



FREEMAN TAKING THE LEAD
DUCKS FOOTBALL/1B



Happy Canyon prepares for 100th celebration **REGION/3A**

EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2015

139th Year, No. 220 WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD One dollar

Fire blazes on as governor activates National Guard

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

With a loud whoosh and blast of heat, flames shot high into the branches of several pine trees on a steep hillside in the heart of the Canyon Creek Complex Wednesday.

It has been a week since lightning touched off the nation's highest-priority wildfire, and crews still have plenty of work cut out for them on the front lines.

Nearly 650 firefighters have

come from around the country to battle the inferno south of John Day. Incident commanders figure they would have had more than 1,500 personnel on site, if not for the multitude of other fires raging across Oregon and the entire western U.S., placing an enormous strain on resources.

The Canyon Creek Complex is now 48,201 acres and remains completely uncontained. Another bout of high winds is in the forecast Friday, which should keep flames spreading quickly.

More inside

Pet allies seek to help four-legged fire victims
REGION 3A

Gov. Kate Brown arrived to fire camp Wednesday at the Grant County Fairgrounds, where she announced she activated the Oregon National Guard to assist in firefighting efforts. An initial wave

See **FIRE/8A**



Thomas Boyd/The Oregonian via AP

Gov. Kate Brown visits firefighters, and other government agencies that are working to contain the Canyon Creek Complex fire, Wednesday.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A veteran who continues to fight

Hermiston World War II veteran Willard "Bill" Runion has been named a 2015 Oregon Citizen of the Year by the U.S. Deputy Sheriff's Association. Runion served in the U.S. Army and was involved in the Pacific theater and the occupation of Japan. For the full story see Page 8A

Umatilla County's network under the microscope

Concerns about possible connectivity problems with emergency dispatch center

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Umatilla County will shell out more than \$5,000 for an assessment of its computer network. This is the county's latest move to find out what is causing problems in its communications and emergency dispatch center.

The center, under the roof

of the sheriff's office, has experienced dispatch failures both small and significant since upgrading in 2014 to software from Sun Ridge Systems. Some of the problems have been from human error, some from software glitches, and some, according to Sun Ridge and local police officials, from the county's network connection.

Dan Lonai, head of the

county's computer information systems, stated in a memo to the board of commissioners that concerns regarding the dispatch system prompted him to get approval to hire a consulting firm to evaluate the county's network.

Cerium Networks Inc. has headquarters in Spokane, but according to Lonai it was the only firm with a nearby office in the Tri-Cities. Cerium agreed to do the work for \$5,240. The county board approved that 3-0. County counsel Doug

Olsen said the assessment will span the whole of the county's network and not just dispatch. The statement of work from Cerium stated it would conduct a comprehensive analysis of network performance and stability and create "detailed reports that show what is working, what is not, and what opportunities exist to improve operations."

The work statement, though, did not say how long this will

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BMCC sells bonds at a premium

Unstable international scene, good bond rating lead to success

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Timing is everything.

The adage certainly proved true for Blue Mountain Community College, which recently sold capital construction bonds at a premium. After Umatilla and Morrow County voters in May authorized the college to sell \$23 million in bonds, the college reaped an extra \$1.8 million.

Celeste Insko, BMCC's financial controller and Vice President of Finance & Business Operations, partially attributed the success of the bond offering to an unstable international financial scene.

"Greece was pretty uncertain as well as China," Insko said. "We sold our bonds at just the right time — there was a wrinkle of uncertainty."

That and a favorable AA- rating from S&P accounted for heightened demand for the offering, Insko said. The college could have sold \$30 million in bonds if authorized by voters for that amount.

"Investors were willing to pay a premium to get those bonds," Insko said.

"We are very thankful," said BMCC President Camille Preus.

Preus cautioned, however, that the extra \$1.8 million won't likely translate into extra bells and whistles for construction and infrastructure improvement projects in Boardman,

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— Celeste Insko, BMCC's financial controller



Contributed photo by Debbi Herrera

Florence "Cricket" Miller

HERMISTON

Memorial scholarship created in honor of HHS graduate

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

After being paralyzed in a bus crash as a teen, Florence "Cricket" Miller became a symbol of hope for her high school class.

She stayed in touch with class of 1980 for the next three decades, serving as a constant reminder that it is possible to get through life's hardest trials with a smile.

Miller died in July, and the Hermiston class of 1980 is starting a scholarship in her honor for students who have maintained a positive attitude through hardship.

"Whenever you thought you had

problems, you never had it as bad as her, but you would never hear her complain," classmate Debbie Herrera said. "You would never think she was bitter about being in a wheelchair since she was 16 years old."

Herrera, along with other classmates putting together a memorial and scholarship drive in Miller's memory, repeatedly used the word "inspirational" to describe their former schoolmate.

Kevin Hamblin didn't know Miller well before the crash that took her ability to walk, but fate put the cheerleader and the wrestler next to each other on a bus heading back from a wrestling meet in Bend on January 13, 1979.

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