones said construction is on schedule.

“Right now so far, so good and we shouldn’t have



Fourth-graders at Washington Elementary School take a tour of the new school under construction recently in Pendleton.

Construction on the former Red Apple grocery store on Orchard Avenue, spurred on by Hermiston School District’s plans to move staff into the space, has displaced the community recycling bins once located behind the store. Until the city’s sanitary disposal department finds a new home for them they are located at the department’s offices at 81144 N. Highway 395. Residents can drop off recycling there or at the recycling center at 220 Harper Road. A cardboard recycling container is also located behind Hermiston Public Library.

any weather hiccups,” she said.

That being said, Jones said the construction schedule is “pretty tight” and the facilities staff will have to work hard to get everything moved into the new buildings in time for the first day of school.

Meanwhile work will go on in Pendleton’s other schools, including security upgrades at the district’s secondary schools, roofing projects and the addition of air conditioning to Sunridge

Middle School. Jones said the air conditioning is probably the most anticipated upgrade.

“I think it’s going to make a world of difference,” she said, noting that it’s hard for students to concentrate on learning when “it turns into an oven in there.”

Over in Hermiston, operations manager Mike Kay said the district doesn’t have many big improvement projects planned, besides routine preventative maintenance like refinishing the

gym floors, in anticipation for all of the moving that facilities staff will help with this summer.

The district recently signed a lease on the former Red Apple grocery store at 305 S.W. 11th Street. Once landlord Double H LLC finishes renovating the space, Kay said about 150 district staff will be shuffled around, including about 60 people being moved into the new space.

“They’re coming from all different areas,” Kay said.

That includes special education staffers at the Kik Center, the district offices currently next to Rocky Heights Elementary, and the print shop and IT departments currently at Hermiston High School.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

New look, frequency and editor for Herald

EO Media Group

Changes are coming to the *Hermiston Herald* on July 1.

On Wednesday, the *Hermiston Herald* will debut a re-designed newspaper, celebrating Hermiston’s past, present and future.

The new-look print edition will be distributed once a week on Wednesdays. HermistonHerald.com will become a principal platform for breaking news and information for the community.

Kathryn B. Brown, publisher of the *Hermiston Herald* and *East Oregonian* newspapers, also announced that a new editor will take over the *Herald*, effective July 1.

Gary L. West, 49, will replace Jessica Keller who has been editor of the *Herald* for the past two years.

“Gary West has played an important role in EO Media Group’s transformation from an old-school newspaper company to a modern and dynamic media company over the last decade,” Brown said. “He is able to combine his solid journalism skills with new



West

technologies, recognizing that the way people get news and information from newspapers is ever-changing. We are fortunate to have him in the ever-growing city of Hermiston, which is such an important community to our company.”

West is no stranger to Hermiston and Eastern Oregon. A graduate of Echo High School and Oregon State University, he has worked at newspapers in Oregon and California for more than 25 years, including previous stints at both the *Hermiston Herald* and *East Oregonian*.

“It is exciting to return home and work with the talented journalists at the *Hermiston Herald* and *East Oregonian*,” West said. “We are currently working to develop a new look and new strategy for the *Herald*, so we will be asking readers, community members and businesses to help us determine how best to cover the greater Hermiston area.”

Follow incoming editor Gary West on Twitter @GaryLWest, follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/journalist.gwest or email him at gwest@hermistonherald.com

Former Pendleton City Council member joins state pot committee

East Oregonian

A former Pendleton City Council member will serve on the rules committee for the hottest hot-button issue in Oregon.

Steve Taylor is one of 16 members on the Oregon Liquor Control Commission’s Recreational Marijuana Rules Advisory Committee. Taylor served on Pendleton City Council for 16 years before losing the seat in 2010 to Al Plute. Taylor also is a former Blue Mountain Community College board chairman.

Initially, no representatives east of Bend were appointed by OLCC Executive Director Steven Marks to the rules committee, technical advisory subcommittee or technical subcommittee on laboratories.

State Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, sent a letter to Marks asking for an explanation on how individuals were chosen to serve on these three committees.

“If marijuana is going to be legal for the entire state, people from all areas of the state should have a voice in the rule making process,” according to Hansell. “That

is why I felt it was essential to notify director Marks the make-up of the committee was unacceptable. People in Eastern Oregon are tired of Portland making all of the rules for the state. Eastern Oregonians should have a voice in the discussion.”

