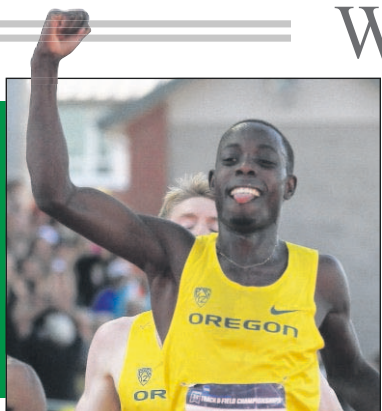


**OREGON NATIONAL CHAMPS TRACK/1B**



**Going electric**  
LIFESTYLES 1C



**NORTHWEST:**  
NAACP leader lied about her race **2A**  
**ENTERTAINMENT:**  
Goonies nostalgia never dies **3C**

# EAST OREGONIAN

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139th Year, No. 172

WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50

## Broadcaster awarded BMCC's first honorary degree



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Radio host and keynote speaker Butch Thurman receives the first honorary Associates of Arts degree from BMCC President Cam Preus after speaking during the graduation ceremony on the BMCC campus in Pendleton.

## Thurman honored more than three decades after leaving school

By KATHY ANEY and ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

Butch Thurman was dubious when Blue Mountain Community College President Camille Preus asked him to give this year's commencement address.

"I'd be honored," Thurman told Preus, "but Cam ... I didn't graduate."

Thurman, who attended BMCC from 1979 to 1981, had detoured into a career in radio broadcasting instead of graduating. On Friday evening, however, more than three decades after leaving academia, Thurman received BMCC's first-ever honorary degree.

In order to make this happen, the school's board of education had to add policy language

that allowed for honorary degrees. The honor blindsided Thurman. On graduation night, the unsuspecting Thurman first spoke to the 440 graduates who make up the school's largest graduating class ever. He admitted that his failure to graduate "haunts me from time to time" and exhorted the grads to "push yourself to take risks — and don't take no for an answer if it's something you really believe in."

After the applause came the surprise from Preus, who came to the microphone and presented the honorary degree.

"The fact that Butch is the 2015 BMCC Commencement speaker brings his success full circle to where it all started back at the college," Preus said. "He deserves to leave commence-

See BMCC/12A

### BMCC student body

**Gender: about even between male and female**  
**White: 60 percent**  
**Hispanic: 25 percent**  
**Younger than 18: 24 percent**  
**18-21: 24 percent**  
**22-26: 12 percent**  
**27-35: 14 percent**  
**26-45: 11 percent**  
**46-61: 12 percent**  
**Older than 61: 3 percent**  
**Credit students: 1,053 full-time and 1,650 part-time**  
**Non-credit students: 1,784**

## Top employers take different approaches to drug testing

Wildhorse to allow hiring workers who test positive for marijuana

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

Measure 91 will change many things on July 1, but it won't change a common practice among many large employers — drug screening.

Although marijuana possession and consumption will become legal this summer, Oregon legislators will continue to give employers the discretion to block a hire or terminate an employee based on a positive marijuana test.

Based on the changing landscape, two of Pendleton's largest employers are taking different tacks when it comes to screening for marijuana.

Tom Young, the finance manager for Keystone RV Co., said the city's second largest employer won't change its drug testing policy.

In addition to marijuana, Keystone tests for other narcotics and alcohol.

Young, who's also a member of the Pendleton City Council, said Keystone initiates tests in three different situations — a pre-employment screening, after work-related accidents and in "probable cause" incidents where the company suspects an employee is impaired.

Young stressed that Keystone's policy wasn't anti-marijuana, but rather anti-impairment — the company wants to use drug tests to avoid work related mishaps that could endanger employees.

"We don't need people lopping off fingers because they're impaired," he said.

There are a few exceptions to the rule. Young said employees and candidates can pass a drug test with the presence of prescription drugs in their system as long as they inform the tester ahead of time and show proper documentation.

That exception doesn't apply to medical marijuana. Young said any type of marijuana is still grounds for termination because it's against federal law.

Marijuana and other mind-altering substances have kept many potential employees from finding work at Keystone — Young said 40 percent of Keystone candidates are rejected because they couldn't pass the pre-employment drug screening.

While marijuana regulations are loosened in Oregon and other states around the country, Young doesn't anticipate Keystone changing its policy any time soon.

**"Personally, I don't see any difference between marijuana and alcohol."**

— Gary George, Wildhorse CEO

See MARIJUANA/12A

## Legislature passes testing opt-out bill

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

A bill headed to Governor Kate Brown's desk could decrease the number of students taking state tests next year.

House Bill 2655 would allow parents to opt their student out of the Smarter Balanced tests for any reason, not just medical or religious ones, and requires school districts to mail the opt-out forms to parents with a notice explaining their ability to

exempt their child from the tests.

Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena) voted in favor of the bill Thursday. He said he has heard concerns from constituents and lobbyists about the new tests and wanted to support parents' rights to have a say in their child's education.

"This will allow parents to make decisions," he said.

In addition to making it easier to opt out of standardized testing, HB 2655 also keeps the state from penalizing schools that

have less than 95 percent of their students participate in the tests.

The Oregonian reported Assistant U.S. Secretary of Education Deborah Delisle emailed Oregon school superintendent Rob Saxton that Oregon schools stood to lose their federal Title I funding if the state violated the part of its No Child Left Behind waiver requiring at least 95 percent of each student group (including racial minorities and special education students) participate in

state testing.

Hansell acknowledged that was a "major concern" discussed by the Senate Thursday, but he felt the bill's sponsors convincingly vetted the concern by arguing that the federal government wouldn't actually pull that much money from a state's education system, especially not with the state's Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., dedicated to making sure that

See TESTING/12A



James Quigg/The Victor Valley Daily Press via AP, File  
**Firefighters battle a wildfire in The Mojave Narrows Regional Park March 31 in Victorville, California. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell on Friday announced \$10 million for projects to restore health and fire resilience in mainly Western states but also two states in the East.**

## 13 states to share \$10M to reduce wildfire risks

By KEITH RIDLER  
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Interior Secretary Sally Jewell has announced \$10 million for land restoration projects in 13 states in a strategy to reduce catastrophic wildfires.

Jewell said Friday making land more resilient to fire is essential for vulnerable species and for healthy rangelands, forests and watersheds.

"These projects will restore critical landscapes, which is essential for mitigating the impacts of fire and climate change," Jewell said in a statement. "These proj-

ects support our efforts to protect our nation's landscapes for this and future generations."

Eight of the states are in the West, with projects in conifer forests and sagebrush rangelands, where wildfires have been especially destructive in the last decade. Sagebrush also is habitat for sage grouse, an imperiled bird under consideration for federal protections.

To the east, Georgia, Florida, Virginia and North and South Carolina are receiving \$770,000 to help restore longleaf pine forests, home to the endangered

See FIRE/12A

