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THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2015

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West Nile abuzz in Umatilla Co.

No human cases yet reported by mosquito control

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

West Nile virus has turned up unusually early in Umatilla County mosquitoes this summer, and health officials are on high alert for potential human cases. Randy Gerard, manager of the West Umatilla Mosquito Control District, said the first positive sample came July 21 on Bensel Road in Hermiston — the earliest the district has ever detected the disease. Two

more pools of infected mosquitoes were later found off Spearman Road just east of the city. So far, no residents have become sick, though the *Tri-City Herald* reports seven people have West Nile in nearby Benton and Franklin counties in southeast Washington. A fledgling gray owl also recently died of the virus at Blue Mountain Wildlife in Pendleton, which director Lynn Tompkins said was brought to the sanctuary from near Wallowa. A twin engine airplane sprayed for

mosquitoes July 30 over 15,000 acres in the Hermiston area, including portions of land near Diagonal Road, Hat Rock and Power City. Since spraying, Gerard said he has noted a 90 percent decrease in mosquitoes in those areas. West Nile is almost always spread through mosquitoes that have fed on infected birds, with crows, magpies and robins especially susceptible. No humans have tested positive anywhere in Oregon, according to the state Health Authority. Umatilla County hasn't had a person

See WEST NILE/8A

Countywide pot ban still in effect

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Marijuana businesses remain against the law in Umatilla County. The county board of commissioners voted 3-0 Wednesday in favor of continuing the moratorium on medicinal marijuana dispensaries and other pot-related businesses. The local law went into effect as soon as the board adopted it.

The vote came during a public hearing and supported the recommendation from the county's marijuana study committee, which also wanted the county board to adopt new land use regulations. The board also plans to do that.

Commissioner and board chair George Murdock said no one spoke against the moratorium, which the board first implemented in April 2014. That shut down the two medicinal pot dispensaries that were operating in the county's jurisdiction.

Murdock also shared a statement he presented during the hearing.

In spite of encouragement from the media and some local citizens to approve marijuana sales, Murdock said, the oath of office commissioners take binds them to uphold state and federal laws, and commissioners represent the interests of the county's voters.

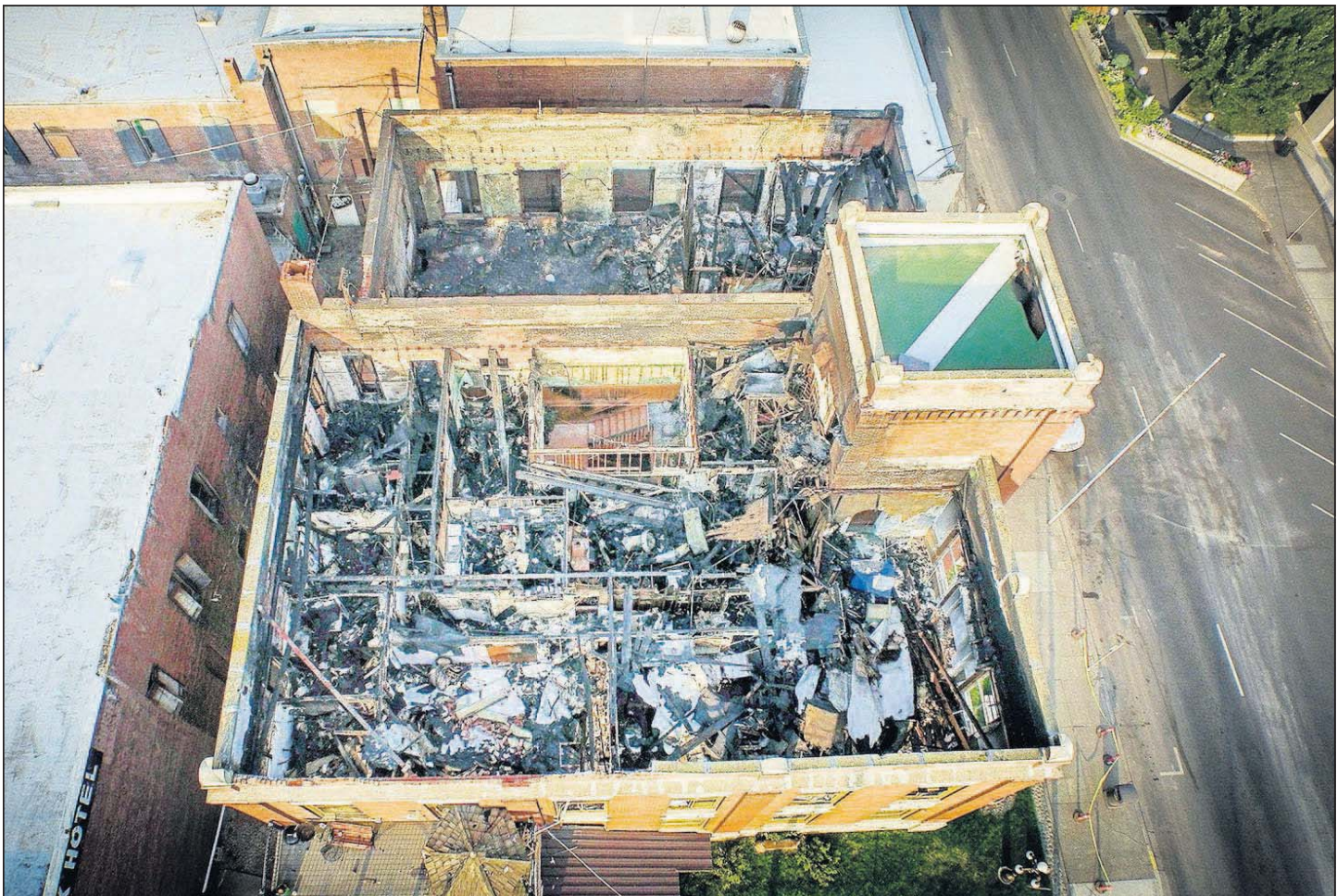
"Roughly 70 percent of those voters indicated

