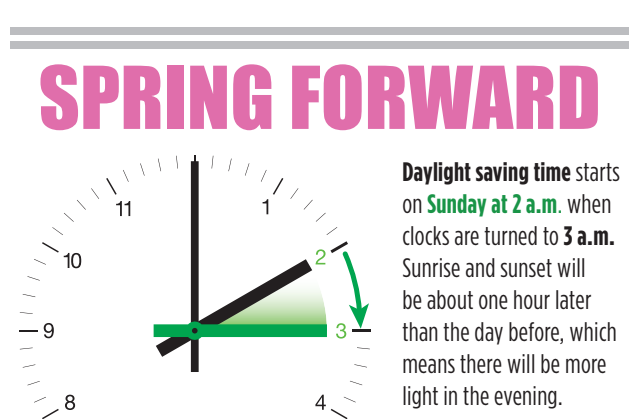




**BUCKS CLAIM STATE TROPHY**  
SPORTS/1B



**A PASSION FOR ANIMALS**  
LIFESTYLES/1C



**SPRING FORWARD**

Daylight saving time starts on **Sunday at 2 a.m.** when clocks are turned to **3 a.m.** Sunrise and sunset will be about one hour later than the day before, which means there will be more light in the evening.

# EAST OREGONIAN

MARCH 11-12, 2017

141st Year, No. 105

WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
Mabel Largaespada Dean prepared food for dinner as her son, Luis, takes plates to the table Thursday evening at her home in Hermiston.

## HERMISTON Rancher indicted on 200 counts of cattle neglect

Walchli Farms, sheriff's office continue to take care of herd

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
East Oregonian

A Hermiston rancher may be charged with 200 counts of animal neglect after authorities discovered dead and malnourished cattle on his property earlier this year.

Michael Hockensmith, 55, was indicted Feb. 28 by a grand jury in Umatilla County Circuit Court. His arraignment is scheduled for Monday, April 3 before Judge Dan Hill.

The indictment accuses Hockensmith of 14 counts of first-degree animal neglect, and 186 counts of second-degree animal neglect — one count for each animal in the herd. All together, the offenses amount to Class C felonies since more than 10 animals were involved.

Jake Kamins, a deputy district attorney for the state of Oregon who specializes in animal rights cases, has been brought on as a special prosecutor. Hockensmith has not returned multiple phone calls by the *East Oregonian* for comment.

On Jan. 7, the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office arrived at Hockensmith's Cedar Creek Cattle Company on Columbia Lane and South Edwards Road to find 14 dead cattle, and another 15 animals so malnourished they could not safely be moved off the pasture.

Since then, the sheriff's office has assumed daily care of the cattle, with help from local farmers and volunteers. Sheriff Terry Rowan said they have spent more than \$30,000 so far on feed, vaccinations and checkups for the animals. At least another three have died since the investigation began, bringing the overall death toll to 17.

"We would like this case to move more quickly, but that's our criminal justice system," Rowan said.

Meanwhile, the size of the herd has grown with the births of new calves, Rowan added. At last count, there were 204 total animals.

Once Hockensmith is arraigned, Rowan said the courts will address whether the cattle will be forfeited. Until then, Walchli Farms of Hermiston is providing hay and a few ranch hands to get the animals fed, under the supervision of sheriff's deputies. Walchli Farms will be reimbursed, Rowan said.

Another obstacle, Rowan said, has been trying to separate the unusually high number of bulls within the herd from the rest of the cows. Deputies hope to address that issue next week.

"There is an unusual bull-to-cow ratio," Rowan said. "It goes back to the mismanagement of the herd."

Rowan said neighbors should not hesitate to report any type of suspicious activity among the herd while the matter proceeds to court.

## NEW ROOTS

Hermiston woman's journey to citizenship took the long road

By **PHIL WRIGHT**  
East Oregonian

Mabel Largaespada met Stephen Dean 11 years ago waiting in line for a concert at the Silver Saddle Nightclub in Roxboro, North Carolina.

She was 21, he was 20. Though he was underage, he bought her a drink that night.

They fell in love. They got married. She took his last name. They had twin boys, Luis and Victor, now 5. Steve's construction career brought them to Hermiston two years ago. They bought a house. They put the boys in school. Last year she started her own janitorial business, and on Feb. 10 she won a contract to provide services at Hermiston's Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

One week later, Mabel became a United States citizen.

### Moving north

Mabel was 20 when she arrived in Roxboro for college from her home in Managua, the capital of Nicaragua. She grew up in a traditional family, where going barefoot

**"I'm a big believer that if you go to another country, you should try to communicate in their language. I'm not expecting anybody to understand me."**

— **Mabel Largaespada Dean**, proud U.S. citizen

was taboo and relatives tended to be protective of girls and women.

"When I came (to the U.S.) the girls my age were like, 'You don't know how to drive?' So I had to become independent," she said.

And she worked to speak and understand English.

"I'm a big believer that if you go to another country, you should try to communicate in their language," she said. "I'm not expecting anybody to understand me."

Because she speaks English with an accent, people in the South

See MABEL/14A



Contributed photo  
Mabel Largaespada Dean poses for a photo on Feb. 17 after receiving her U.S. citizenship.

## PENDLETON Student dish it out in Future Chefs Challenge

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

Provided a day off because of an in-service day, a dozen Pendleton elementary school students chose to hang out in the school cafeteria.

The fourth and fifth graders were there to cook, though, not to eat.

Garbed in black chef's uniforms, the students were in the Sherwood Heights Elementary School cafeteria Friday to compete as the finalists in the 2017 Sodexo Future Chefs Challenge, a first for the Pendleton

### More inside

For photos from the event see **Page 14A**

School District.

Earlier in the school year, fourth and fifth graders were asked to submit recipes based on the theme "healthy comfort food."

Sodexo, a food services company that contracts with the district to provide school lunches, chose the 12 best recipes based on their ingredients, leading them to

See CHEFS/14A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

## Reptile rescued from residence fire

Pendleton firefighters/paramedics Craig Murstig and Marc Proctor give aid to an iguana they rescued from a burning house Friday on Southwest Gaidwin Avenue. The family and their pet were all unhurt. For the full story see **Page 3A**.



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