

EAST OREGONIAN

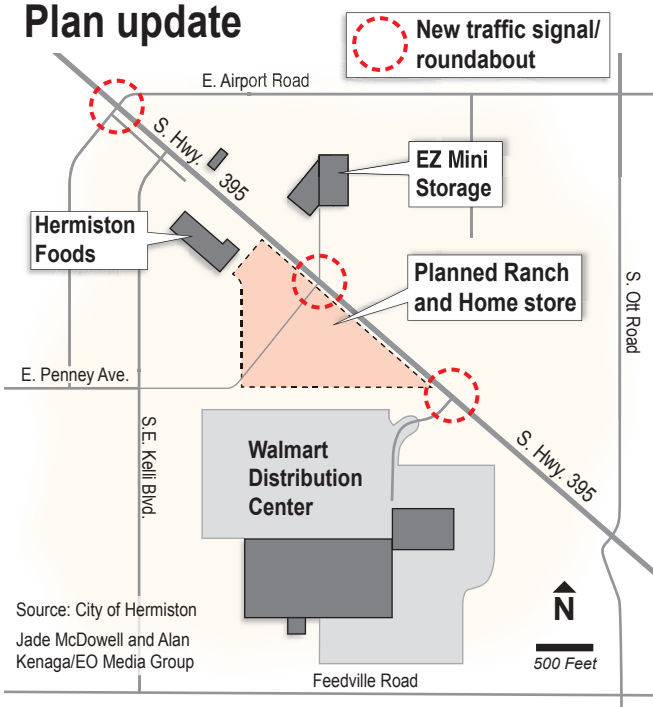
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016

140th Year, No. 92

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Proposed Transportation System Plan update



Source: City of Hermiston
Jade McDowell and Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

HERMISTON

No love for roundabouts

City councilors, citizens voice opinions on ODOT recommendation

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

An Oregon Department of Transportation recommendation to install roundabouts on south Highway 395 was met with resistance from city councilors and citizens alike on Monday night.

"It seems ridiculous," councilor Jackie Myers said.

The negative comments came during a public hearing for amendments to the Transportation System Plan approved by the city's planning commission. One amendment, added at the request

of ODOT, would add the words "or a roundabout" to the plan's current recommendation for traffic signals to eventually be installed at multiple spots along Highway 395 south of the city.

According to ODOT's recommendation, roundabouts in high-speed areas help reduce crashes that come from distracted drivers who run red lights or rear-end vehicles that are waiting to cross.

Five citizens spoke out against the roundabout idea during Monday's public hearing, including Dan Coffee, who lives on Airport Road. He said his years of truck-driving experience had taught him that heavy eighteen-wheelers would constantly damage the roundabouts and drivers would have difficulty navigating them.

"A roundabout is the stupidest thing

I've ever heard," he said.

Nathan Crowther, a Hermiston resident, said he spoke with the manager of the Wal-Mart Distribution Center and learned that during the month of November the center had 500 trucks coming in and 500 trucks leaving every day. Some sort of signal along there may be needed to control traffic, he said, but "the combination of a roundabout and trucks is asking for trouble."

During a workshop before the council's regular meeting, city planner Clint Spencer stressed that the Transportation System Plan is not a construction plan, but rather a "conceptualization" of what the city's transportation needs might be over the next 20 years.

The state won't give the city money

See **ROUNDABOUTS/8A**

PENDLETON

Jail to add Wallowa County prisoners

East Oregonian

The Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton is the new home for Wallowa County offenders.

The final contract is still in the works, but suspects arrested in Oregon's northeastern county will be transported to Umatilla County instead of Union County, where they have been housed since around 2010.

Wallowa County has its own 12-cell jail, but Sheriff Steve Rogers said he has neither the manpower nor funding to staff it. Umatilla County has more room than Union county facilities, one of the reasons that necessitated the move.

"Union County (jail) is real small, and they can't do anything with our people without our permission, so we could basically keep their jail plugged all the time," Rogers said.

Wallowa County housed its inmates at the Pendleton jail for at least a decade until around 2010. Rogers said isn't sure why the switch was made to Union County. Though a few bumps in the transfer need to be ironed out with the court and the district attorney's office, Rogers said the move to Pendleton is permanent.

The Pendleton jail started taking Wallowa County's inmates last Wednesday. Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan said the return makes a lot of sense; Umatilla County's jail is an impressive facility with qualified staff working at high standards.

Rowan said a typical contract would provide five or six beds for

See **JAIL/8A**

Homeless campers forced to move to higher ground



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

James Johnson, originally from Irrigon, smokes a cigarette near his campsite Monday along Umatilla River Road outside Umatilla.

By JENNIFER COLTON
East Oregonian

Nowhere to go

'River people' shuffled again, move closer to Umatilla River Road

A tent offering a bit of warmth, a bite to eat and a fragment of privacy becomes home for those who have nowhere else to go.

Around those tents springs a community of "river people," those thrown together by circumstance and chance, bound by a need to survive.

Monday, about 14 people called the camp near the Umatilla River home. In the summer months, the camps have

been home to as many as 20 or 25 residents.

One is Douglas Robertson, a long-time resident of Eastern Oregon who has been in the camps for about a year.

"A lot of people lost their jobs. That's why I'm here," he said with a shrug.

After losing his job and his apartment, Robertson moved into a tent near the river and started looking for another job. Then he said he lost his wallet, and to replace his identification card he had

See **HOMELESS/8A**

Youngman meets Ellen

Twitter campaign ends as PHS teacher appears on 'Ellen Show'

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

#YoungmanOnEllen. Check.

For the past several weeks, students of Pendleton High School Spanish teacher Kathryn Youngman waged a Twitter campaign to get their teacher on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show." Youngman, fighting cancer for the third time, has long admired the comedienne for her posi-



Photo contributed by Michael Rozman/Warner Bros
Kathryn Youngman, center, talks with Ellen DeGeneres during a taping of "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" that aired Monday.

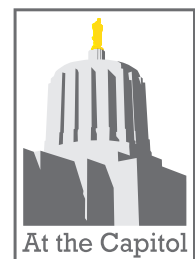
See **YOUNGMAN/8A**

Amended energy bill lowers cost hike caps

By HILLARY BORRUD
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A bill to double Oregon's renewable energy mandate is headed for a vote as soon as Wednesday in the state Senate, where it faces an uncertain fate.

The Senate Committee on Business and Transportation voted 3-2 Monday afternoon to pass an amended version of the bill out of committee. Committee chair Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Springfield, wrote the amendment in an attempt to address concerns that the bill, which was negotiated behind closed doors by the state's two investor-owned utilities, environmental groups, the renewable energy industry and Citizens Utility Board of Oregon, will be costly to consumers and businesses.



At the Capitol

See **ENERGY/8A**

