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EAST OREGONIAN

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PENDLETON

Basketball tourney takes meticulous gameplan



Burns fans watch their high school boys basketball team play in the quarterfinals at the state 2A basketball championships in March 2016 at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Nearly 300 volunteers pitch in to prepare center

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Success, they say, is in the details. No one knows the wisdom of that statement more than individuals planning this week's 2A Oregon State Activities Association championship basketball tournament in Pendleton. Dan Mitzimberg knows about preparation. He's the guy responsible for getting the hardwood basketball floor laid down in the main room at the Pendleton Convention Center. The old Phoenix Suns floor, which cost \$46,000

and came by semitrailer to Pendleton in 1998, took 12 workers about 10 hours to lay out the first time. Mitzimberg, as a utility worker at the convention center, said a crew of six whittled that time down to about five-to-seven hours in the years since. This year, the process got even more streamlined. "Ten inmates from Two Rivers Correctional Institution came and helped," he said. "It went up in about three-and-a-half hours." The flooring sits atop a layer of slats 3.5 inches deep, which gives the floor a bouncy feel. To ready the gym for three days of intense tournament play, Mitzimberg

See **TOURNAMENT/8A**

City: Safe lead levels at game site

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

Some positive results from lead testing won't stop the Pendleton Convention Center from hosting one of its busiest events of the year. Following two rounds of lead testing, Pendleton facilities manager Glenn Graham said the convention center is safe to use for the hundreds of

See **TESTING/8A**

State cuts to BENT have deep implications

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Pendleton police chief Stuart Roberts warns that removing state police from the regional drug team would have far-reaching consequences.

"Does it decimate us? No," Roberts said. "But does it cripple us? Absolutely."

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year would end state police participation on drug teams, including the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team based in Pendleton, and close the state police crime lab in Pendleton. The Hermiston City Council voted Monday night to give its support for the state to fund the lab and BENT.



Roberts

Roberts chairs the drug team board of directors, and Pendleton, Hermiston, Milton-Freewater, Boardman and Umatilla tribal police provide officers for the team, along with the sheriff's offices of Umatilla and Morrow counties and Oregon State Police. The team at full strength has 10 members, but Roberts said for the last few years there have been six regular members due to some agencies not participating.

Three of those six are troopers with Oregon State Police, including one supervisor in Hermiston.

Losing the state police, he said, means losing officers with deep investigative skills as much as losing the sheer numbers. And for BENT, the numbers matter.

The team's funding comes from the United States Office of National Drug Control Policy, which operates the High

See **BENT/8A**



Third-grader Damian Montez reads the book "I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!" by Dr. Seuss during his reading period Wednesday at West Park Elementary School in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

THE JOY OF READING

Schools celebrate Read Across America by putting focus on fun

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

Millions of elementary school children took those words from Dr. Seuss' famous book "Oh, The Places You'll Go!" to heart this week, with the festivities from Read Across America, an annual celebration commemorating Seuss' birthday of March 2, 1904.

The author of more than 60 children's books including "The Lorax," "The Cat in the Hat," and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," Seuss, whose real name was Theodore Geisel, captivated readers with his stories and memorable characters. Some were mischievous and lighthearted, some were grouchy and some carried a powerful message. But many inspired a love of reading in young kids — something the program aims to encourage long after Seuss' death.

"It seems like the love of reading has found its way out of schools," said Kevin Headings, principal of West Park Elementary School. "There's much more of a technical focus to teaching reading — more focus on testing, Smarter Balanced."

Headings said while the technical aspects of reading are important, the other side is important, too.

"When I was in school, teachers would read aloud, making reading fun for the



English as a Second Language students use a computer program called Fast ForWord on Wednesday at West Park Elementary School in Hermiston. The program is a game that helps students accelerate their reading skills while pinpointing where the students are less proficient at reading.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

kids," he said. "We don't do enough of that anymore. Encouraging that love of reading — that's what Read Across America is about."

Headings said classes at West Park are participating in dress-up days and reading challenges or competitions. On Friday, he

said, the school will do a read-in, where students can bring pillows and blankets and the entire school will read just for fun.

Long-term, he said, the school has followed the lead of Sunset Elementary

See **READ/8A**

