

EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015

140th Year, No. 40

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



AP Photo/Steve Dipaola

Woman killed by fallen tree
A worker assesses damage from a large fir tree that fell on a house overnight and killed an elderly woman in Portland Wednesday. For more on weather in the Northwest see page 2A.

Legislature to consider pulling plug on DOE

Overhauling agency may be only way to save it

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Democratic leaders in the Oregon Legislature announced Wednesday afternoon they will form a committee in 2016 to consider whether to overhaul or eliminate the state Department of Energy.

State Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, issued a joint statement calling for a “full and open Legislative overhaul” of the agency. The lawmakers said they will direct the committee to issue recommendations and legislation for the full Legislature to take up in 2017.

“It’s time for the Legislature to bring the problems at the Department of Energy into full focus and determine how we can fix them once and for all,” Kotek said in a written statement.

Courtney went even further, in his written statement

Wednesday afternoon.

“Session after session we have had to address problems at the Oregon Department of Energy,” Courtney said. “The (business energy tax credit) program has gotten the most attention, but it’s been more than just the BETC. We need to get to the bottom of the issues at ODOE. Is it the structure? Is it the purpose? Is it the personnel? Is it time for the Department of Energy to go away?”

Michael Kaplan, director of

See DOE/8A

PENDLETON

Questions remain in man’s death

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Neil Basil Schulte’s last days took him from Austin, Texas, to Pendleton. And while Oregon State Police Sgt. Tom Spicknall said his death does not appear suspicious, how the 73-year-old man ended up on the side of Interstate 84 remains a mystery.

A search of records available online shows Schulte was a patent attorney and owned a home in Austin. Spicknall said Schulte was driving a 2001 Chevrolet pickup from Texas to another home in Norldland, Washington, on an island off the Olympic Peninsula.

Spicknall said a trooper on Dec. 2 found that pickup near the “Cattle Drive” sculpture located near the on-ramp for Interstate 84 and Southgate. Police tagged the Chevrolet pickup as abandoned and had it towed the following day.

Six days later, on Tuesday morning, an employee of Oxford Suites spotted a body on the interstate side of the fence behind Cummins Northwest, 223 S.W. 23rd St., according to Pendleton police records.

Schulte’s body was a couple hundred yards from where police found his pickup days prior.

During that time, National Weather Service records show Dec. 1 had a high temperature of 25 and a nighttime low of 19, and Dec. 2 had a high of 30 and low of 22. The temperature didn’t climb above freezing until Dec. 4.

Sgt. Dwight Johnson heads up search and rescue for the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office. He said he did not know the circumstances of Schulte’s death, but 20 degree temperatures are cold enough to induce hypothermia, depending on length of exposure, clothing type and moisture levels.

Spicknall also said state police are planning on releasing more information as soon as possible.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

World War II veteran William Jones, at his home Wednesday in Hermiston, holds a photograph of himself and a letter he sent home while he was serving in the Army Air Force in Italy during WWII.

EARNING HONOR

Niece trying to restore medals to Hermiston WWII veteran

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

It has been 70 years since William Jones served in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II, but he still doesn’t have some of the medals promised in his discharge papers.

His niece is trying to fix that.

“He deserves it because he served our country and he earned them,” said Emily Mellick of Hermiston.

After Jones, 92, moved in with her last year, Mellick said she began discussing his military service with him and decided to pursue the medals, which according to his honorable discharge should include a service medal, a good conduct medal and a distinguished service citation.

She’s still working on it, but on Wednesday she did present him with an official transcript of a speech Senator Ron Wyden gave in October, honoring the World War II veterans of Umatilla County.

It takes a while to get Jones talking about his service, but as he warms up to the topic the details trickle out. He was drafted in March 1943 at the age of 19 and sent to an airbase in southern Italy that had been captured by the Allies. There he was an ordnance worker,

See MEDALS/8A

Wallowa Lake property given to local trust

By STEVE TOOL
Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Land Trust took another step in protecting the moraines of Wallowa Lake from development with a recent donation of nine acres of prime lakefront property that includes 1,500 feet of shoreline.

Brothers Fred, Frank and Steve Kimball of Washington donated the property, and the land trust took possession of the land Nov. 23.

The Kimball brothers inherited the property from their parents and didn’t want to see the land divided up or developed.

“This property was our parents’ dream.

See LAKE/8A



Steve Tool/Chieftain

Wallowa Land Trust Conservation Director Julia Lakes stands on the Wallowa Lake shoreline.

Fall back, spring forward could be thing of the past

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

Medford resident David Miles grumbles every year about having to turn his clocks forward in the spring and back again in the fall.

This year, Miles decided to respond differently by launching a ballot initiative Nov. 12 to end daylight-saving time in Oregon.

“I complain almost every time there is a time change and do nothing about it, and I didn’t want to be that guy anymore,” he said.

A month later, Miles has 20 volunteers in 15 Oregon towns and cities who have

gathered nearly 1,000 signatures — a first step toward placing an initiative on the ballot. He said he expects to hit the 1,000-signature mark by mid-December.

Once the volunteers pass that hurdle, they’ll need to round up a total of 117,578 signatures to send the measure to voters in November.

The proposal abolishes daylight-saving in 2018 and allows voters in individual counties to opt out through an election. Miles added that provision with Malheur County in mind. That county already follows Mountain

See TIME/8A

