

EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2015

140th Year, No. 53

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

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HERMISTON

Senior center to move downtown

City council votes to build facility behind public library

East Oregonian

Hermiston’s new senior center will be located downtown after the city council voted Monday night to change its preferred location.

The council had originally voted to locate the planned \$2 million Harkenrider Center on Northeast Fourth Street behind Wal-Mart. But when the owners of the property declined a \$200,000 offer, city staff asked the council to approve Plan B to build the center behind the Hermiston Public Library.

The site would span the parking lot behind the library, the current stretch of Ridgeway Avenue that loops around behind the library, as well as a one-acre parcel of Hermiston School District property where Armand Larive Middle School once stood.

Perry Hawkins, a senior center volunteer who serves on the advisory board for the project, took the city to task during the public testimony portion of Monday’s meeting.

Hawkins accused the city of taking over the project and forcing the seniors to accept the building layout, location and Harkenrider name. He said the Ridgeway site wouldn’t allow for expansion and that the process had been hijacked by downtown businesses. He also accused Mayor David Drotzmann of ignoring input from the seniors during a meeting about the move.

Drotzmann denied the accusation, saying the message he received from the seniors was that the Harkenrider name was acceptable.

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Youth holds little power in Legislature

Survey shows only 3 percent of seats held by millennials

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

In the state where “young people go to retire” — as depicted in IFC’s comedy “Portlandia” — baby boomers hold the power.

Millennials, ages 18-34, represent only 3 percent of seats in the Oregon Legislature, while they make up 29 percent of the voting-eligible population, according to a survey by Pew Charitable Trusts’ Stateline and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Baby boomers, ages 51-69, make up less than one-third of Oregon’s potential voters yet hold more than half of legislative seats.

The survey found a similar disparity in state legislatures around the nation.

The imbalance might be “tilting policymaking toward the interests of seniors and away from the country’s largest living generation: millennials,” wrote Stateline’s Rebecca Beitsch.

Oregon’s handful of legislators who are 35 and younger think the political tilt toward seniors is a reality.

“Young people simply don’t vote as frequently as senior citizens, and that is what skews political outcomes far more than the age of legislators,” said Rep. Brent Barton, a 35-year-old Democrat from Oregon City.

Climate change and higher education are “two examples of issues where seniors and millennials weigh issues differently,” Barton said. “I am certain that climate change and higher education would receive more policy attention if young people voted more.”

At age 30, Rep. Dallas Heard, R-Roseburg, is the youngest legislator serving in Salem.

Heard sought election after struggling with state regulations to kick off his landscape consulting business in Douglas County. He said policymakers often enact regulations that make it harder for young people to start businesses and careers.

“The older generation is already in place in their businesses or endeavors so when they vote for more policy that hinders young people, they don’t understand that regulation is getting so thick and heavy and onerous that it is shutting down my generation and people younger than me from even getting started,” Heard said.

Millennials also are at a stage in life when they might be establishing careers, paying off student debt and raising children.

Barton’s life might epitomize some of the challenges millennials face in

See LEGISLATURE/10A



The Hermiston Parks and Recreation Department cleared brush and trees from a 100-yard section along the shoreline of the Umatilla River at the Riverfront Park in Hermiston.

Riverfront gets river view

Area could eventually become ‘water trail’

*By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian*

One of Hermiston’s most popular parks now has a football field-sized clearing to the Umatilla River.

The city Parks and Recreation Department recently mowed down about 100 yards of brush and vegetation along the stream bank at Riverfront Park to provide visitors with better views and access to the water.

Riverfront Park is located just upriver from the Bureau of Reclamation’s Oxbow property, where local and tribal groups are planning long-term rehabilitation of plant life to benefit native fish runs.

Hermiston Parks and Recreation Director Larry Fetter said they hired work crews from Two Rivers Correctional Institution to cut dense brush at Riverfront Park over the summer. The prisoners used hand tools to cut down reeds, weeds and bushes that previously blocked park-goers’ views and access to the river, Fetter said. No work was done in-stream.

Fetter described the project as routine maintenance, saying open views and river recreation are part of the park’s original design. But migrating salmon and steelhead also depend on healthy riparian habitat to provide shade and prevent erosion into the river.

“We’ve tried to strike a balance between the wildlife interests and the recreation interests,” Fetter

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“Part of the enjoyment of the park is to have a view of the water. We want people to enjoy this public facility.”

— Larry Fetter, Hermiston Parks and Recreation director

New prosecutor finds cowboy vibe a good fit

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian



Jameson Hayes moved to Pendleton on July 1 and started right up as the newest Umatilla County deputy district attorney.

Getting here, though, he said, was a bit of a winding road.

Hayes, 32, is married and father to a boy, 4, and a girl, 6. He hails from Rexburg, Idaho, and grew up in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At 19, like other young men in the church, he went on a two-year mission. His was in Hong Kong, where he learned Chinese. Afterward he attended Brigham Young University and earned a degree in political science. Hayes said he planned to meld his Chinese language ability and his educational background with a job in law.

So off he went to the University of Idaho College of Law, and graduated in 2012 with a degree.

“When I went to law school, my whole focus was on international law, business law,” he said. “I just didn’t want to be in the courtroom.”

But the Great Recession still rolled along, and finding a job was tough. He worked in Utah for a year in a field not related to law, he said, until he knew it was time for a change.

“I promised my wife we’d end up in Oregon at some point,” he said. “So I

See NEIGHBOR/10A



Deputy district attorney Jameson Hayes moved to the Pendleton area six months ago and was recently joined by his wife and two children.

