



**STANFIELD
PREPS FOR
STATE FINAL**
BASEBALL/1B



**POOLS
OPEN
SOON**
REGION/3A

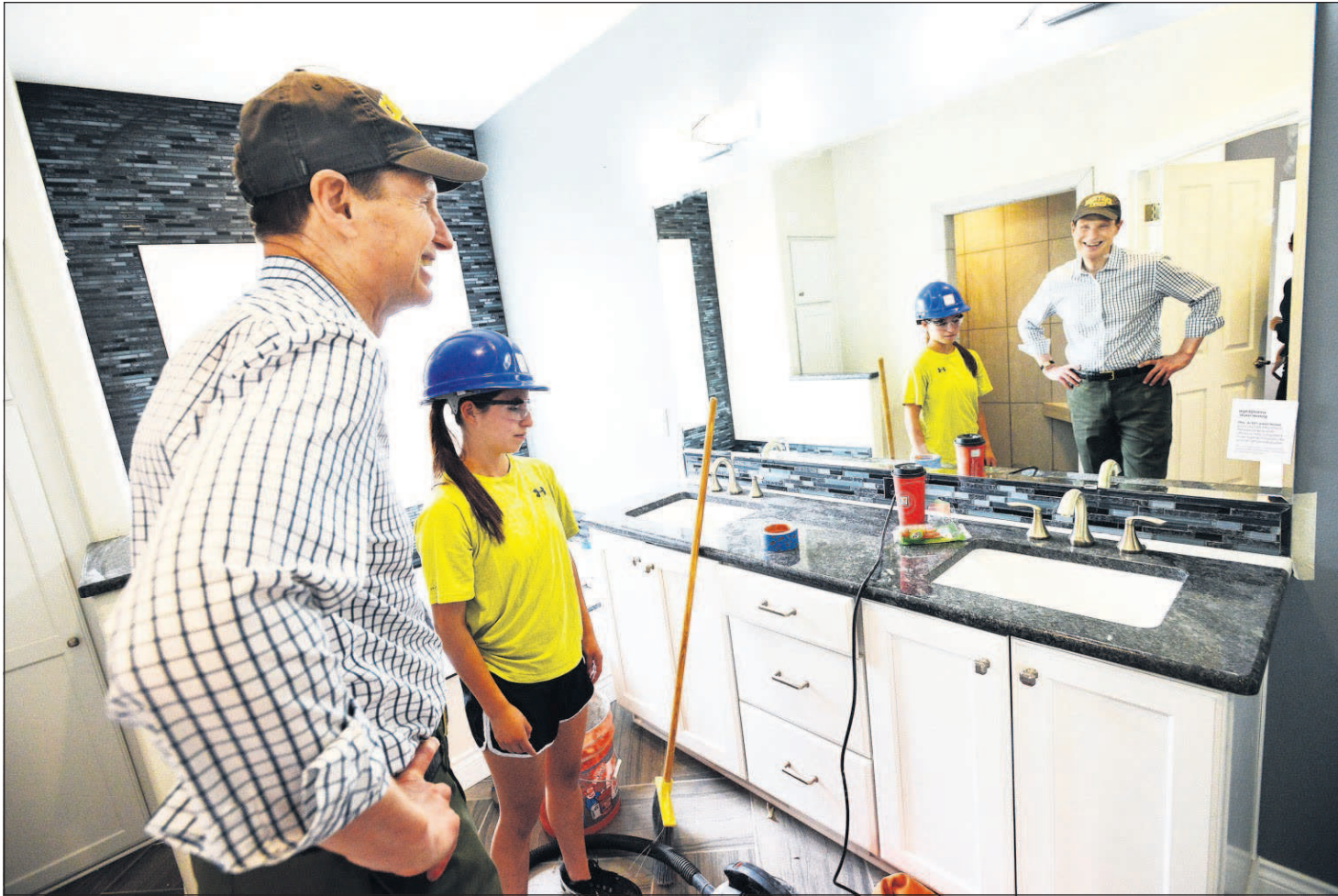
EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2016

140th Year, No. 164

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Sen. Ron Wyden smiles at himself in the mirror of a bathroom in the second house built by students for the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding Program. Wyden toured the home Wednesday with Hermiston senior Elizabeth Herrera.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

BOARDMAN New housing proposed for farmworkers

Seasonal workers needed at
Threemile Canyon Farms

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

Threemile Canyon Farms is looking to add a new housing development west of Boardman for 200 to 800 seasonal workers who are needed to grow more organic crops.