Hansell reported he heard back from Marks, who stated the commission would appoint someone from the eastern part of Oregon before the first Rules Committee meeting of June 19 in Milwaukie.

The OLCC made good on that Monday, according to Hansell, when Taylor became the 16th member of the rules committee.

“I have known and worked with Steve Taylor for many years, and he will represent the people of Eastern Oregon very well on the OLCC Rules Commission,” Hansell stated.

Oregon voters in November approved Measure 91 to legalize recreational marijuana, which goes into effect July 1. The OLCC has the charge of developing rules for the new industry, but those will not go into effect until 2016.

Trial nears for white supremacist gang founder

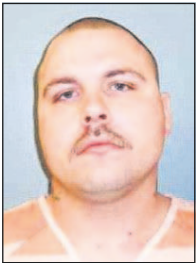
By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The criminal case against the leader of a Pendleton white supremacist gang that police tied to a murder plot continues to chug toward trial, while the window for a plea deal is closing.

Jeremiah Jerome Mauer, 31, has pleaded not guilty to 17 charges in all, with racketeering and two counts of conspiracy to murder the most serious. He had a pretrial hearing Tuesday morning at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton.

Umatilla County deputy prosecutor Jaclyn Jenkins said she believed the state provided all its evidence to the defense. Defense attorney Jon Lieuallen of Pendleton was in a trial Tuesday morning, so attorney Molly Tucker Hasenbank filled in. She said Lieuallen’s notes indicated he wanted a date for the court to consider pre-trial motions and was waiting for evidence from the state.

Circuit Judge Lynn Hampton set June 24 as the deadline for defense motions, July 14 for the state to file responses and July 21 to hear arguments in court. Jenkins told the court once the district



Mauer



Browning



Tinnell

attorney’s office argues motions it no long will negotiate for a plea bargain.

Mauer’s trial stays on the docket for Aug. 24 through Sept. 4. Attorneys for both the prosecution and defense will check in with the judge on Aug. 4 for a trial readiness meeting first.

Mauer was to appear via video from the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, where he has been since his arrest Jan. 9, but he had to settle for talking and listening over the phone. The jail video was not working due to a power failure. Jail commander Stewart Harp explained the jail operated for a few hours Tuesday on its generator while undergoing an earthquake drill. He said the exercise may have revealed a need to address the video feed.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts has stated Mauer was the founder and leader of the United Aryan Empire based in Pendleton, and the gang was responsible for fights and shootings in late 2014 and early 2015.

Another United Aryan Empire member, Warren Browning, 35, has a pretrial hearing the morning of Tuesday, June 16, according to court records. He faces charges akin to Mauer’s, including the charges of racketeering and two counts of conspiracy to murder.

Two other members, Gregory Tinnell, 44, and Steven Grangood, 22, made plea bargains with the state. Tinnell is in the Umatilla County Jail and Grangood is at the Northern Oregon Regional Correctional Facilities, The Dalles. They could end up as witnesses if Mauer goes to trial.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

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SafetyMan says
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Healthy Back Habits for Caregivers - CONCLUDED

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 3:30PM

Many adults spend a considerable portion of their week caring for aging parents, relatives, friends, or other adults. According to the results of a recent study, the stresses and strains of providing care to an ill loved one may take a considerable toll on the mental and physical health of care-givers — including their back and spine health. Learn healthy back habits to keep you safe.

Elder-Friendly Living: Modifying Your Home for Safety

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 3:30 PM

No matter when the older person’s home was built and regardless of whether it is modern or traditional in style, it likely was designed for young adults and their families. As adults age their homes also grow older, but most are not updated to accommodate the resident’s changing needs. Home adaptation or modification can provide friendlier elder living so older occupants may continue to life safely in the comfort of their home.

Know Your Numbers

TUESDAY, JULY 28, 3:30 PM

Are you at risk for diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases? Learn about the numbers and what they mean for various screenings to stay in control of your health. We will talk about cholesterol, blood pressure, body mass index (BMI) numbers and more.

For more information or to RSVP, call us at (541) 276-1987 or visit us today!

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