



61/39



MUSTANGS SURGE INTO SEMIFINALS
FOOTBALL/1B



HUNTER CHARGED IN WOLF SHOOTING
NORTHWEST/9A

EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2015

140th Year, No. 23

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Syphilis spikes in state

Gonorrhea epidemic in Umatilla County

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

On a graph, the spike in Oregon syphilis cases looks like a piece of steep roller coaster track climbing into the sky.

Oregon health officials say that the number of cases increased by 1,500 percent since 2007 — from 30 to 450 so far in 2015.

Syphilis is a bacterial disease spread mostly by sexual activity. Men make up 90 percent of the cases. Gay and bisexual men are the biggest demographic.

So far, the state trend hasn't touched Umatilla County — the last time the county had a case of syphilis was 2013 — but a rise in syphilis may be on its way. Gonorrhea is epidemic here. The county had 63 cases this year, up from 48 in 2014, 21 in 2013 and four in 2012.

"It's increasing exponentially," said Umatilla County Public Health Nursing Supervisor Sharon Waldern.

The upswing in gonorrhea likely means a rise in the even-more-dangerous syphilis is right around the corner, Waldern said.

"It's a pattern we've seen at the state level and in other counties," Waldern said. "They saw a sharp increase in gonorrhea infections initially followed by a dramatic increase in syphilis."

The two STDs share risk groups, which include men who have sex with other men, illicit drug users, people with HIV and people with multiple sexual partners. Differences in testing might explain the lag.

"The gonorrhea/chlamydia test is an easy, fairly inexpensive test," Waldern said. "Syphilis testing costs more and requires a blood draw and interpretation of the results."

Dr. Sean Schafer, a medical epidemiologist with the Oregon Public Health Division, is worried about the statewide jump in syphilis.

"It's huge," Schafer said. "We're alarmed and we would really like to see more people at risk get screened."

The numbers have ebbed and flowed over the years,

See **SYPHILIS/10A**

WORLD REACTS

As France turns firepower on Syria in wake of terrorist attack, world sends its love to Paris and debates refugee role



AP Photo/Amr Nabil

A French soldier stands alert at the Eiffel Tower which remained closed on the first of three days of national mourning in Paris on Sunday. Thousands of French troops deployed around Paris on Sunday and tourist sites stood shuttered in one of the most visited cities on Earth while investigators questioned the relatives of a suspected suicide bomber involved in the country's deadliest violence since World War II.

France identifies top attack figure, seeks unity to bomb Islamic State

By **GREG KELLER** and **RAF CASERT**
Associated Press

PARIS — France identified a 27-year-old Belgian who once boasted about killing "infidels" and fought for the Islamic State group in Syria as the mastermind of the Paris attacks, and President Francois Hollande vowed Monday to forge a united coalition capable of defeating the jihadists at home and abroad.

Addressing lawmakers after France observed a minute of silence honoring the 129 people killed and 350 wounded, Hollande said the victims came from at least 19 nations, and the international community, led by the United States and Russia, must overcome their deep-seated divisions over Syria to destroy Islamic State on its home turf.



Militant video via AP

Abdelhamid Abaaoud is the suspected mastermind of the Paris attacks was also linked to thwarted train and church attacks, according to French officials.

"Friday's acts of war were decided and planned in Syria. They were organized in Belgium and perpetrated on our soil with French complicity with one

See **FRANCE/10A**

More inside

- Stadium massacre averted: Quick thinking and strong security at soccer stadium may have saved hundreds of lives. **Page 8A**
- Love for Paris: As world mourns Paris, many in Middle East see double-standard. **Page 8A**
- Stay the course: Obama defends current approach to ISIS, saying patience will pay off. **Page 8A**
- Fearing fear: Terrorism doesn't have power to destroy civilization. **Page 4A**

Brown declines to take position on accepting Syrian refugees

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown has rejected calls by Republicans to take a position on whether Oregon should accept more refugees after reports that at least one of the suspects in the Paris attacks carried a Syrian passport.

"The governor's response stands," said Melissa Navas, a spokesperson for the governor. "I can't tell you what will happen tomorrow or a week from now."

Several Republican governors have declared they will block more Syrian refugees from settling in their states following attacks, though federal law suggests they have no power to do so.

See **REFUGEES/10A**



New cell tower in Pendleton

Construction crews erected a cell phone tower for U.S. Cellular at Southwest 10th Street and Dorion Avenue over the weekend. Tim Polumsky, a network field engineer for the Chicago-based company, estimated the height of the tower at 75 feet. He said the tower was built to provide better cell service for U.S. Cellular customers in Pendleton, although it isn't operational yet. The tower is located between Dave's Chevron and Kwong's Cafe.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

PENDLETON

Surprise gift van moves disabled toddler's mom

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Thanks to the kindness of others, Courtney Bissinger has a new ride.

She accepted the keys to the 1998 Dodge Caravan Thursday night during a benefit dinner at Cadillac Jack's. The van has a side loader and electronic ramp that will allow the Pendleton mom to more easily transport her two-year-old daughter, Ember, to medical appointments.

Ember was born with a brain condition that affects her vision, hearing and mobility. She recently got her first wheelchair.

As dozens of diners chowed down Thursday on ribs and potato salad, Bissinger looked around the interior of Cadillac Jack's in wonderment as she held her giggling toddler. Many of the people in the room were unfamiliar.

"To see complete strangers want to pitch in and help. ..." said



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Courtney Bissinger and her daughter, Ember, 2, share a moment this week shortly after receiving a van which will help her transport Ember in her wheelchair.

the single mother. "It is very, very touching."

Life hasn't been easy. When Ember emerged from the womb, doctors noticed the baby's head was smaller than normal. Doctors ordered a CT scan and then an MRI. Bissinger and her mother waited anxiously for the results.

"We were freaking out but trying to stay hopeful," Bissinger

See **VAN/10A**

D & B SUPPLY

ONE DAY SALE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2015

20% OFF CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR
INCLUDING CLEARANCE ITEMS

10% OFF EVERYTHING ELSE
IN THE STORE

Some Exclusions Apply • Limited to Stock on Hand

