



EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016

140th Year, No. 83

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

PENDLETON



John Turner

Turner files for mayor

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

John Turner will once again try to win over Pendleton voters, this time as a candidate for mayor.

The former Blue Mountain Community College president on Tuesday became the first to file for Pendleton's mayoral race.

"The citizens of Pendleton have a bright future and I want to help lead the efforts to achieve our full potential," he said in an announcement of his candidacy.

Turner, 62, has experience in Umatilla County's economic and education sectors.

He currently serves as a commissioner for the Port of Umatilla and the board of the Round-Up City Development Corp.

Turner has also served on two Oregon Solutions task forces, is a past president of the Pendleton Rotary Club and was on the Pendleton Convention Center Commission.

He spent 28 years in the Marine Corps, spending his last four years as the executive director of the Marine Corps War College. He retired with the rank of colonel in 2003.

After moving to Pendleton to become the provost at BMCC, Turner was named interim president in 2004 and installed permanently in the position in 2005. He retired from the job in 2013.

According to his filing paperwork, Turner holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Oklahoma and a master's degree in international affairs from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

Although his professional résumé is extensive, his elec-

See MAYOR/8A

Committee approves wolf delisting

Environmental groups fear bill will hinder lawsuit

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — The removal of wolves from Oregon's list of endangered species has been approved by a key legislative committee, potentially jeopardizing a lawsuit that challenges the delisting.

Last year, Oregon wildlife regulators found that wolves had

sufficiently recovered to delist them under the state's version of the Endangered Species Act.

Because wolves remain protected by the federal Endangered Species Act across much of Western Oregon, the state delisting only has effect in the eastern portion of the state.

Several environmental groups, which worry that delisting will eventually lead to wolf hunting, filed a

legal complaint accusing the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission of ignoring the best available science.

That lawsuit prompted two lawmakers from Eastern Oregon to propose House Bill 4040, which would ratify the commission's delisting decision as having properly followed the state's endangered species law.

On Feb. 9, that bill passed the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources 8-1 and is now

heading for a vote on the House floor with a "do pass" recommendation.

Chair Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, noted that H.B. 4040 was amended from its original version to eliminate language that would require wolf populations to decline substantially before the species could be re-listed as endangered.

Rep. Sal Esquivel, R-Medford, said that worries the delisting will lead to "automatic slaughter" of

See WOLVES/8A

PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A solid day's work

A work crew from Withrow Construction out of Yakima pour concrete while laying a sidewalk near Washington Elementary School in Pendleton. Construction on the new elementary school building is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2016.

HERMISTON

Highway 395 committee high on ideas, low on dollars

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian



Existing Conditions



Design Standards Concept

A year after a citizen advisory committee was formed to improve Highway 395 north of Hermiston, interest is still high but funding is not.

"We want this industrial area to thrive," Umatilla County planning director Tamra Mabbott said. "We want to see new development come in there."

The advisory committee, made up of property owners along the 395 corridor, is looking for funding to implement landscaping, paving and safety improvement ideas for the highway and roads around it. The group's focus is on implementing a Feb. 2015 report centered on the stretch from Punkin Center to Bensel Road that lies between Hermiston and Umatilla's urban growth boundaries.

Mabbott said the committee's biggest focus right now is road improvement. Many of the roads branching off of the highway, including Oldfield, Lauback and Birtrand, are roads that are open to the public but not part of the county's road system. If area property owners don't decide to fix potholes or come up with the money to pave the roads on their own, it doesn't get done. And poor-quality roads don't encourage new development.

"The roads out there are pretty tough," Mabbott said.

Committee members haven't given up on finding grant funding, but they have also discussed rallying support for a local improvement district, which 51 percent of property

owners would have to approve.

"It all depends on getting information out there," committee member Bryan Medelez of BJK Transport said. "It's difficult, I think, but not out of the realm of possibility."

He said several employers along that stretch, including BJK Transport, sometimes put their own money into making road improvements anyway.

His father Benny Medelez said his top priority for traffic safety along the corridor would be to see a traffic signal put in at Baggett Lane. Several trucking companies and construction companies with heavy machinery enter and exit the highway in the area.

If Baggett Lane had a traffic signal there, he said, it would be safer and easier for truck drivers to pull in and out, and they would switch to using that specific intersection to access the entire industrial area instead of entering and exiting on several different roads.

Mabbott said traffic volume and crash numbers at that intersection, including one fatal crash recently, make it the most likely candidate for getting some government funding.

The committee is also working on ways to encourage landscaping improvements along the highway. Bryan Medelez said concept ideas drawn up by senior planner Bob Waldher for the committee aren't meant to set specific rules for property owners, but committee members do hope to give them ideas.

"When you see pictures like that, and not just in your head, it's

See HIGHWAY/8A

