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**BAND DIRECTOR PACKS UP HIS BAGPIPES** ATHENA/3A

# EAST OREGONIAN

JULY 30-31, 2016

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## BOARDMAN



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A truck drives down Poleline Road between poplar trees on the left and a corn field on the right as the transition begins at the Boardman Tree Farm from trees to food production.

# Receding tree line

## Iconic poplar tree farm making room for cows, crops

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
East Oregonian

Once a captivating landmark along Interstate 84 in Eastern Oregon, the Boardman Tree Farm is quickly disappearing to make way for more conventional crops and cows.

GreenWood Resources, headquartered in Portland, sold the land earlier this year and already large swaths of poplars have been cut down and replaced with irrigation pivots. Approximately one-third of the 25,000-acre property is slated to become a dairy farm — permit pending — while the rest was purchased by AgriNorthwest, based in the Tri-Cities.

Will Evans, division controller for AgriNorthwest, said the plan is to convert all acreage into cropland as the



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Piles of cut poplar trees sit in a field Friday at the Boardman Tree Farm.

remaining trees are harvested. Evans said the transition has gone better than expected since the company took over in February.

“It’s a beautiful piece of property,” he said. “This is a great place to farm.”

Terms of the deal, which included both the land and water

rights from the Columbia River, were not disclosed. AgriNorthwest grows a variety of local staples, including potatoes, corn, wheat and carrots.

Don Rice, director of North American operations for Greenwood Resources, said it will likely be a few years before all the trees are gone. Part of the wait, he said, is to allow younger trees to finish growing before they are ready to be processed. Another part is based on what the markets will bear.

The Collins Companies informed Morrow County officials they will permanently shut down the Upper Columbia Mill by the end of October, with most of the facilities’ 67 employees laid off by Sept. 19. However, Rice said the Columbia Forest Products veneer mill is still open,

See DAIRY/12A

# GMO wheat found again in northwest

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**  
EO Media Group

SPOKANE — The USDA is investigating 22 genetically engineered wheat plants found in a fallow Washington state agricultural field.

The wheat plants are resistant to the herbicide glyphosate, known by the trade name Roundup, according to an Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service notice.

“APHIS has taken prompt and thorough action in response to this discovery and has no evidence of GE wheat in commerce,” the notice states. It did not say when or where the discovery was made or reveal the name of the farmer.

The GE wheat was developed by the Monsanto Co. and is referred to as MON 71700 and contains the CP4-EPSPS protein, according to the notice.

“Due to the small number of affected plants and based on available information about MON 71700 and CP4-EPSPS, (the Food and Drug Administration) has concluded it

See WHEAT/12A

# It is rocket science for Pendleton grad

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

Sometimes it takes Ryan Lacey longer than expected to grasp things. But once he does, he takes off.

Graduating from Pendleton High School with a 4.0 GPA, the top SAT scores in his class and all the other accolades that come with being a top student betrays the fact that Lacey didn’t know how to read until third grade.

By the next year he was in the top reading group.

“As easy as riding a bike” was more of an adage than a personal truth for Lacey until he was around 10, when he first learned to ride a bicycle unassisted in the Alford Desert, a dry lake bed in southeastern Oregon.

And it may have taken some time for

See LACEY/10A

**PROMISE & POTENTIAL**



Lacey

# No protection for no man’s land

## Parts of county left uncovered by fire districts

By **ALEXA LOUGEE**  
East Oregonian

There are 156,000 acres of land in Umatilla County with no official fire protection. This land is predominantly in three areas of the county — north of Pendleton, east of Hermiston and south of Pilot Rock — and is known as “no man’s land” among county fire officials.

These areas are unprotected because those land owners do not pay taxes for fire coverage. Fires that start in those areas have the potential to become large fires, like the recent fire in Gilliam County, that would threaten land and homes owned by citizens within a fire protected area. As a result, time and resources are often expended

outside district boundaries to prevent small fires from getting out of control.

Where possible, district fire crews will preserve resources by allowing a fire in no man’s land to burn toward a boundary line and then take action.

Most often, land owners are the first responders to fires on their land and do their best with tractors and equipment, but according to Scott Stanton, fire chief of the Umatilla County Fire District, their efforts are just not enough.

Stanton wants to see the county, city and area fire chiefs sit down and find solutions to the no man’s land issue and the problems unprotected land pose. Stanton has at least three possible ways to

address no man’s land.

One idea is to have current fire districts adjacent to the lands annex the unprotected area. Landowners would have to file the request and then voters would have to approve the annexation.

Another solution is to create a new fire district. The process is similar to annexation and requires a vote.

A third possibility would be to form a rangeland fire protection association through the state. In a fire protection association, landowners agree to serve as volunteer wildland firefighters in case a fire starts on their lands. There is no fire station, no paid fire crew and no tax district.

Through forming an

See FIRE/12A