See MARIJUANA/8A

More inside

Residents speak in favor of dispensaries to Umatilla city council. Page 3A

PENDLETON



Unmanned aerial photography by Ron Cooper

The old Pendleton City Hall was gutted by fire on July 21, but owner Jose Quezada may restore the building.

Old city hall could see new restoration

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

The old Pendleton city hall has stood for more than 100 years at 34 S.E. Dorion Ave., and it could stand a few more, despite a July 21 explosion that scarred the building. Although its future is still tenuous, Marco Quezada, the son of owner Jose Quezada, said the family is looking into the possibility of restoring the building.

Some of the bricks are damaged, all the windows are shattered and the roof is gone — but the actual structure is in relatively good condition.

Pendleton building official John Lindstrom said he evaluated the structure and concluded it was sound in the short-term.

"Barring any catastrophic acts of nature, it's not going anywhere," he said.

After the Quezadas hired their own engineer to do a longer term evaluation, the engineer told them they could restore

"Barring any catastrophic acts of nature, it's not going anywhere."

— **John Lindstrom,**
Pendleton building official

the former city hall.

In addition to a solid structure, the building contains only a small amount of asbestos according to an email from Oregon Department of Environmental Quality air quality specialist Tom Hack to the city.

The old city hall was damaged in an explosion caused by homemade fireworks, killing Eduardo Quezada, the son of Jose and the brother of Marco.

Marco Quezada said funding is the primary obstacle to a restoration.

At a façade committee meeting Wednesday, permit technician Julie Chase

said the Quezadas picked up a façade grant application.

The façade restoration program is run by the Pendleton Development Commission and can grant up to 40 percent of the cost of façade restoration for a commercial building between S.E. Sixth Street and S.W. Sixth Street.

Quezada said his family intends to sit down with the city soon and discuss what sort of funding they would have access to.

"We're at the mercy of the city," he said.

In the meantime, the Quezadas have spent the week clearing debris from the building. Local volunteers have organized a cleanup day Saturday at 8 a.m. to help expedite the process.

Once the debris is cleared, Quezada said he will start requesting estimates for the restoration cost.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

College credit costs triple for high schoolers

By **SEAN HART**
East Oregonian

In the upcoming school year, the cost of college credits for local high school students will more than triple.

Blue Mountain Community College Vice President of Instruction Jim Whittaker said the school is raising the price from \$10 to \$31 per credit because of the loss of state funding.

To help establish Eastern Promise, Whittaker said temporary funding was provided to the collaboration between Eastern Oregon University, Treasure Valley Community College, the InterMountain Education Service District and school districts in Eastern Oregon. He said college officials knew the funding would eventually be discontinued but were unaware it would happen this year until the conclusion of the legislative session.

Even with the increase, the cost will be substantially less than the \$94 per credit charged for classes at the college. Whittaker said the new price was based on his calculations that it costs BMCC about one-third as much to administer the credits for classes taught at high

See COLLEGE/8A

Judge turns tragedy into testimony

Work in suicide prevention leads to national honor

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Judge Cris Patnode wears a black robe. She can be tough and gritty and resolute.

But those who know the Gilliam County Justice of the Peace and municipal judge in Arlington and Condon say Patnode also has kindness in her veins. The quality isn't a liability for a judge, but rather an asset, according to the National Judges Association. It recently named Patnode as the group's

national non-attorney judge of the year, partly because of her compassion in and out of court.

Patnode attributes much of her heightened empathy to her daughter's suicide in 2007, which knocked her off center and increased her awareness of the struggles of others.

On the day of the NJA banquet Aug. 24 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Patnode had been thinking about her daughter Devin. Patnode had come home that horrible day to

See JUDGE/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Gilliam County Justice of the Peace and municipal court judge Cris Patnode has been named the national non-attorney judge of the year by the National Association of Judges.



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