

EAST OREGONIAN

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140th Year, No. 227 WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD One dollar

PENDLETON

McKay water fountains over lead limit

Sunridge Middle School faucets pass all tests

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

Two schools in Pendleton have water sources that tested above the Environmental Protection Agency's acceptable limit for lead, including

10 drinking fountains at McKay Creek Elementary School. Lab results also found elevated levels of lead in two sinks in the gold gym girls' locker room at Pendleton High School. District Superintendent Andy Kovach said

all of the fixtures will be replaced and re-tested. One drinking fountain at McKay School registered 95 parts per billion of lead, which is nearly five times higher than the EPA limit before action must be taken. Kovach said each of the fountains will be replaced before kids return to school after the Pendleton Round-Up. He

did not know exactly how old the fountains are. "The Pendleton School District is working hard to comply with Oregon state guidelines and to address each site with elevated lead levels," Kovach said in a statement Monday. "The district will continue to work diligently on this until all issues are resolved and all water

levels are within acceptable limits." Results were also released Monday for Sunridge Middle School, which detected no elevated lead levels in that building. Testing was done at Table Rock Analytical Lab in Pendleton. Kovach said the two sinks at PHS

See **LEAD/10A**

Commercial drones about to take off

FAA forecasts 600,000 drones in the skies within the year

By **JOAN LOWY**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — There will be 600,000 commercial drone aircraft operating in the U.S. within the year as the result of new safety rules that opened the skies to them on Monday, according to a Federal Aviation Administration estimate. The rules governing the operation of small commercial drones were designed to protect safety without stifling innovation, FAA Administrator Michael Huerta told a news conference. Commercial operators initially complained that the new rules would be too rigid. The agency responded by creating a system to grant exemptions to some of the rules for companies that show they can operate safely, Huerta said.

"With these rules, we have created an environment in which emerging technology can be rapidly introduced while protecting the safety of the world's busiest, most complex airspace."

— **Michael Huerta,**
FAA Administrator

On the first day the rules were in effect the FAA had already granted 76 exemptions, most of them to companies that want to fly drones at night, Huerta said. "With these rules, we have created an environment in which emerging technology can be rapidly introduced while protecting the safety of the world's busiest, most complex airspace," he said. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said people are "captivated by the limitless possibilities unmanned aircraft offer." The few thousand commercial drones that had been granted waivers to operate before Monday have been used to monitor crops, inspect

See **DRONES/10A**

Hermiston second fastest growing school district in state



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Fifth-grade teacher Daylee Lathim helps a student navigate a tablet while teaching in one of the modular classroom units on the first day of school Monday at Rocky Heights Elementary School in Hermiston.

Growing pains



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Fifth-grade teacher Daylee Lathim helps a student navigate a tablet while teaching in one of the modular classroom units on the first day of school Monday at Rocky Heights Elementary School in Hermiston.

Rocky Heights facilities stretch to keep up with enrollment

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

Jerad Farley doesn't have to look far to find signs of his school's issues. As the second year principal of Rocky Heights Elementary School speaks about some of his school's challenges in his office, an electric fan buzzes in the background, a whirring reminder of some of the measures the oldest school in the Hermiston

School District takes to continue operating. Farley had already fielded some comments on the school's heating and cooling system on the first day of school Monday, which frequently renders classrooms too hot or too cold. Farley estimates the school's heaters and air conditioners aren't functioning properly 60 percent of the time.

See **SCHOOL/10A**

PENDLETON

18-year-old dies after suffering severe burns



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton firefighters and police respond to a reported fire at 521 S.W. 19th Street on Monday in Pendleton.

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

An 18-year-old Pendleton man died Monday morning after he was severely burned outside a home at 521 S.W. 19th St. Police and fire crews were called out shortly before 10 a.m. to a fire in the side yard of the house. Assistant fire chief Shawn Penninger said they put out a small fire, but could not provide any further details. Medics treated the man at the scene and took him to St. Anthony Hospital, where he was later pronounced dead. The victim has not been identified, nor has the cause of death. The Pendleton Police Department is investigating what happened, in cooperation with the Oregon State Police

Arson Unit and Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office. Officers cordoned off an area consisting of several blocks around Southwest Goodwin Place and Southwest 19th, though the roads were reopened by early afternoon. Amber Sullivan, a neighbor, said she was alerted by her 8-year-old son that there was a person on fire across the road. The boy had seen smoke, Sullivan said, and when he went to look, he saw the victim's leg and could hear moaning. Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said there is no prosecutable criminal act at this time, and no ongoing threat to the public. He did not release any other information.

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