



**TWO  
POACHERS  
ARRESTED**  
REGION/3A



**BUCKAROOS  
GET BEAT BY  
BLUE DEVILS**  
BASEBALL/1B



# EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2016

140th Year, No. 122

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**Pendleton City Councilor Al Plute has announced he will be resigning from the council and moving away from Pendleton. Plute owns many properties in Pendleton, including the St. George Plaza, which he says he will hold onto and manage from his new place of residence.**

**PENDLETON**

## Plute to resign, move

Will leave council for Eugene in May

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
*East Oregonian*

Following seven years in Pendleton, Al Plute is leaving town.

Plute, a Pendleton city councilor and the owner of several downtown buildings, said Monday that he intends to resign from the council in May and move out of the city.

Plute said a recent spate of criticism and personal attacks contributed to his

decision to leave Pendleton and move to the Eugene area.

Plute's departure will mark an abrupt end to a rapidly ascendant political and civic career.

A native of Northern California, Plute bought the Brown Building in 2005 and later the Bowman Building and the Temple Hotel, renaming the latter the St. George Plaza in honor of its original moniker.



**Plute**

Plute estimated he invested \$7 million into those buildings, which had fallen into deep disrepair before he bought them.

Plute made Pendleton his home in 2009 and was subsequently appointed to the city's planning commission.

He beat a longtime incumbent to win an at-large seat on the city council in 2010 and ran unopposed for a second term in 2014.

See **PLUTE/10A**

# Overdue honor

Hermiston WWII veteran awarded medals 70 years later

By **KATHY ANEY**  
*East Oregonian*

William Jones stood proudly Saturday afternoon as he received military medals that were long overdue.

Jones isn't a veteran of Iraq or Afghanistan, nor Vietnam or Korea. He served in World War II, loading bombs into B-24 planes as an Air Force ordnance worker. It took 70 years, some gumption on the part of his niece, and help from politicians before the medals finally arrived.

The moment came Saturday at the Columbia Grange Hall in Hermiston.

The ceremony came as a surprise to the 92-year-old. He thought he was simply going to a party at the grange until his niece, Emily Mellick, informed the veteran on the drive over that he was the guest of honor. The party, she said, was for him.

"For me?" he asked, taken aback.

"Yes," she told him. "It's all about you."

Family members, including seven of his remaining eight siblings, and friends watched VFW State Senior Vice Commander Richard Halverson pin the medals on Jones' chest. Jones smiled as his shirt got heavier.

"Thank you for your service," Halverson told the veteran. "Thank you for all you did for your country."

The medals included a Presidential Citation, Good Conduct Medal, campaign medals for the American and Euro-African-Middle-Eastern campaigns and the World War

See **MEDALS/10A**



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
**World War II veteran William Jones, who served as an ordnance worker at an airbase in Southern Italy, received five medals Saturday at the Columbia Grange in Hermiston. VFW State Senior Vice Commander Richard Halverson pinned on the medals.**

**UMATILLA**

## Depot land transfer pushed into 2017

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
*East Oregonian*

The Army's latest schedule has the former Umatilla Chemical Depot land in local control by May 2017.

The Columbia Development Authority was supposed to receive the land in 2015, but it has twice been delayed — first until Nov. 2016, and now until the May 2017 date.

On Monday, the authority's executive director and board agreed that progress was still being made, but also expressed frustration that it has taken so much longer than promised.

"The length of time in the transfer is costing us opportunities," board chair and Umatilla County commissioner Bill Elfering said.

After the Army conveys the former depot land along Interstate 84 east of Boardman, part of it will be used as a National Guard training facility. But the rest will fall under the control of the development authority for a wildlife refuge and industrial development.

The authority has repeatedly stated that it is not taking the land off the Army's hands unless it is "free, clean and has water."

In October executive director Greg Smith said that the Army's initial proposal to give the authority approximately 25 percent of the site's water was not nearly enough to support the scale of economic development needed to make the site worthwhile to acquire. On Monday he said water rights negotiations were slowly moving along, with the Army agreeing to give two wells to the Columbia Development Authority, three to the National

See **DEPOT/10A**

## Wrong-way crash on I-84 kills two

By **PHIL WRIGHT**  
*East Oregonian*

A Hermiston man driving the wrong way on Interstate 84 killed himself and another driver in a head-on crash.

I-84 in Eastern Oregon has been the scene of three crashes resulting in five deaths since March 28.

Shane R. Ware, 48, of Hermiston, and Mary A. Padilla, 47, of Homedale, Idaho, died in the collision Sunday about 1:30 a.m. near Pendleton, according to Oregon State Police.

Ware drove a 1999 Saturn SL westbound in the east-

bound lanes of Interstate 84 several miles east of Pendleton, according to a report from state police. He struck the Chevrolet minivan near milepost 214. A 10-year-old passenger in Padilla's vehicle suffered non-life threatening injuries and an ambulance took the child to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton.

Ware forced another vehicle off the road a few miles before the fatal crash. Sherry Marie Anderson, 24, of Rainier, Oregon, suffered non-life threatening injuries after she wrecked trying

See **CRASH/10A**

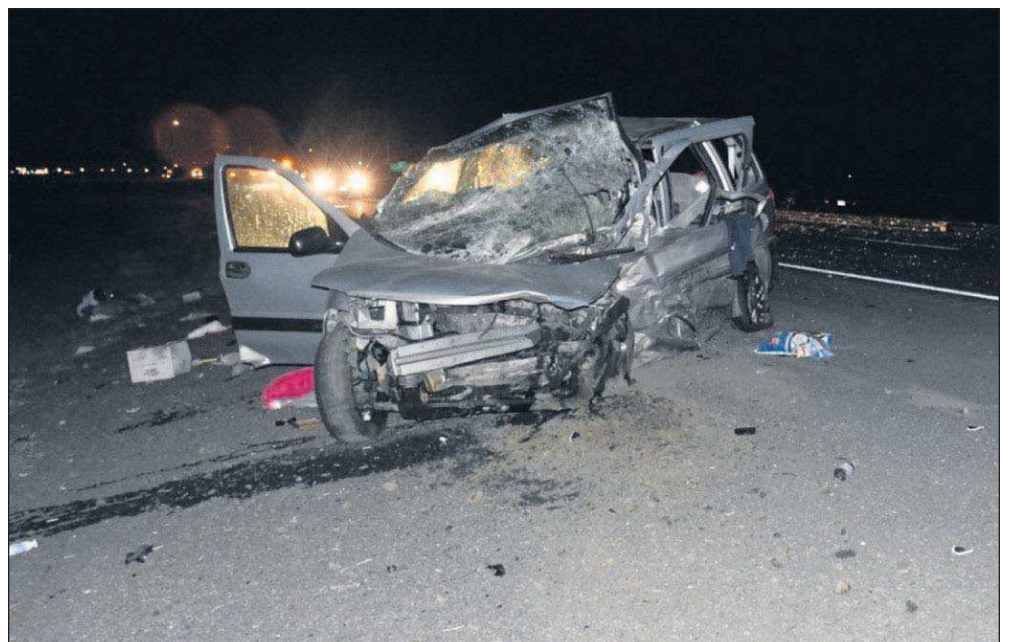


Photo courtesy of Oregon State Police

**A Chevrolet minivan traveling east on Interstate 84 Sunday morning after it collided with a wrong-way driver near Pendleton. Both drivers died in the crash.**

