

HOME: 7,000 new homes have received an Energy Performance Score since 2009

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makes it move. That's how it travels. So when you have heat that's up in the air, it's more likely to get outside the house, and that's why we have the different barriers to keep the heat inside."

The students also learned about Energy Trust's scoring system that rates the energy consumption and carbon footprint of a newly constructed home. The energy score — which varies from 0 to 200 — is based on the amount of energy used each year. The lower the score, the more efficient the building. The current home's preliminary score was 80, compared to 101 for the same residence built only to required code standards rather than using energy-efficient techniques. Because the home uses less energy, the eventual homeowners will pay less in utility bills.

The students said energy efficiency is a significant aspect of modern homebuilding.

"I think it's very important," Meade said. "I think many people here are wanting to save money."

"And it helps our environment," Carr added. "Not only is it going to keep costs down for the people that live here, but it's going to completely reduce the carbon footprint that they leave, which is great because with global warming and all the problems we are having currently, I can't imagine how much it would help if everybody had a score of 80."

Berger said the program's homes feature better furnaces, air conditioners, heat pumps, insulation and seals, as well as more efficient appliances. Although the process is just starting to catch on in this region, he



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Mike Lillesand, with Energy Trust of Oregon out of Portland, talks about an energy performance score with high school students Wednesday at the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilders Program in Hermiston.

said it will continue to grow.

"It has not been as big of a deal in Eastern Oregon, but as energy costs go up with natural gas or with electricity, it's going to be more and more of an issue," he said. "It's a great selling point, and we think as more and more people are educated about energy efficiency it's going to be an even bigger selling point."

Susan Badger-Jones, Energy Trust's Eastern Oregon outreach manager, said 7,000 new Oregon homes have received an Energy Performance Score since the program began in 2009. To receive the score, the homes are designed to be at least 10 percent more efficient than required by code, she said, and the performance of 11 different systems from duct sealing to heat pumps must be verified by a third party. Energy Trust provides early design assistance, performance testing at various stages of the project and the final official test and score, she said.

Through its services and energy solutions, as well as cash incentives for energy efficiency, Badger-Jones said Energy Trust saved its 1.5 million Oregon customer

more than \$1.9 billion in energy costs between 2002 and 2014. The benefits, however, are even greater, she said.

"Because it does involve air sealing particularly and better insulation, you also get a house that's more comfortable," she said. "The dust doesn't come in because it's more sealed up. The temperature doesn't fluctuate because the insulation and the special attention to the shell of the house is keeping the cool air in in the summer and keeping the warm air in in the winter."

Further, she said, Oregon's 10-year energy plan states new demand should be met by increased efficiency rather than expanded power sources. She said the student homebuilders were helping achieve that goal.

"If you can do the same things just as well with less energy, then there is more energy to go around," she said. "Instead of building a new power plant, which is very expensive, you can supply new customers with their power needs out of the efficiency of existing customers, and it keeps the price of energy down for everyone."

Volkswagen CEO steps down

BERLIN (AP) — Volkswagen CEO Martin Winterkorn resigned Wednesday, days after admitting that the world's top-selling carmaker had rigged diesel emissions to pass U.S. tests during his tenure.

No replacement was announced, and VW still has no easy exit from a scandal that has suddenly dented a reputation for trustworthiness that took decades to build. The smog-test trickery has wiped out billions in VW's market value and raised the specter of criminal investigations and billions more in fines.

Winterkorn took responsibility for the "irregularities" found by U.S. inspectors in VW's diesel engines, but

insisted he had personally done nothing wrong.

"I am doing this in the interests of the company even though I am not aware of any wrongdoing on my part," his statement said. "Volkswagen needs a fresh start ... I am clearing the way for this fresh start with my resignation."

Winterkorn, 68, resigned following a crisis meeting of the Volkswagen supervisory board's executive committee. Its acting chairman, Berthold Huber, said company directors are "resolved to embark with determination on a credible new beginning."

Huber said a successor will be discussed at a board meeting on Friday that was originally intended to approve extending Winter-

korn's contract through 2018.

VW reversed its market slide, closing up 6.9 percent at 118.90 euros. But VW's share price has a long way to go to recoup this week's losses.

Around \$28 billion was wiped out in the first two days of trading after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency revealed that VW has been violating the Clean Air Act.

