

PENDLETON

Hackberry tree sets state record

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Pendleton's latest state champion wasn't crowned at the high school or the Round-Up Arena, but within the grassy confines of Olney Cemetery.

At 78 feet and 175 inches in circumference, a common hackberry tree at Olney was recently recorded as the largest of its kind in the state.

Parks and Recreation Director Donnie Cook said the idea to submit the hackberry to a big tree registry came from Dave Powell, the chairman of the city's tree commission and retired forester with the U.S. Forest Service.

The registry is maintained by American Forests, a nonprofit dedicated to forest preservation.

Cook and Powell measured the tree according to American Forests' specifications, adding together the height, circumference and the average amount the tree's branches extend away from the base.

The Pendleton common hackberry tree's 271-point score wasn't enough to surpass the largest recorded



Photo courtesy Pendleton Parks and Recreation

This hackberry tree, shown here in Olney Cemetery in its summer leaves, is the state's largest.

hackberry in Findlay, Ohio, but it scored well enough to be crowned state champion.

Pendleton's hackberry was aided by the fact that its species aren't native to the region.

According to the forest

service, the common hackberry tree — *Celtis occidentalis* — is mostly found in the eastern United States, extending from New England to the east to the Dakotas in the west.

While the typical hack-

berry tree grows to about 50 feet, they can grow as high as 110 feet under the right conditions.

The hackberry's wood is soft and can be used for inexpensive furniture or crates, and its fruit is mostly eaten by birds.

Although Cook is uncertain how old the tree is without chopping it down, hackberrys typically live between 150 and 200 years.

Cook said his long-term vision for the hackberry tree is to see it surrounded with donated trees to form an arboretum, with signs recognizing the hackberry tree as the largest in the state.

Cook said an arboretum could be a local attraction that would attract people from off nearby Interstate 84.

Pendleton doesn't have a monopoly on large hackberry trees in Eastern Oregon.

Wallowa County is home to the largest recorded netleaf hackberry in the country, a different species than the one in Pendleton.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

BRIEFLY

OSP seeks information in Interstate 84 death investigation

Oregon State Police is investigating the death of a 36-year-old man who was found Thursday, Oct. 27 on Interstate 84 near milepost 121, west of Arlington.

Sheriff's deputies from Sherman and Gilliam counties initially discovered the body of Phillip H. Webb, of Vancouver, Washington, lying next to his vehicle with a single gunshot wound to the head. OSP arrived on scene, and the incident is being investigated as a suicide. There is not believed to be any threat to the public.

Callers reported seeing two other vehicles in the area prior to officers arriving. The first is described as a dark blue or black newer style full-size pickup, with a canopy and male driver. The second is described as a cream colored full-size pickup. Webb's vehicle was a gray 2011 Toyota Tundra with Washington plates.

Anyone with more information about the incident is asked to call OSP in The Dalles at 541-296-9646.

Agape House board member recovering after deadly crash

PROSSER — A board member of Hermiston's charitable nonprofit Agape House is recovering after he was in a car crash last week that left another man dead.

Dan Thurman, 41, of Prosser, Washington, was discharged Monday from Kadlec Regional Medical Center, Richland, Washington, a hospital spokesperson confirmed.

Washington State Patrol reported Thurman was in a crash the morning of Tuesday, Oct. 25, when he was driving south on Highway 221. His 2010 Honda Insight crossed the center line about 24 miles from Prosser and smashed into a 2014 Chevrolet Sonic.

The driver of that car, Caleb Culver, of Kennewick, died at the scene.

An ambulance took Thurman to the Richland hospital, where initial reports said he was in critical condition. Washington State Patrol also reported the crash was under investigation and charges were pending.

Thurman is a supervisor at the Hermiston Walmart Distribution Center.

Road work to create delays on Highway 395 near Hermiston

HERMISTON — Drivers on Highway 395 in Hermiston may experience some traffic delays over the next couple of weeks.

The Oregon Department of Transportation will be working to make some minor adjustments to the repaving project it completed earlier this year.

Starting Tuesday, crews will be working on the highway between Southwest Fourth Street and Theater Lane to make the ride over manhole covers and in-street valves smoother. Work about a mile south of Highway 730 will also be performed to fill a dip in the roadway.

Drivers can expect lane closures and minor delays between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. until Nov. 11, and are reminded to drive with extra caution through work zones.

Emergency innovation award goes to Umatilla, Tillamook counties

PENDLETON — Umatilla County Public Works and Tillamook County Public Works received an innovation award for their sister community partnership at the recent Oregon Emergency Management Association Conference.

Umatilla County Emergency Management announced the recognition in a written statement Tuesday. The two counties entered into an agreement to have their public works department step in and cover for each other during an extreme natural disaster, such as the Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake.

"Staff from both public works departments will use what they have learned to step into the other's position and respond to emergencies," according to the county.

