



**STUDENTS
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EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016

140th Year, No. 93

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
The owners of this house on Southeast Third Street are suing the city of Pendleton for \$200,000 as compensation for flood damage sustained from a leaky water line on Nov. 28, 2013.

PENDLETON

Leaky line leads to lawsuit

Home owners seek \$200,000 for flood damage

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

Although the city of Pendleton has estimated it will take more than \$14 million to meet the needs of the city's aging water system, a \$200,000 lawsuit was not included in the calculations.

Howard and Theresa Hunter filed suit against the city of Pendleton Nov. 12 alleging that a leak from a city water line that runs near their 516 S.E. Third Street

home flooded their property. According to a complaint written by the Hunters' attorney, David Blanc, a water line failed on Nov. 28, 2013, causing water to run underground and collect on the their property at the base of South Hill.

As a result of the flooding, Blanc wrote the Hunters' home, yard, retaining walls, foundation and landscaping were significantly damaged.

The complaint states that the leak and

the ensuing damage was caused by the city's negligence in properly monitoring, maintaining and replacing the water line.

Blanc argued the Hunters were owed \$100,000 for damages to their property and an additional \$100,000 for the "distress," "sleeplessness," and "concern" they experienced due to the flooding.

The city is represented by Salem attorney Gerald Warren, who wrote a response to the Hunters' complaint on Feb. 10.

See **LAWSUIT/8A**

Hotel tax hike clears House

By **HILLARY BORRUD**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A bill that will nearly double Oregon's statewide tourist lodging tax is headed to the state Senate, after lawmakers in the House voted 37-20 Tuesday to pass the bill.

The bill hikes the tax rate from 1 percent to 1.8 percent.

Lawmakers drafted the bill in response to a request for a state subsidy from organizers of a world track championship in Eugene in 2021. Nike and University of Oregon officials

have pushed for the state to help pay for the event since at least 2014 and according to news reports, the Eugene nonprofit TrackTown USA wants the state to provide \$25 million for the event.

Rep. Nancy Nathanson, D-Eugene, a chief sponsor of the bill, described the measure as "an economic development proposal."

"More than three-quarters of this (tax) is paid by people from out of state," Nathanson said. "Tourism is a significant sector in Oregon's economy."

State law currently requires the government to spend at least 80 percent of hotel tax revenues on tourism marketing. House

See **TAX/8A**



At the Capitol



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Bird-brained sunbathers

Among those enjoying Tuesday's warm weather were these two great blue herons sitting on a nest near N.E. Lindell Lane in Pendleton.

HERMISTON

Brookshier back on EOTEC board

Re-appointed as Farm-City Pro Rodeo's representative

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Ed Brookshier is back on the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center board after a brief hiatus.

The Hermiston City Council appointed him on Monday as the Farm-City Pro Rodeo's representative to the board, after he stepped down in December to make room for City Manager Byron Smith.

Brookshier is the former Hermiston city manager and will replace David Bothum, a rodeo board member who resigned from the EOTEC board in order to pursue an upcoming contract for construction of the project's rodeo arena.

Bothum said the rodeo board would be honored to have Brookshier represent them, though he isn't a rodeo board member. Smith said he believed Brookshier would be an excellent fit for the open position.

"I think his passion for this project and his history with it makes him a great candidate," Smith said.

Before moving on to its regular business, the council meeting began with a presentation from Sheriff Terry Rowan, who is up for re-election to a second term in May.

Rowan said he wanted to give the city an update on the progress the sheriff's office has made in recent years, starting with when he took office in January 2013.

"I knew the status quo wasn't going to be sufficient or acceptable," he said.

Since that day he said he has increased the number of patrol deputies from seven to 11 and hired an evidence technician.

See **COUNCIL/8A**



Brookshier

Obama: Guantanamo Bay must be closed

Said detention center undermines security

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama on Tuesday vowed to "once and for all" close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and transfer the most detainees to a facility in the U.S., submitting a plan short on specifics and unlikely to make headway with opponents in Congress.

Obama cast his proposal as a moment to turn the page on a facility that for years has raised nettlesome legal questions, become a recruitment tool for violent extremists and garnered

strong opposition from some allies abroad.

"I don't want to pass this problem onto the next president, whoever it is," Obama said, in an appearance at the White House. "If we don't do what's required now, I think future generations are going to look back and ask why we failed to act when the right course, the right side of history, and justice and our best American traditions was clear."

Despite the big ambitions, Obama's proposed path to closure remained unclear. It leaves unanswered the politically thorny question of where in

See **OBAMA/8A**



AP Photo/Charles Dharapak, File
This 2013 file photo shows the now closed Camp X-Ray, which was used as the first detention facility for al-Qaida and Taliban militants who were captured after the Sept. 11 attacks at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba.