Winterkorn, VW's boss since 2007, had come under intense pressure since the EPA's disclosure Friday that stealth software makes VW's 2009-2015 model cars powered by 2.0-liter diesel engines run cleaner during emissions tests than in actual driving.

COLLEGE: Financial barriers are a large concern for first-generation college students

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to better educate parents about the benefits of higher education and how to reach their college planning goals, Parker said.

Hermiston elementary students received folders, bookmarks, pencils and pens as a reminder about college savings earlier this year, and now OCSF officials will provide informative sessions and answer questions during presentations for their parents.

The presentations will take place in English from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Sept. 29 at both Sandstone Middle School and Armand Larive Middle School, followed by Spanish versions from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Free pizza will be served at the events, and although the Be College Ready program targets elementary students, the information is valuable for any level of students saving for college.

Parker said many people are not aware of the OCSF tax benefits. Earnings from the savings plan are tax free at the state and federal level,

he said, and the state also offers a tax deduction each year deposits are made.

Parker said parents have three primary options to help their children avoid student debt: savings, scholarships and current income.

"The more you can put in a plan over time, the less you're going to have to borrow or the less you're going to have to shell out as you're working," he said. "Saving for college is really the way to offset those costs."

Hermiston School District Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives Michelle Jensen said the district is excited to participate in the program that she believes will have a significant impact on college attendance.

Jensen said financial barriers are a large concern for first-generation college students. While working on her Ph.D. dissertation, she said she presented information with different themes about going to college to young students.

"The day that I presented a lesson about finances and

college was the day that I saw a significant increase in the way that students felt about themselves going to college," she said. "The bottom line is, as we teach students about how to pay for college, they believe they can go."

Many students have often decided whether or not to attend college by the seventh grade, Jensen said, and a major factor in that decision is the financial ability to pay. She said one of the best aspects of the Be College Ready program was that it targeted not only the students but also the parents with information about the benefits of saving when the students are young.

"When parents are saving for college, the students know they have their family's support to go to college," she said. "We highly suspect this is going to change our community toward being a more college-going community."

For more information about the Oregon College Savings Plan, visit oregon-collegesavings.com or call 866-772-8464.

EVIDENCE: No indication Larson falsified reports

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Larsen on paid leave earlier this month as she is being investigated for the theft of drugs from the office. She worked at the agency's crime labs in Pendleton and Ontario before Bend.

The *Bulletin* newspaper in Bend reported Crook County District Attorney Daina Vitols identified Larsen.

Nelson and Primus during separate phone interviews explained that evidence presented by someone under criminal investigation presents prosecutors with a daunting challenge. The person might invoke their constitutional right not to self-incriminate and thus not say much. And a defense attorney would use the fact the person was the target of

the investigation to question their honesty and create doubt in the mind of a jury.

So far, though, they said that defense attorneys are not beating down their doors demanding they drop cases or give new trials. Nelson said stealing narcotics is a crime, but nothing indicates Larson falsified reports or evidence. He said he still has confidence in her reports.

Still, to counter concerns, Nelson said the crime lab is retesting evidence in open cases.

State police reported Friday a former forensic analyst is also under investigation for misconduct. That analyst worked in the Central Point lab and in 2005 testified about physical evidence in the Douglas County prosecution of Samuel Adam Lawson, who was convicted

of murder.

The Oregon Supreme Court in 2012 overturned the case due to problems with the eyewitness testimony of the victim's wife. A new trial was ordered.

The analyst under investigation retired in November 2013. The following month, state investigators reviewed records for the trial — which never went forward — and found "potentially exculpatory information related to the Lawson case and some documents that could potentially cast doubt on the analyst's future testimony."

Exculpatory evidence can be used to exonerate the defendant. State police reported in April 2014 that it notified 20 of Oregon's 36 district attorney's offices about "issues surrounding the former employee."

CHINA: Agreed to buy 300 jets from Boeing

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will be no driving force; without opening up, there will be no progress. ... There is good news and I believe there will be more good news in the future."

China will "stand firm" to protect intellectual property rights, he added.

Xi attributed the Chinese economy's recent slowdown to three factors — world economic problems, proactive Chinese efforts at regulation and "protracted structural problems" in China.

A big item of concern for the American CEOs is a treaty that would provide a framework for broader investment in the economy of each nation.

All of the American CEOs participating in the forum, organized by the Paulson Institute, signed a letter to Xi and U.S. President Barack Obama urging them to support such a treaty, and they heard encouraging words from Xi on the topic Wednesday.

