

EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Out of Africa

New health director works with NBA star Mutombo to improve Congo health care

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Jim Setzer's resume looks a little like the table of contents for the World Atlas.

Umatilla County's new public health director comes by way of Namibia, Kenya, Niger, Zaire, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia.

And those are just the African countries. He's also worked in the Republic of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, India, Laos, Pakistan, Vietnam, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana and Haiti.

Setzer, an epidemiologist who speaks six languages in varying degrees of fluency, spent the past year-and-a-half helping the government of Namibia strengthen that country's health information system.

"We were trying to create an electronic information system for the (several hundred) government-run clinics," Setzer said. "Traditionally this was done by paper. People didn't have real-time information."

Setzer is a numbers guy — not much makes him happier than creating a system or making sense of data — but he's also a people person. He tells stories with comedic timing and dramatic flair, though he claims to have a streak of introversion lurking within.

Recently, he leaned back in his new office chair and described his time in Namibia. His jobs included everything

See SETZER/10A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris



"George Murdock is thinking outside the box. I wasn't the average applicant."

— Jim Setzer, Umatilla County's public health director

Contributed photo
A younger Jim Setzer stands with a group of young boys during a stint as a Peace Corps worker in Zaire.

State jobs recovery lags in some rural areas

Overall number is 6.5 percent higher than pre-recession peak

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon now has more jobs than before the "great recession" but some rural areas are still lagging behind, according to the state economist.

After the financial crisis a decade ago, Oregon lost roughly 8 percent of its jobs, said Mark McMullen.

Since then, the state has not only regained all those lost jobs but also increased the overall number by 6.5 percent from the pre-recession peak, he said during a Feb. 6 hearing before the House Committee on Economic Development and Trade.

However, McMullen said those gains haven't been felt equally by all regions of the state.

The Portland metropolitan area has seen the strongest recovery, with the number of jobs now 9 percent higher than before the recession.

There are now 7.5 percent more jobs in the Columbia Gorge, 6.8 percent more jobs in Central Oregon and 3.3 percent

See JOBS/10A

Constituents quiz Walden on what's next for Obamacare

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The hot questions on Rep. Greg Walden's town hall hotline Monday were about the fate of the Affordable Care Act at the hands of a newly Republican-led White House and Congress.

Questions about former President Barack Obama's health care law — passed seven years ago and commonly known as Obamacare — dominated a telephone town hall the Hood River Republican held for residents across eastern, central and southern Oregon as he called from Washington D.C. Monday.

After President Donald Trump and conservatives up and down the ballot spent the past year promising voters they would repeal and replace Obamacare, several people asked Walden how he and his fellow Republicans planned to do just that.

Walden reassured callers that he wanted to keep certain aspects of the law, like prohibiting insurance companies from denying patients with pre-existing conditions and setting lifetime caps, while

See WALDEN/10A

Icy roads strike again over weekend

Dozens of wrecks reported, two semis spill some diesel

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Icy Interstate 84 through Morrow and Umatilla counties again gave drivers all they could handle and more Friday and Saturday.

And there could be more on the way.

The National Weather Service is warning that a couple inches of snow is likely Tuesday afternoon and evening and a wintry mix on Wednesday.

Umatilla County Fire District

1 on Saturday morning posted this message on Facebook: "If you have not left your house today, please do not. The roads are VERY slick and are not safe to drive on. If you must go out, drive slow and extend your following distance."

The dozens of wrecks included two semis that rolled and spilled diesel near Boardman. The regional hazardous materials team out, which operates out of Umatilla Fire District 1 headquarters in Hermiston, responded to the crashes.

The first big rig crashed around 10:20 p.m. on the eastbound side of Interstate 84 near mile 168,

See ICE/10A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A semitrailer remains on its side in the median strip after sliding off of icy Interstate 84 this weekend near exit 209, Pendleton.