But first, Morrow County must approve a zoning change for the property on Tower Road south of Interstate 84. The land is currently zoned Space Age Industrial, which does not allow seasonal farmworker housing as a permitted use. Instead, Threemile Canyon Farms wants the land zoned for Exclusive Farm Use, which would allow the project to move forward.

The Morrow County Planning Commission met May 24 to review the zoning request, and continued that hearing for its next meeting on Tuesday, June 28. Planning director Carla McLane said the commission will make its recommendation to the county court, which has final say on the matter. The commission will meet at 7 p.m. at the Bartholomew Building in Heppner.

Threemile Canyon Farms is owned and operated by R.D. Offutt Company, which is working on a deal to buy 66 acres from the city of Boardman through its real estate branch — PROffutt Limited Partnership — to build farmworker housing along the east side of Tower Road. The property is outside of the city's urban growth boundary, across from the Boardman Airport.

Organic farming has become more of an emphasis at the farm in recent years, with

"I don't understand why we treat our farmworkers the way we do. It's my estimation that we have ample water, ample sewer and ample building space within the city."

— Kelly Doherty,
nearby property owner

See HOUSING/8A

Education blueprint

Wyden touts Hermiston as
model for technical education

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Sen. Ron Wyden plans to put Hermiston High School in the spotlight as Congress works to implement new education legislation.

He met with career-technical education students Wednesday, including business students and members of the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding Program.

"If it's all right with you, I'm going to talk about you guys on the floor of the Senate," Wyden

told the students.

He had high praise for Hermiston's CTE programs, calling them "exactly the kind of model" he wanted to highlight as he works to create legislation aimed at raising graduation rates.

"I haven't heard of anyone else that has the array of programs you do," he said.

Wyden said Oregon has a lot to be proud of, but its high school graduation rate is not one of those things. As he has been

See WYDEN/8A



Hermiston senior Dru Walchli, bottom, makes a coffee drink for Sen. Ron Wyden as senior Kiersten Miller talks about Java Dawg, the Hermiston High School student run coffee shop, on Wednesday in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Lonnie Wright

Pioneer of Columbia Gorge wine industry

By **ERIC MORTENSON**
Capital Press

THE DALLES — The pump is on for the first time this season but things aren't working. Alejandro Rojas, Lonnie Wright's foreman and friend for 20 years at The Pines 1852 vineyard, says there isn't enough



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Lonnie Wright is considered the pioneer of Columbia Gorge wines, having planted or managed dozens of vineyards over the past 35 years. In 2011 he was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Oregon Wine Board.

pressure to water the grapes up on the slope: the Syrah, the Merlot, the "Young Zin" and, of course, the Old Vine Zinfandel that grows at the heart of Lonnie's story.

Wright doesn't like what he's hearing. Truth is, he's fuming. He says there must be a leak in the system. He wants Rojas and two other employees to chop a path down to Mill Creek to see if there's a problem in the pipe down there.

Rojas demurs; he has other options to check first. And besides, he just had a bout

with poison oak and doesn't savor crashing through brush to examine the creek pipe.

"You got a machete?" Wright asks. "I'll do it." And next thing he's rummaging through a tool shed, muttering, looking in vain for a machete and grabbing a couple of big clippers instead.

Wright, 67, bears the ruddy look of someone who works outdoors, with a thick mustache and salt and pepper hair swept back from his forehead. He's the acknowledged

See WINE/8A

HERMISTON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Firefighters battle a fire in an onion shed at the Columbia Basin Spreader facility Wednesday on Westland Road southwest of Hermiston. Firefighters from Umatilla and Morrow counties responded to the blaze.

One person injured in onion storage building fire

East Oregonian

A fire Wednesday at Columbia Basin Spreaders on Westland Road near Hermiston sent a burn victim to the hospital, according to Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services.

An update on the department's Facebook page reported that one patient was flown to a burn center in Portland. All other employees were accounted for and no firefighters were injured.

The fire consumed an approximately 400-by-150-

foot single-story onion storage building, which according to the fire district was "being worked on" when the fire started shortly after 3:30 p.m.

Mutual aid was provided by multiple fire departments from Umatilla and Morrow counties.

