



Visiting ghosts

LIFESTYLES 1C



ENTERTAINMENT:
EO launches podcast with J.D. Kindle **3C**

OUTSIDE:
Your guide to hiking the Elkhorns **10C**

EAST OREGONIAN

AUGUST 1-2, 2015

139th Year, No. 207

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50



Eric Mortenson/EO Media Group

State Rep. Greg Smith of Heppner (left) and Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith (right) hand out free watermelons to Portlanders Friday during a renewed goodwill exchange of some of Eastern Oregon's best-known crops in Oregon's biggest city and export gateway.

Ambassadors of sweetness

Hermiston envoy hands out watermelons in Portland, shares seed-spitting techniques

By **ERIC MORTENSON**
AND **JADE McDOWELL**
EO Media Group

Jokes and seed spitting contest aside, there was a polite edge to Hermiston's renewed tradition of handing out free watermelons and potatoes in downtown Portland.

This time, Hermiston's growers and civic leaders stood in Portland's Pioneer Square as representatives of Eastern Oregon's biggest and fastest growing city and one of the state's agricultural powerhouses.

As a line formed for the giveaway Friday, Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann acknowledged the two cities vary greatly in scale – Portland has about 570,000 more people – but said they share issues such as public safety, livability, transportation and water.

"Those are all common things, regardless of size," he said.

Drotzmann said he hoped the event reminded Portland residents of Hermiston's agricultural prowess.

See **WATERMELON/10A**

Pot, potholes on Pendleton's plate

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

After a few months of silence, the Pendleton City Council will return to the hot topic of marijuana sales.

According to a memo prepared for Tuesday's city council meeting, police chief Stuart Roberts will discuss the new marijuana market regulations recently created by the Oregon Legislature and the actions the council will need to take to meet them.

One of the chief topics of discussion will be House Bill 3400, which gives cities and counties the authority to opt out of medical and recreational marijuana sales.

See **POT/10A**

More inside

Umatilla city council will also consider pot ordinances. 3A

Dems stand by Planned Parenthood

By **ZANE SPARLING**
Capital Bureau

In the midst of a controversy surrounding the release of undercover videos that critics say appear to show officials from Planned Parenthood casually discussing the sale of fetal tissue, Oregon's top Democrats remain united in support of the organization.

But that doesn't necessarily mean they want to talk about it.

The Center for Medical Progress, an anti-abortion group, has in recent weeks



Brown

released a series of undercover videos that it says show Planned Parenthood officials discussing the sale of organs and tissue harvested from aborted fetuses. Sale of such tissue for profit is prohibited by federal law, though researchers can reimburse providers for the cost of its collection and preservation. The videos also appear

to show officials discussing alternative abortion techniques to provide more intact organs.

Planned Parenthood says the videos are highly edited and present exchanges out of context. It claims the organization and its employees have done nothing wrong and that the videos are meant to promote an anti-abortion political agenda.

A spokesperson for Gov. Kate Brown issued a terse, one-sentence statement in

See **ABORTION/9A**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A pair passes a car while riding a motorcycle down Main Street on Thursday in Pendleton. ODOT data shows deadly motorcycle crashes are up almost 20 percent this year.

Fatal motorcycle crashes spiking this year

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Motorcycle crashes since June put one local man in a hospital and left three more dead. Oregon Department of Transportation data show deadly motorcycle crashes this year are up almost 20 percent.

•Mitchell Alexander Goodwin, 19, of Milton-Freewater is still recovering after an SUV crashed into him June 4 on Highway 11 in Milton-Freewater.

•William R. Brooks, 58, of Boardman, died July 2 when he crashed his 2002 Harley Davidson after trying to backtrack from Highway 730 to the intersection with Interstate 84.

•William S. Hill V, 65, of Irrigon, died July 22 in a motorcycle crash near Starbuck,

Washington, when he tried to pass another northbound vehicle on Highway 261.

•And Jason Anteau, 43, of Hermiston, died Friday in Pendleton at Westgate Drive and the Interstate 84 westbound off ramp when a pickup struck him while he was riding with two other motorcyclists.

Witness told police Anteau tried to slide out of the way of the pickup.

Motorcycle crashes in Oregon claimed 32 lives from Jan. 1 through July 23, the day before Anteau died, according to preliminary data from Oregon Department of Transportation. Tom Strandberg, ODOT spokesman in Eastern Oregon, said there were 27 fatalities through the same period in 2014, an increase of 18.5 percent in a year.

And this year already is deadlier than all of 2013, which had 32 fatalities. Preliminary figures peg the total number of deaths from motorcycle crashes for 2014 at 43.

Anteau is one of five motorcyclists who died this year in ODOT Region 5, which consists of Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Baker, Grant, Harney and Malheur counties. There were two deaths in the region by this time last year. Strandberg also said a rider also died in Wheeler County this year.

Fatal crashes of all vehicles are up as well through July 23. Strandberg said 165 people died in 151 crashes in 2014 during the period; this year, 238 have died in 220 crashes. Why, though, is

See **FATAL/10A**

Motorcycle fatalities

Motorcycle crash fatalities in Oregon. Not all casualties in the crashes were motorcyclists.
2015 — 32*
(through July 23)
2014 — 43*
2013 — 32
2012 — 50
2011 — 40
2010 — 38
2009 — 51
2008 — 46
2007 — 51
2006 — 44
2005 — 46

Source: Oregon Department of Transportation
* preliminary data

Wheat field fire burns barn near Athena

East Oregonian

ATHENA — Local firefighters battled a wheat field blaze Friday night near Athena that destroyed a barn off Zerba Road.

Crews for the East Umatilla Fire District, Pendleton, Pilot Rock, Stanfield and Hermiston were called out to the scene as the flames ripped up a draw.

As of press time, no residences were damaged, nor were there any known injuries.

This is a developing story, however. Please visit www.eastoregonian.com for updated information on the fire and the aftermath.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Firefighters and farmers watch an old barn as it is engulfed in flames Friday after a wheat field fire set the structure alight off Zerba Road northwest of Athena.

Drought shouldn't affect local government credit

SALEM (AP) — Moody's Investors Service says Gov. Kate Brown's drought declarations in 23 Oregon counties should help maintain credit ratings for local governments.

In its weekly credit outlook, Moody's says the drought can have a negative impact on credit ratings, particularly in agricultural communities. But the agency says Brown's declarations open up access to emergency water use permits and the temporary transfer of water rights.

Moody's says the various water management tools, along with a small amount of additional funding, should sufficiently mitigate the credit risk posed by low-water levels. Credit ratings in the affected counties are not expected to drop unless drought conditions worsen.

Nearly two-thirds of Oregon counties are now under a formal drought declaration, the most since 1992.

