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A layer of fog enshrouds a pair of farm houses on Mission Market Road Tuesday at the foothills of the Blue Mountains, south of Mission. Fog and freezing fog remain forecast for Eastern Oregon through the weekend, according to the National Weather Service.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris



EAST OREGONIAN

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141st Year, No. 72

WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A sign warning of a bump stands in front of a large pothole that has been filled with gravel Tuesday on Westgate in Pendleton.

Winter wear & tear

Snow and ice cause cracks, potholes

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The severe winter weather has some road departments preparing for a slew of new street maintenance.

Bob Patterson, director of Pendleton Public Works Department, said crews are assessing the toll that snow, ice and cold caused road tops to pop free, resulting in new cracks and plenty of potholes.

"This winter was much harder on our road system than (any) in the last 12 years," Patterson said.

Pendleton budgeted \$300,000 for arterial road maintenance, about a third of what it needs. And the city's street utility fee generated \$480,000, with 70 percent targeted to residential streets in good condition and the rest for streets in the poor condition.

"If anything, this has put more streets in the worst case," he said.

Ronald Sivey is Hermiston's street superintendent. He said it was hard to tell at this point if the winter has caused more damage than usual to Hermiston's streets

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Gravel used during the recent snow storms lies in piles on Northwest Fourth Street on Tuesday in Pendleton.

HERMISTON

County, city join to discuss EOTEC

Has hosted 40 events since opening in May

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Hermiston City Council and Umatilla County Board of Commissioners agree it's time to lay out a long-term plan for the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

During a joint work session Monday the two governing bodies discussed the need to come up with a concrete operations plan as soon as possible, and to increase the focus on marketing so that the center is busy year-round and not just during the Umatilla County

Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo. "The fair and rodeo are an event, one month out of the year," city councilor John Kirwan said. "We should be looking two to three years out."

He said it seems the EOTEC board's focus has been on getting the project done in time for the 2017 fair and rodeo. That's important, he said, but so is making sure the center is busy so that the city and county aren't saying "we need taxpayer money to keep this going."

He also said that city manager Byron Smith, who chairs the EOTEC board, is spending about 20 to 25 percent of his time on EOTEC, taking away from other city concerns. That can't be the

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— John Kirwan,
Hermiston city councilor

case forever, he said.

Smith and county commissioner Larry Givens, who also sits on the EOTEC board, told Kirwan they share his concerns. Givens said the center does not have bonds to pay off, which puts it ahead of most event centers in terms of becoming

See EOTEC/8A

BOARDMAN

Debate emerges over what replaces coal plant

By TED SICKINGER
The Oregonian

Portland General Electric's agreement to close its only coal-fired power plant won praise seven years ago as an environmental victory with national implications in the fight against air pollution and climate change.

As the 2020 closure date approaches, though, those good feelings have largely evaporated. The coalition of environmentalists, ratepayer advocates and industry groups that once cheered PGE's decision are now preparing for a showdown instead.

They suggest the utility, in deciding how to replace the Boardman plant's power, is stacking the deck in favor of two new gas plants it wants to build at the coal plant site. A series of decisions by the utility and state regulators later this year will determine the direction of PGE's future power supply and its mix of green energy and fossil fuels.

See PGE/8A

UMATILLA

Fast-tracked development questioned by commission

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Umatilla's planning commission found itself at odds with its city manager Tuesday night during a planning commission meeting.

City manager Russ Pelleberg was not at the meeting, but the commission approved a motion to ask him to attend their next one.

The commission had on its agenda an application from Fastrack, Inc. for a 24-lot residential subdivision in McNary across Willamette Avenue from the golf course. In December the city council had approved Fastrack's request for a zone change from commercial to residential.

When planning commission chair Boyd Sharp asked planning director Bill Searles why the subdivision was on the agenda, Searles said it was at Pelleberg's request.

Sharp noted that ORS 227.186 requires the city to provide written notice to adjacent land owners of a public hearing on a land use change at least 20 days in advance. He said Fastrack submitted its application to Pelleberg on Jan. 10, so a 20 day notice could not have been given.

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