"Once concluded, the treaty will further ease market access and put in place more open and transparent market rules," he said.

Bilateral investment treaties provide rules for

companies doing business in other countries. The agreements can help ensure the rights of foreign investors are protected and that foreign companies operate on a level playing field with domestic ones.

An agreement with China could open up more of that nation's massive market to American companies, provide clearer rules for Chinese investment in the U.S., and create jobs in both countries, supporters say.

"The reason that the U.S. and China have a nearly \$600 billion trading relationship, large amounts of U.S. investment in China, and increasing amounts of Chinese direct investment here, is because there are many areas where our national and business interests align," Paulson told Xi at the forum, according to a copy of his remarks.

Representatives from Twitter, Facebook and Google were notably missing from the event. China blocks those companies' websites.

Earlier Wednesday it was announced that Chinese companies have agreed to buy 300 jets from Boeing.

In addition, state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China signed a cooperation agreement with the aerospace giant to build

a 737 aircraft assembly center in China. That move angered Boeing's unions in Washington state, which fear a loss of U.S. jobs.

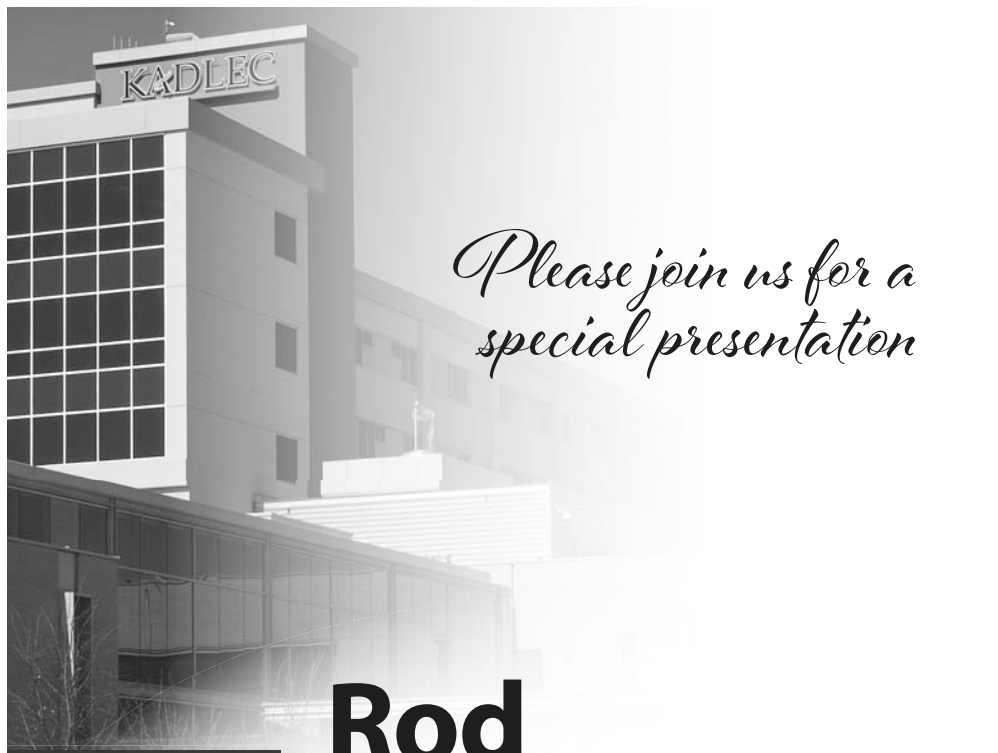
Xi arrived in Seattle on Tuesday for a three-day visit before he heads to the White House later this week.

In the speech Tuesday, Xi told dignitaries such as former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson and Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker that reaching agreements to ensure robust international trade was a priority.

Xi also said China and the U.S. could work together to address cybercrimes, a problem that has sparked mutual tension. He said China was a staunch defender of cybersecurity and also had been a victim of hacking.

Acknowledging that the countries don't always see eye to eye, Xi said China is ready to set up a joint effort to fight cybercrimes. American officials say Chinese hacking is an epidemic.

A meeting Tuesday with governors from five U.S. states — including Oregon governor Kate Brown — and local Chinese officials produced a deal to work on clean energy.



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The Future of Healthcare Systems



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Please RSVP by September 29

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