

PENDLETON

Board approves superintendent contract

East Oregonian

The Pendleton School Board approved a three-year contract with incoming Superintendent Andy Kovach at a meeting Monday.

Michelle Jones, the district's director of business services, said Kovach will earn \$127,500 in his first year with an opportunity to negotiate pay raises after his annual evaluation from the board.

The \$127,500 salary represents the low end of the pay scale offered by the board when it advertised the job, the maximum being \$140,000.

Outgoing Superintendent Jon Peterson retired last year but agreed to work on contract through June while the board found a successor.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the last year before his retirement, Peterson earned \$128,215.

Kovach, currently the principal of

Ontario High School, was named superintendent March 7 and will start July 1.

Other topics discussed during the meeting:

- The board unanimously approved new curriculum for the school district, which will be used for the next six years.

The adopted curriculum is K-8 Ready Math Curriculum, K-12 iReady Diagnostics and Interventions Tool, McGraw Hill Algebra I, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Geometry and Algebra II, McGraw Hill Integrated Math and Glencoe Health Series High School Health.

With pension costs and the state's minimum wage set to rise next year, board member Steve Umbarger said purchasing new curriculum could be costly on a tight budget.

Peterson said the district could priori-



Kovach

tize which curriculum to adopt if there's not enough money in the budget for all of them.

- Special Programs Director Julie Smith reported an improvement in results of the district's special education report card.

Although still behind the state target, special education students' four- and five-year graduation rates nearly doubled from the year before — 52.4 percent and 53.6 percent, respectively.

Special education students are also showing progress outside the classroom.

While only 10 percent of special education students are enrolled in some type of higher education, well below the state target, that number jumps to 65 percent when competitive employment is included, which is above the state's expectation.



Photo contributed by OSP

The heads of two bighorn sheep were removed by poachers east of Biggs Junction in Gilliam County.

Alleged bighorn poachers get May 6 hearing

East Oregonian

CONDON — The two men accused of poaching bighorn sheep along Interstate 84 east of Biggs Junction will be arraigned May 6 in Gilliam County.

Cody Plagmann, 37, and Justin Samora, 32, are accused of working together to kill and behead two bighorns from the I-84 herd earlier this month. They were arrested by Oregon State Police and have since posted bail.

Plagmann, of Albany, was booked on charges of taking or possessing bighorn sheep, wasting a game animal and hunting on closed ground. Samora, of Layton, Utah, also faces charges of aiding in a game violation. There is no hunting season for bighorns from the I-84 herd, which have become a popular viewing attraction along the highway.

Charges have not yet been filed in court; Gilliam County District Attorney Marion Weatherford said

they are taking their time with the investigation before the May hearing. Weatherford said the duo could face up to \$50,000 in restitution — \$25,000 for each animal killed.

Weatherford did not provide any other information about the motive for the incident. Bighorn sheep were reintroduced in Oregon in 1954 and wild-life officials estimate there are now roughly 4,500 of the animals across the state. Drawing a bighorn tag is a once-in-a-lifetime hunting opportunity in Oregon, with fewer than 100 tags issued.

According to OSP, troopers received a tip from a passing motorist on the morning of April 3 that someone was apparently gutting a game animal next to I-84. Samora was discovered at the scene sitting in a vehicle, while Plagmann was found hours later hiding along railroad tracks two miles away. In the course of their search, troopers found the severed heads of two bighorns.

UMATILLA

Robotics team heads to World Championships

By JENNIFER COLTON
East Oregonian

For the third time in five years, Umatilla Robotics will compete at the World Championships.

This weekend, Umatilla's FIRST Robotics Competition team, 4125 "Confidential," competed at the Pacific Northwest District Championships in Portland, a regional level competition against 159 teams from Oregon and Washington. Confidential brought home the Engineering Inspiration Award, an honor that celebrates outstanding success in advancing respect and appreciation for engineering within a team's school and community.

For Umatilla, the award reflects how members of Confidential volunteer to lead robotics clubs and classes at McNary Heights Elementary School as well as participating and volunteering at community events across the county.

"It's really cool this year because we're going to the championships on a completely different path. This isn't just about the efforts of the robot, this is a whole team award," team mentor Kyle Sipe said Monday. "This award reflects what the whole team does in this community."

Only one team from each regional competition can win the Engineering



Contributed Photo

Umatilla's Team 4125 "Confidential" qualified for the FIRST World Championships at the regional competition this weekend in Portland.

Inspiration Award. The honor qualifies Umatilla Robotics to compete at the world championships, April 27-30 in St. Louis, Missouri.

At the championship, 900 teams and 20,000 students from 39 countries will compete. Among those students will be the 48 members of Team Confidential.

"We've been looking and hotels and talking to Mid-Columbia about busing

all day, trying to figure out the logistics of how we're going to get everyone there," Sipe said.

Team Confidential competed in two Pacific Northwest district-level competitions. The team qualified for the regional competition by winning the Chairman's Award at one district-level competition and the Engineering Inspiration Award at the other.

BRIEFLY

Irrigon teen arrested for rape

IRRIGON — A 15-year-old Irrigon boy raped an 18-year-old woman and now is in jail, according to the Morrow County Sheriff's Office.

The sheriff's office did not identify either person. The county's dispatch center Sunday at 6:53 p.m. received information from Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, that an 18-year-old female from Irrigon reported a 15-year-old boy sexually assaulted her, according to a written statement from the sheriff's office.

A deputy contacted the victim at the hospital, and sheriff's detective Brian Synder responded and began a sexual assault investigation.

The woman and her boyfriend visited the 15-year-old Saturday evening at his home in Irrigon. Sunday at about 1 a.m., according to the sheriff's office, the 15-year-old raped and sexually assaulted her.

The survivor told her boyfriend in the morning "the 15-year-old did something to her during the night," according to the statement, "but she did not disclose the details." She was "upset, confused and didn't know what to do," the sheriff's office reported, and decided to call a girlfriend, who told her to tell her parents.

She did, the sheriff's

office stated, and they took her to the hospital.

Synder obtained a search warrant for the residence and found evidence there, according to the statement, and "developed sufficient probable cause" to arrest and book him into the youth jail at the Northern Oregon Regional Corrections Facility, The Dalles.

The Morrow County District Attorney's Office arraigned him Tuesday afternoon via video from the jail on charges of first-degree rape, two counts of unlawful sexual penetration and three counts of first-degree sexual abuse.

Teen dies, two injured in crash

LA GRANDE — A crash Monday evening outside La Grande killed one teen and injured two others.


Oregon State Police reported Melissa Book, 19, was eastbound in a 2008 Toyota Solara at 5:46 p.m. with two passengers, Alexis Browning, 18, and Hanna Doig-Cashell, 18. All three lived in La Grande.

At about milepost 256, Book tried to pass a vehicle, according to preliminary information from state police, but the car left the road and rolled. Police do

not know what caused the loss of control.

Doig-Cashell died at the scene. Book suffered serious injuries and an air ambulance flew her to Providence Saint Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla. Browning was seriously injured as well, and an ambulance drove her to Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande.

State police closed both eastbound lanes of I-84 for approximately three hours following the crash.



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