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One dollar

PENDLETON Mayor defers on marijuana referral

East Oregonian

Pendleton Mayor Phillip Houk deferred the referral of three marijuana sales ballot measures at a meeting Tuesday night.

In order to go on the November ballot, the city must approve a series of resolutions and ordinances.

Houk said he wasn't comfortable with the city council taking action because the ordinances weren't advertised on the council's agenda.

The proposed ballot questions ask voters to consider repealing a ban on medical and recreational marijuana sales and assessing a 3 percent tax on recreational marijuana.

The council's next meeting is scheduled for July 19, and Aug. 19 is the final day the city can file the referral with the Oregon Secretary of State.

The council did take action on a bid from McCormack Construction to build hangars at the airport, unanimously approving a \$966,000 bid, which covers the construction of the hangars, one of which will include office space.

The cost of the hangars is covered by a \$1.1 million loan and grant package from the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority.

Airport Manager Steve Chrisman suggested building three hangars for an extra \$200,000 at city expense, but City Manager Robb Corbett recommended against it because the city's community development fund had already committed money elsewhere.

The council also unanimously approved a \$588,373 bid from Pioneer Asphalt, which covers street overlay projects at Southwest 16th Street, Southwest 19th Street, Southeast Third Street, Southwest Olsen Avenue, Southwest Perkins Avenue, Southeast Goodwin Avenue and Southeast 17th Street.



Enjoy a free pass to the Heritage Station Museum in Pendleton



Kovach begins work as new Pendleton superintendent



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Andy Kovach, who started as superintendent of the Pendleton School District this week, leans against a brick wall Tuesday near the entry to Lincoln School, which is being renovated into district offices.

New schools boss sets path for coming year

By ANTONIO SIERRA East Oregonian

Andy Kovach will be expected to hit the ground running.

The new Pendleton School District superintendent discussed a new set of board goals and the things he expects to achieve within the first 100 days of his tenure at a school board meeting Tuesday.

He discussed a draft of new goals for the 2016-2017 school year, which included generalized goals like fostering a positive

"I have three promises. I want to tell the truth, I want to make decisions based on what's best for kids and I want to keep an eye on the budget."

— Andy Kovach, Pendleton School District Superintendent

school climate and continuing the district's focus on cultural competency but also more measurable goals like decreasing the number of chronic absentees by 10 percent, increasing dual credit course participation by at least 5 percent and raising SAT and ACT

participation by 10 percent.

Kovach hailed the board's set as both ambitious and achievable.

"There had to be something measurable in there," he said.

Kovach is no stranger to stoking

See KOVACH/8A

Brown, Pierce agree to debate

By PARIS ACHEN Capital Bureau

Gov. Kate Brown and GOP gubernatorial nominee Bud Pierce have agreed to their first debate for the race for the state's top post.

The debate, hosted by the Oregon Territory Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, is scheduled for Sept. 24 in Bend.

The debate will focus solely on issues facing Oregon's rural residents.

"The Oregon Territory SPJ believes it is important to have an honest and open exchange at the highest levels about the state's future in rural areas," said Oregon SPJ President Samantha Swindler. "With more than a month between this debate and election day, we hope the issues raised will help give voters enough time to learn where the two major candidates stand on a range of rural issues, from the environment to education to the economy."

Oregon SPJ will host the debate in partnership with the *East Oregonian*, KTVZ-TV and Jefferson Public Radio. The Oregon SPJ Board sought those particular media partners because they serve rural Oregon, Swindler said.

The hour-long debate will be a moderator-panelist format in front of a live audience. Candidates may give a 90-second open statement and a 90-second closing statement. They will field questions from the panel made up of rural journalists. Candidates will have 60 seconds to respond, with a 30-second rebuttal period.

The exact location has yet to be finalized.

The announcement follows controversy over Brown's decision to skip a July 22 debate sponsored by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. That debate has traditionally served as the first debate of the campaign. No other gubernatorial incumbent has declined to appear in the debate since it began 30 years ago, according to ONPA.

Brown has said she plans to participate in at least three debates, starting no sooner than Sept. 1, and will consider more on a case-by-case basis. Pierce has called for a minimum of six debates.



Brown



Pierce

Fireworks, wind spark fires across region

By JADE MCDOWELL East Oregonian



Staff photo by Daniel Wattenburger

Fireworks from Hermiston's annual Fourth of July celebration started a grass fire Monday at the Hermiston Butte.

Fireworks on the Fourth of July are meant to invoke the "rockets' red glare" spoken of in our national anthem, but on Monday night they also forced plenty of people to spend the holiday under the orange glow of a fire.

One of the most visible fires of the night was on the Hermiston Butte, where falling embers from the city-sponsored fireworks show lit up the south side of the distinctive landmark.

The rest of the fireworks were set off as planned despite the blaze, but Umatilla Fire District 1 Chief Scott Stanton said the department was on the butte for about two hours total.



Photo by Jacque DeAngelo

A fire burns Monday on Pendleton's South Hill.

They had intentionally burned the north side of the butte a few days earlier, but Stanton said they didn't do the south side because as far as he could remember that side had

See FIRE/8A

