



EAST OREGONIAN

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140th Year, No. 243

WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

PENDLETON

SeaPort planes grounded

Commercial flights cease at airport as company begins liquidation

East Oregonian

For the moment, Eastern Oregon Regional Airport has no commercial air service.

SeaPort Airlines, which had flown in and out of

Pendleton since 2008, ceased operations Tuesday.

In a court hearing Tuesday, a judge ordered the SeaPort be converted into Chapter 7 liquidation effective at noon Wednesday.

"This is a very sad day

for our employees, shareholders, and the communities we serve," said SeaPort president Tim Sieber in a press release. "While we made great strides, a successful financial reorganization did appear possible

and we were forced to make the difficult decision to cease operations."

According to the company, customers with tickets on SeaPort Airlines that were purchased with MasterCard or VISA credit

cards may apply for a refund through their credit card company. Customers using other credit cards must inquire at their respective credit card companies about refunds.

Susan Norquist, of Pilot Rock, works for Prestige Care. Four employees of McKay Creek Estates and

Elizabethan Manor, which are owned by Prestige Care, flew on SeaPort Monday morning to a health care conference in Portland. They had taken the train back out to the Portland International Airport for their return flight Tuesday night, but found no

See SEAPORT/8A

HERMISTON



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Socorro Paris hands a bunch of celery to fellow Agape House volunteer Maria Travino on Tuesday morning. Both women started volunteering at the outreach center about 11 years ago.

Counties join forces on rail safety plan

Worst case scenario is derailment in populated area

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

Three months after an oil train derailed and caught fire in the Columbia River Gorge near Mosier, the Local Emergency Planning Committees for Umatilla and Morrow counties are working to prepare for a similar disaster close to home.

Both committees held a joint meeting Tuesday at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston, where they decided to collaborate on a rail safety plan that would outline what to do should another oil train derail in the region.

That followed a presentation from the Office of the State Fire Marshal, which provided an overview of the incident in Mosier to help local emergency planning committees, or LEPCs, refine their response and procedures.

"The way you respond to something like this has to be unique to the area you're in," said Terry Wolfe, LEPC program coordinator. "It may never happen in your area, but if it does, you're going to be ready for it."

On June 3, a 96-car Union Pacific trail hauling Bakken crude derailed along the Columbia River near Mosier. Sixteen total cars jumped the tracks, three of which caught fire, sending a dark plume of smoke over the Gorge. No one was hurt, though 47,000 gallons of oil spilled.

Roughly one-third of the oil burned away, while the rest either seeped into the soil or drained into a nearby water treatment plant, causing damage. Officials evacuated residents from within a half-mile radius and used a total of 1.5 million gallons of water to fight the blaze.

Numerous local, state, federal and tribal agencies descended on the scene as traffic backed up for 20 miles along Interstate 84. Within three hours, every motel in Mosier, Hood River and parts of The Dalles was booked.

Officials established a unified command center at the Mosier School to plot the next steps. The Washington Department of Ecology and neighboring tribes deployed an absorbent

See RAIL/8A

House of love

Agape House celebrates 30 years of giving

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

After 17 years of working the front desk of the Agape House, Adelina Torres doesn't judge anyone who comes in to get an emergency food box to make it through the month.

"Some people, when they come in for the first time, they cry because they feel embarrassed," she said. "I tell them it's OK, but sometimes they pick up the box and they go outside crying."

The nonprofit, which is

celebrating its 30th anniversary with an open house on Sunday, serves several hundred Umatilla County residents per month with food, clothing, showers, firewood, job training, gas money and other help.

That knowledge doesn't always make the experience easier for those who find themselves in need of help.

On Tuesday morning Torres and her coworker Ovelia Munoz greeted clients as they trickled in. Some sat quietly in the chairs, waiting for a food box with an air

of someone who has been there many times before. Others approached the desk hesitantly, sounding unsure of the procedure, or paced up and down the room, looking around furtively as if worried someone might recognize them.

One man declared he hadn't needed help in "a very long time." Another man and woman searched through a shopping cart full of household goods for a blanket to give the little boy

See AGAPE/2A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Community service worker Kelly Adams, of Hermiston, pulls weeds Tuesday morning at Agape House.

PENDLETON

EOCI readies for inmate workers outside the fence

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

The end is nigh for Pendleton's 29-year agreement that bars Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution inmates from working outside the prison.

A 10-inmate crew and its overseeing officer from Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla, started landscaping work this week outside the Pendleton prison. Capt. Jeff Frazier at EOIC said staff are training with the Umatilla unit and screening minimum-custody inmates to work outside the fence come Oct. 24, a first for the facility.

"They will do work in the community," he said.

Two Rivers spokesperson Sherry Iles said the training crew came from the Umatilla prison because it already has a minimum-security facility and provides inmate workers for community projects.

The Oregon Department of Corrections opened medium-security EOIC in Pendleton in 1985 after converting it from a state mental facility. Two years later, the state agreed to a deal with the city not to have inmates work outside the fence.

Locals have shifted their views since. Prison officials in early May pitched the idea to the Pendleton City Council to allow inmate work crews in the commu-

See EOIC/8A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Tommy Kolpin and Cesar Najera, two members of an inmate work crew from the Two Rivers Correctional Institution, work Monday outside the secure perimeter of the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton. The work day marked the first since the Pendleton City Council voted to repeal a near 30-year ban on inmate work crews, the last of its kind in Oregon.

