

EAST OREGONIAN

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141st Year, No. 43 WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD One dollar



Domino's Pizza delivery driver Robert Campbell loads pizza into his car before heading out on a delivery in the snow storm Wednesday in Pendleton. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

DELIVERING IN THE STORM

Many service jobs
don't shut down just
because roads get bad

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The second winter storm in as many weeks means a bump for services that deliver. Felicia Terry and Jessica Hiatt were part of the crew at the ready Tuesday night at Domino's Pizza, Pendleton. They drove through everything last week's storm sent down and were ready to take on the latest, they said. It's a good thing, because when the snow starts drifting down, the calls for

hot meals stack up. Hiatt, 26, a Pendleton native, said she broke one set of chains last week, but her 2016 Chevrolet Sonic's front-wheel drive handled the roads just fine. Still, she said, she got a second set of chains. Driving slow and using low gears is the key to making it up and down Pendleton's hills, the drivers said. Shift manager Shannon Dimock, 25, said most customers are understanding about drivers taking longer to bring the goods, stretching that 30-minute window to as much as 45. And some folks, Hiatt added, even tip more in the winter. Terry, 25, said she relies on

See DELIVERY/6A



Domino's Pizza delivery driver Robert Campbell sweeps snow off his car before heading out on a delivery Wednesday in Pendleton. Staff photo by E.J. Harris



Even emergency vehicles can fail on wintry roads. Umatilla County Fire District 1's Medic 21 ambulance lost traction Tuesday morning on Salmon point off Highway 730. Scott Stanton, the district's chief, snapped this photo as he tried to use his vehicle's winch to pull the ambulance on the road. Stanton said a tow truck came in to get the job done. Contributed photo by Scott Stanton

PENDLETON

City closing in on \$15M water loan

Would help replace aging water, sewer lines

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

A year into a five-year utility rate hike, Pendleton is aiming to use the new revenue to access a much larger pot of money. At a city council workshop Tuesday, public works director Bob Patterson shared an update on the city's efforts to leverage their higher utility rates into state loans that could provide millions of dollars to Pendleton's aging water and sewer systems. Although the city originally applied for \$11.3 million in water loans from the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority,

Patterson said low interest rates means the city qualifies for almost \$15 million. The city would need to strike while the iron's hot — Patterson reported the state's 1.72 percent interest rate only lasts through the end of the year and is projected to rise after that. City staff is also interested in a \$7 million sewer loan from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, but there's an obstacle that's currently blocking them from applying for it. Both the finance authority and DEQ require environmental reviews, but DEQ is the only agency that requires it with the

application, meaning staff will request \$147,900 for the environmental reviews at the council's next meeting. If the council grants the request, Patterson said they can apply for the sewer loan in April. The loans could be a windfall for the city's utility systems — Patterson said many of the utility lines running under the downtown area will push 100 years old by 2020 and the city's streets can't be repaired until the pipes under them are replaced, lest the city tear up the same street twice. The city also wants to use the money to finish utility extensions to the Airport Road extension —

See LOAN/6A

HERMISTON

Snow days push back graduation

East Oregonian

Hermiston High School's 2017 graduation date will be moved back a week in order to accommodate snow days.

Commencement ceremonies will now be on June 10 instead of June 3, giving Hermiston School District room to make up day for snow days last Friday, today and for up to three additional days as needed.

If no more school days are canceled due to inclement weather, students' last day will be Friday, June 9 and teachers' last day will be Monday, June 12.

According to a news release, seniors would not meet state standards for the "instructional hour minimum" before graduation without the added days.

"We understand that changing the graduation date and extending the school year is challenging for everyone involved," Superintendent Fred Maiocco said in a statement. "However, we believe this decision is in the best interest of our entire community. We remain hopeful that with six months advance notification everyone will be able respond flexibly to this difficult situation."

The district did not leave any room for make-up days in the 2016-2017 calendar and the Oregon Department of Education no longer gives an allowance for inclement weather in meeting minimum instructional hour requirements for students.

Closures

The following
school districts
will be closed
Thursday:

- Hermiston
- Pendleton
- Pilot Rock
- Umatilla
- Morrow County
- Stanfield
- Lone

2-hour delay
• Helix
• Athena-Weston

Notices as of press
time Wednesday.
Check for updates at
eastoregonian.com

OTC suggests \$574M hike for transportation

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon Transportation Commission has recommended state legislators boost transportation spending by \$574 million a year to upgrade roads and bridges and relieve traffic congestion in metro areas.

The figure is the first concrete proposal in play for a transportation package, which is expected to be one of the major issues in front of the Legislature in 2017. The legislation will likely send hundreds of millions of dollars to the Department of Transportation, which the commission oversees.

Transportation commissioners presented a draft report outlining their recommendations Tuesday to the legislative committee charged with crafting the transportation package. The transportation commission was scheduled to formally vote on the recommendations at a meeting Thursday.

"We are creating a menu for you to start from," said Tammy Baney, transportation commission chairwoman.

The committee's leadership requested the report from the transportation commission to serve as a foundation for drafting the legislation, which is scheduled to be released in January.

"These are the experts, so we have asked them to bring us their thoughts," said Rep. Caddy McKeown, co-chairperson of the Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization. "This is the starting point of the conversation."

The state spends about \$1.3 billion a year on transportation system maintenance and upgrades. The commission's recommendation would bring that amount up to \$1.9 billion, said Transportation Commissioner Sean O'Hollaren.

Lawmakers would likely finance the transportation package by hiking the gas tax and other fees.

The legislative committee traveled the state and held hearings in 11 different locations to help identify the public's and local governments' priorities for a transportation package.

