



# EAST OREGONIAN

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**PENDLETON**

## Carnegie Library turns 100



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Remnants of the 2016 Rock Camp can still be seen on the crosswalk outside the Pendleton Center for the Arts. The building housing the arts center was originally built as a Carnegie Library and first opened its doors on August 26, 1916.

## Arts center to celebrate Friday with live music

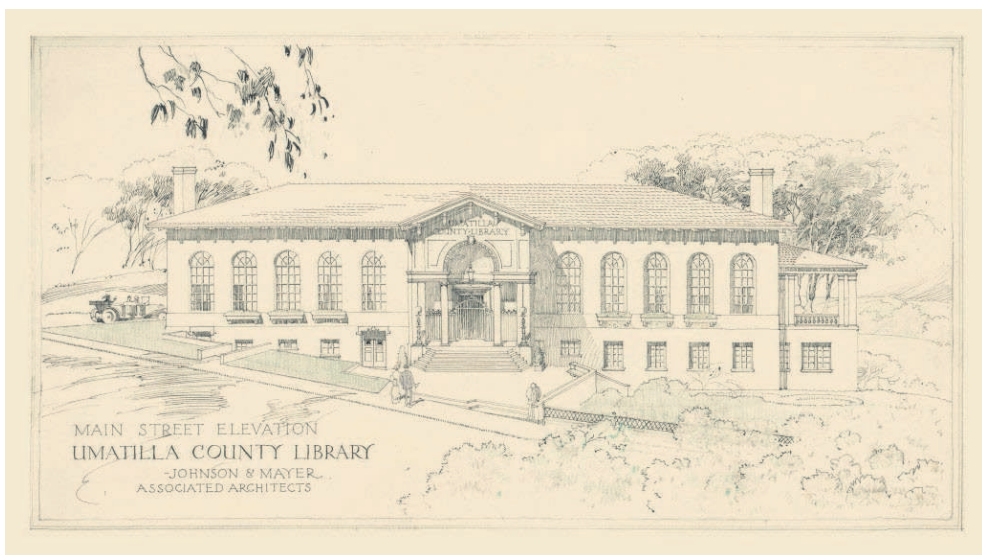
By **WILL DENNER**  
*East Oregonian*

Rich in history and stories, Pendleton's Carnegie Library — once a major social hub — reaches its centennial milestone this week.

Initially opened as the Umatilla County Library on Aug. 26, 1916, the building was built with the financial backing of Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish-American philanthropist. His foundation helped fund over 1,600 U.S. libraries between 1886 and 1923, including 31 in Oregon.

Now known as Pendleton Center for the Arts, the building, located at 214 N. Main St., will celebrate its 100th anniversary this Friday starting with a noon reception free to the public, executive director Roberta Lavadour said. Acoustic Celtic band Molly's Revenge also will play a concert at the arts center beginning at 7 p.m. The reception will include the unveiling of a new exhibit highlighting the history of the building and the key people connected to it throughout the years.

Sabra Nason, the county librarian when



Courtesy of Roberta Lavadour

An original architectural sketch of the Umatilla County Library, designed by Folger Johnson and overseen by R.W. Hatch.

the library opened, was one of the most integral people in getting it built. According to Lavadour, Nason knew how to work the Carnegie grant process, having already done so at other libraries in the U.S.

With grant money and city funding secured, Folger Johnson designed the building, drawing on inspiration from the

See **BUILDING/8A**

## Sregzinski gets 10 years for gun fight with police

*East Oregonian*

The College Place teen who is a homicide suspect in Walla Walla is going to prison for 10 years for trying to kill police in Milton-Freewater.

Robert Gage Sregzinski, 19, pleaded guilty Monday in circuit court in Pendleton to charges of attempted aggravated murder, unlawful use of a weapon and menacing stemming from a gun fight he had with Milton-Freewater police on April 28. He admitted on court documents to firing a short-barreled shotgun at an officer in an attempt to kill him.



Sregzinski

Sregzinski gave the plea in a deal with the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office in exchange for the decade-long sentence and three years post-prison supervision. Judge Christopher Brauer handed down the sentence Monday.

Sregzinski tried to flee from Milton-Freewater police after a traffic stop the evening of April 28. He fired at officers during a chase through the town, according to Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus and court records, until one officer rammed Sregzinski's 2007 Ford Focus, disabling the car.

Sregzinski stepped out of the Ford and continued to shoot at police, who returned fire and wounded Sregzinski, thus ending the fight.

Walla Walla police identified Sregzinski as the suspect in the killing of Gabriel Ledezma Rodriguez, 34. Police think Sregzinski killed Rodriguez in late April in the basement of 1589 E. Alder St., Walla Walla, then buried the body near Milton-Freewater.

Following the shootout, police found duct tape, rubber gloves and a drop cloth in Sregzinski's car. Police found Rodriguez's body on May 27 outside Milton-Freewater. No one, though, faces charges for the death of Rodriguez.

## Valdez family seeks healing in memories

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
*East Oregonian*

As they begin to work through the pain that comes from losing a loved one, Kenneth Valdez's family is grateful for the memories and condolences that the community has shared with them.

Valdez died Thursday at his home in Hermiston, shot during a murder-suicide that claimed three lives and injured a fourth person. His brothers Daniel Diaz of Hermiston and Tony Valdez of Kennewick said their family has since found solace in reading the messages friends of their brother Kenny have posted to his Facebook page or sent to them directly.

"Social media has been fantastic," Tony said.

The grief and shock still feel raw days later, but Tony said he has started reaching out to some of Kenneth's friends and the family hopes to talk to more during the candlelight vigil scheduled for Wednesday night and at Kenneth's memorial service Saturday.

"People have been good about letting us grieve, but our family is definitely

See **VALDEZ/8A**

**"He was genuine. If you talked to his friends, they would say Kenny would be there in a pinch."**

— **Tony Valdez**, Kenneth's brother

## Wildfires straining ODF staff, budget

Less time for restoration, timber sales

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
*East Oregonian*

The Oregon Department of Forestry is straining both its staff and its budget to withstand more grueling wildfire seasons, according to a state audit released Tuesday.

Last year, fires burned roughly 55,000 acres in the ODF Northeast Oregon District alone — nearly twice as much as any other year since 1960. Yet the audit, prepared by the Secretary of State's Office, revealed the agency as a whole is still fighting blazes with the same number of full-time employees as 20 years ago.

As a result, ODF is spending more time on fires and less time on other programs, including restoration and timber sales. Overtime hours spent on fire protection increased 197 percent, and staff in Salem have reported they're feeling overworked and



Cheryl Chipman/Inciweb.gov via AP

This file photo provided by Inciweb.gov, shows smoke from Bybee Creek wildfire drifting over Crater Lake, July 30. According to a state audit released Tuesday The Oregon Department of Forestry is straining both its staff and its budget to withstand more grueling wildfire seasons

fatigued.

"As fire seasons lengthen and intensify, ODF needs long-term workforce planning to address its firefighting and fire-prevention missions, while still maintaining

broader forest management responsibilities," said Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins in a prepared statement.

Fires also have created a

See **ODF/8A**

