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EAST OREGONIAN

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2016

140th Year, No. 255

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Your Weekend



- Community campfire and hayrides, Hermiston
- Fall Quilt Show at Boardman Senior Center
- Wine & Stein: Altrusa Oktoberfest, Hermiston

For times and places see Coming Events, 6A

Weekend Weather

Fri	Sat	Sun
64/51	74/51	76/53

ODOT to straighten curve on dangerous highway

By KATY NESBITT
The Observer

MINAM — The travel routes into Willowa County can be treacherous, and the Minam Grade on Highway 82 east of Elgin is no exception.

As part of its effort to make the highway safer near the Union/Wallowa County line, the Oregon Department of Transportation will straighten the worst of the curves in 2018 at a projected cost of \$4.5 million.

Ken Patterson, area manager of the ODOT office in La Grande, said the agency is working on a project to smooth out the 25-mph curve on the descent into Minam Canyon.

"It's been a location of a number of accidents in the past," Patterson said. "We got some money a couple years ago to build in 2018, and it's currently under design."

The state is working to get environmental clearances because of the amount of rock that will be removed to ease the curve.

The most recent project on the Minam Grade, five years ago, required the removal of 100,000 tons of rock. Patterson said crews will need to haul away closer to 400,000 tons during the 2018 work.

The permitting process through the Army Corps of

See MINAM/3A

Hermiston holds walk, vigil for victims of domestic violence



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A small group of marchers walk towards McKenzie Park to participate in a candlelight vigil honoring victims of domestic violence on Thursday in Hermiston.

Help is waiting

Victims of abuse urged to reach out to Domestic Violence Services, police

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

A handful of Hermiston residents gathered Thursday night at McKenzie Park for a candlelight vigil honoring victims of domestic violence.

The event — one of several in Umatilla County and Morrow County this week sponsored by Domestic Violence Services — was held in recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

"Domestic violence affects

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, call the 24-hour crisis line at 1-800-833-1161

everyone, not just the victims," said Hermiston police and fire chaplain Terry Cummings. "Entire families are affected, and I've seen the results in the lives of children firsthand."

During the vigil Cummings told

those gathered that one in four women in the United States will be affected by domestic violence of some kind during their lifetime. He asked anyone who is experiencing abuse or believes a loved one is being abused to reach out to Domestic Violence Services, the police or a trusted friend.

The nonprofit offers a 24-hour crisis hotline, immediate shelter for people

See ABUSE/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

McKay water levels below average

Low water levels at McKay Reservoir have exposed what appears to be the remains of an old rail line on Tuesday south of Pendleton. As of Wednesday, there was approximately 16,000 acre-feet of water in McKay Reservoir, according to Mike Ladd, region manager with the Oregon Water Resources Department in Pendleton. That's about 1,000 acre-feet more than last year, though Ladd said the average for this time of year tends to be around 18,700 acre-feet.

Independent joins Brown, Pierce debate

Candidates address housing, transportation, graduation rates

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

EUGENE — Candidates in the contest for governor faced off in a debate at Churchill High School Thursday, offering their take on how to address the housing crisis, transportation, a revenue shortfall and the state's low graduation rate.

The third of five debates between Gov. Kate Brown and GOP nominee Dr. William "Bud" Pierce, the event also featured for the first time Cliff Thomason, Independent Party of Oregon candidate and an industrial hemp farmer from Grants Pass.

The candidates are seeking election to complete the last two years of former Gov. John Kitzhaber's four-year term. As former

See DEBATE/8A

In turnaround, Bundy denies leading refuge occupiers

By STEVEN DUBOIS
Associated Press



Ammon Bundy

PORTLAND — Under a brief, but rapid-fire cross-examination Thursday, Ammon Bundy denied leading the occupation of a national wildlife refuge and defended receiving a U.S. Small Business Admin-

istration loan.

Bundy, 41, who's on trial for conspiring to impede Interior Department workers from doing their jobs at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, was quickly reminded by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ethan Knight that he had earlier testified that he was the leader.

Bundy said he was not a leader in the way Knight considers him to be. The man who led followers to the refuge for the 41-day standoff with law enforcement said he teaches "core principles" to people and lets them govern themselves.

Those principles, spoken of in great detail during three days

of testimony this week, include Bundy's belief that the federal government can't own land within a state's borders, except for limited purposes.

Knight closed his 15-minute cross-examination by getting Bundy to acknowledge

See TRIAL/8A



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