Public works directors Liane Welch with Tillamook and Tom Fellows with Umatilla began visiting each other's county in 2015 and met staff, toured critical infrastructure, public works facilities and emergency operations centers. While the two counties designed the partnership to activate after a large earthquake and tsunami, according to the announcement, the helping-hand approach can kick in for any significant natural and human-caused emergency.

Governor candidate Bud Pierce to meet with Pendletonians

PENDLETON — Republican governor candidate Bud Pierce will meet with the public and answer questions Wednesday from 7:45-8:45 a.m. at Pendleton Coffee Bean, 241 S. Main St., Pendleton.

Area residents wishing to meet Pierce, ask questions or just enjoy a cup of coffee with the candidate are encouraged to attend.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

PENDLETON

Exhibit delves into depression, mental health

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

An examination of depression is reflected in a series of paintings in an upcoming exhibition at Betty Feves Memorial Gallery.

The exhibit provides an opportunity for art to be used as a conversation starter as the gallery is partnering with Blue Mountain Community College's Health and Wellness Resource Center on the Hope & Healing: Mental Health Awareness initiative.

Michigan artist Jill Miller presents *Borderline*, which includes figurative poses in states of despair. The exhibit also reflects treatments for depression and the surrounding perceptions of those treatments, including prescription medication and electroshock therapy. Portions of the exhibit may not be suitable for children.

The exhibit opens with a reception Thursday, Nov. 10 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. in the Pioneer Hall gallery, located on the Pendleton campus, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave. There is no admission charge.

In her artist statement, Miller said when dealing with depression feelings are often masked and turned inward, creating a melancholy outward reaction to internal turmoil. Within the



Contributed

"Fragile Infrastructure," an oil on canvas by Jill Miller, is part of the upcoming exhibit "Borderline," that opens Nov. 10 at the Betty Feves Memorial Gallery at Blue Mountain Community College.

artist's work, body language is expressed through visual metaphors of stripes, shadows and distortions.

"These elements can hide or break the figure apart, or signify imprisonment in one's mind," Miller said.

The BMCC Student Health & Wellness Resource Center will offer workshops coinciding with the exhibit

dates. Also, a resource table at the gallery will include information about mental health and services available at the center.

Cindy Womack, director of the resource center, said anxiety and depression are the main issues students seek counseling at the college. However, many students who deal with anxiety or

depression don't reach out for help because they are afraid or embarrassed, she said.

"The Health & Wellness Resource Center was established to be a safe, confidential place of contact for students," Womack said. "The center offers educational workshops, short-term counseling and referrals to long-term resources."

The exhibit runs through Thursday, Dec. 8. The gallery is open Monday through Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and by appointment by calling 541-278-5952.

The Betty Feves Memorial Gallery was dedicated in 1990 as a nonprofit exhibit space to connect emerging and established artists and their work with students, staff and the general public in Eastern Oregon.

For more about the BMCC Student Health & Wellness Resource Center, contact Womack at 541-278-5965, cwomack@bluecc.edu or visit www.bluecc.edu/support-services/support/health-wellness. For more information about the artist, visit www.jillchristinemiller.com.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

PENDLETON

Auction for foreclosed lots draws single bid

Will now accept sealed bids below market value

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Only one person bid on one of the 21 lots offered up at auction of Pendleton's Sunridge Estates.

Six possible buyers showed up Tuesday morning at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton, for the auction of the foreclosed property off Tutuilla Road in Pendleton's southern end. Developer Dusty Pace bid \$36,050 — the minimum — for a .28 acre site.

That lot and the rest make up a failed local improvement district in Pendleton, and the

city has liens against all the lots. While Pace's bid met the minimum price requirement, it does not cover the city's \$42,000 lien.

County counsel Doug Olsen said any money from the purchase must first pay off the lien. After meeting in executive session Tuesday night, Pendleton city council voted unanimously to accept Pace's bid, even though the city will have lost about \$6,000 on that piece of the improvement district.

Lt. Sterrin Holcomb, commander of the civil division, conducted the auction. She started asking \$1,320,870 for all lots as a group. Receiving no bids, she closed that sale after about 30 seconds, then offered lots one at a time.

Pace bid on the 17th lot,

which was among the smaller sites. After the auction, he said he has a client interested in the property.

The bidding war, though, could just be heating up. The

county now can accept sealed bids for below the minimum market value, Olsen said, and the city can make offers. The deadline for submitting bids is Dec. 1.

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STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Katherine Soto
STANFIELD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Stanfield 11th grader, Katherine Soto, has rightfully earned the honor of Student of the Week. She is nominated by her Strength and Conditioning teacher who says her work ethic and drive in the weight room is AMAZING. She is goal-oriented and incredibly focused on improving each week. Katherine is excelling in the classroom this year and is an example for others in her ability to overcome obstacles and adversity. We are very proud of Katherine and so pleased to have her represent Stanfield Secondary School as our Student of the Week.

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