



EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

ATHENA



Pendleton Grain Growers closed the company's Athena retail store before selling off some of the company's assets to United Grain Corporation. The move hit the tiny community hard and residents are working to bring the store back to life.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Downtown investment

Community pledges fund to buy, re-purpose PGG building

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Eleven Athena and Weston residents promised Tuesday night to put their money where their heart is — their community. They each pledged \$1,000 to help buy the former Pendleton Grain Growers general store on Athena's Main Street. The 9,000-square-foot building has been empty since PGG closed stores in August 2014, a hard kick to the town of about 1,100 that is also fighting the loss of its only bank branch. PGG rejected one offer to buy the building, then failed to sell it at auction. Now locals

are shouldering an effort to buy the building to give it and their community new life. To accomplish the task, they aim to raise \$50,000. Athena Mayor John Shafer was among the 11. He said this is about saving his community, not making money. "There's a lot of buzz," he said. "The people don't want storefronts empty on downtown Main Street." Elizabeth McIntyre with the Develop Athena Downtown Association helped create some of that buzz by sending this message a couple of weeks ago:

See ATHENA/8A



Citizens of Athena met this week to kickstart a campaign of city beautification and renewal that could include painting a mural on this blank wall of Athena Grocery on E. Main Street.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



A weed grows from a crack at the base of the old Pendleton Grain Growers retail store in Athena.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

MALHEUR REFUGE STANDOFF TRIAL

Defense calls upon FBI agents, Siletz tribal member

By CONRAD WILSON, BRYAN M. VANCE,
AND LAURIE ISOLA
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Their start was rocky, but the defense attorneys for Ammon Bundy and six others accused of taking over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge picked up speed Wednesday — so much so it appears they could wrap their case up next week. Toward the end of the day's session, U.S. District Court Judge Anna Brown observed the defense was quickly moving through its witness list. The day started, however, on much shakier legs.

Brown grew visibly frustrated during the initial proceedings when it became unclear who on the defense would call the first witnesses and which witnesses would be called.

"I'm not here to organize your case. I don't want to," Brown told the defense attorneys.

The prosecution said they had only received the witness list Wednesday morning from Ammon Bundy's attorney, Marcus Mumford, and hadn't had enough time to go through it.

"Get it together, folks," a frustrated Brown added after about 30 minutes of the defense trying to figure who would call the witnesses. "It's 9 o'clock. Someone call a witness."

Eventually, occupier David Fry's attorney, Per Olson, stepped up to call the first witness for the defense, FBI negotiator Mark Maxwell.

Maxwell spent several weeks in Harney County and spoke on the phone with Fry and fellow occupier Jeff Banta in the final days of the 41-day takeover. Olson's line of questioning seemed to be driving at establishing his client's mental state in those final days.

Olson asked Maxwell about Fry's holding a gun to his head and having suicidal thoughts. Maxwell testified about working through suicide prevention techniques with Fry. He also described the final conversation with Fry, when the 28-year-old from Ohio demanded negotiators say "hallelujah" before he would surrender.

"I said 'hallelujah,'" Maxwell said. "And he came out?" Olson asked. "And he came out," Maxwell said.

The defense also called a member of the Confederated Tribes Of Siletz Indians: Shellia Warren. She visited the refuge for several hours Jan. 24, when she met with Ryan Bundy and several others involved in the occupation. Warren testified she visited the refuge to check on Native American artifacts and found that they were fine when she arrived. Though she also admitted she

See TRIAL/8A

UMATILLA

School bond seeks to update aging infrastructure

Would replace heating and cooling system, boiler, roofs

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe has a great deal of affection for Clara Brownell Middle School. Not just for its students and staff, but the actual facility itself, having started her teaching career in the building. Sipe has a fondness for the way the ceilings of the gym and cafeteria

resemble the bottom of a Viking ship — she didn't know whether the designers intended it to be a reference to the school's mascot or if it was just a coincidence. The building's sturdy structure, built in 1947 by the Army Corps of Engineers while they were constructing McNary Dam, includes a full-length mirror in one of the girls bathrooms that a custodian once wiped down with toilet water



Sipe

to prevent students from using it to test out their lipstick.

The \$10.5 million bond the Umatilla School

See SCHOOL/8A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

An antiquated heating and cooling system at Clara Brownell Middle School would be replaced if voters pass a \$10.5 million Umatilla School District capital improvement bond.

