



EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2016

140th Year, No. 138

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The developer that owns the empty lots at Sunridge Estates is four years past due on their property taxes with Umatilla County.

Empty lots on fast track for the auction block



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

There are 21 empty lots in the Sunridge Estates that could go on the auction block soon.

Property taxes on the 21 sites haven't been paid in four years

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Umatilla County wants to quickly move 21 foreclosed Pendleton properties to the auction block.

The sites are part of Sunridge Estates, a housing development off Tutuilla Road in south Pendleton. While houses have gone up in the development, these lots remain barren and covered in wild grass. County records show the property

taxes on the 21 sites haven't been paid in four years.

The sites have tax bills of \$5,000, \$6,000 and even \$7,000 and have been in foreclosure since January. Sunridge Estates owner Jack Zeckman did not return a call by deadline Tuesday.

County counsel Doug Olsen said owners could "redeem" the property if they pay the back taxes in full. Property owners have two

See LOTS/8A

PENDLETON

Travel Oregon likes it here

Others might, too

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Oregon's tourism industry shined a spotlight on Pendleton over the past week.

Travel Oregon held the Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Wildhorse Resort & Casino, wrapping up the week-long expo on Tuesday.

The last tourism conference to be held in Pendleton was 11 years ago, and although the organization wanted to come back, the conference had outgrown the venues Pendleton had to offer.

That changed when Wildhorse began to expand, and in between annual conferences in Eugene and Salem, Pendleton got the nod this year.

The Happy Canyon Indian Pageant and Wild West Show, celebrating its 100th year, was awarded the Oregon Heritage Tourism Award on Sunday. Then on Monday Happy Canyon hosted conference attendees and gave them a

See TRAVEL/8A

HERMISTON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Florico dancer Roxana Huerta, 18, performs a traditional dance with a group from Hood River at the 2014 celebration in Hermiston. This year's event is May 1.

Growing Cinco de Mayo eyes new venue

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Hermiston's annual Cinco de Mayo bash could be on its last year in downtown Hermiston.

Hispanic Advisory Committee chair Eddie de la Cruz said organizers are hoping to move the event — which has swelled to approximately 5,000 attendees since moving from McKenzie Park to downtown four years ago — to the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in 2017.

"There's plenty of space out there," he said.

The full EOTEC project isn't scheduled to be completed until July 2017, but the event center building and paved parking area are expected to open next

See CINCO/8A

Pierce's medical experience informs platform

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

Republican gubernatorial candidate Bud Pierce made his fortune on his medical practice, and that practice also has helped to shape his views on many of the issues he is campaigning on in his bid to become Oregon's

governor.

"You have to ... always challenge yourself as a physician: Am I doing the right thing, or has science changed, or is there new information that has changed my attitude and idea about what I am doing?" Pierce said.

This approach and his experience as an oncologist in Salem have given him nuanced and complex opinions on some of Oregon's most controversial social issues, from death with dignity to legalized marijuana.

The former president of the Oregon Medical Association is perhaps best known for his role in negotiating a compromise on tort reform in 2012, a contentious issue for both physicians and trial attorneys. But his greatest challenge in the May 17 primary election where he faces off with Lake Oswego businessman Allen Alley and three others is gaining name recognition from voters.

So far, Pierce and his wife, Selma, have spent more than \$1 million of their own money to finance his campaign, according to reports filed with the Secretary of State's Office.



Courtesy Bud Pierce

GOP gubernatorial candidate Bud Pierce says his experience as physician and businessman have shaped his opinions on issues facing Oregon.

Medical marijuana

Pierce's experience as an oncologist also has informed his opinion on legalized marijuana. He has written scores of authorizations for his patients to use the drug to cope with pain, nausea and other symptoms.

"It does help them feel better, and I have decided as a doctor, I am going to be an advocate for my patients," Pierce said.

As such, he said he wants to see more medical research on the drug and supports a recommen-

See PIERCE/8A

"He has a lot of respect for others' opinions, and I think a lot of that comes from being a physician."

— Monica Wehby, pediatric neurosurgeon who ran for the U.S. Senate in 2014

