



# EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

## PENDLETON



Traffic passes a construction zone Monday on Westgate in Pendleton. The construction zone is blocking one lane as crews dig a trench to replace a section of the water main.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

## Upgrades to roads, bridges estimated as high as \$312M

Committee estimate lower than ODOT's recommendation

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A subgroup of the legislative committee crafting a statewide transportation package has recommended an increase of \$255.6 million to \$312.4 million in annual spending to upgrade roads and bridges.

That would require raising revenues equivalent to a 9- to 11-cent increase in the state's 30-cent gas tax. The money would likely come from a combination of sources, which could include a hike in the gas tax, registration fees, tolling or other options.

"Even the equivalent of 11 cents is yet to be determined," said Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose. "This is all highly fluid."

The state now spends about \$1.3 billion a year on transportation maintenance and upgrades. The Oregon Transportation Commission has recommended spending an additional \$574 million a year to upgrade roads and bridges to ease congestion, particularly in the Portland metro area.

But the legislative subgroup could not reach a consensus on an amount, said Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, who led the group.

"We didn't reach consensus on much of anything, but I think we all agreed we need to do something," Bentz said.

The recommendation comes from the first of five subgroups from the legislative Committee on Transportation Preservation.

See **UPGRADES/2A**

## Westgate rehab project underway

East Oregonian

Westgate will be the hub of plenty of construction activity for the duration of spring.

The city of Pendleton has already closed one lane of traffic as contractors replace a water

main under the road.

The city aims to have the \$510,819 water line project completed by the end of April, in time for the Oregon Department of Transportation to start a street project.

ODOT spokesman Tom

Strandberg said drivers should expect more street closures and construction delays as workers apply a new overlay to Westgate from Airport Road to Southwest 18th Street. Strandberg's ballpark estimate for the project's duration is six to eight weeks.

In a minor snafu Monday, public works director Bob Patterson said contractors clipped the overhead line that supplied internet to the nearby Umatilla County public works office. The connection was expected to be restored Tuesday morning.

## BOARDMAN

## Students take their projects to the wind

KidWind Challenge teaches mechanics of wind energy

By **PHIL WRIGHT**  
East Oregonian

Duct tape saved the day.

Three teams of Boardman students participated in the KidWind Challenge, a national program to teach the benefits and mechanics of wind energy. The students designed and built miniature wind turbines, and Saturday they gathered at Riverside Junior-Senior High School, Boardman, to test their creations in a wind tunnel and find out what kind of power they could generate.

The four large fans in the tunnel sucked a few

turbines completely off the ground. The strong bonds of duct tape, though, allowed students another — and better — go of it.

Loli Jacquez and Rodrigo Guzman, sixth graders at Windy River Elementary, Boardman, built their turbine sturdy enough to withstand the force of the tunnel. Their teacher, Katrina Bretsch, said the pair used a carpet dryer to try out the turbine.

Bretsch said her whole class took part in the hands-on learning about wind power through kits she supplied, but the two boys joined up as Team Voltage to enter the competition. They were the youngest team there, and Bretsch said the pair committed plenty

See **WIND/8A**



Staff photo by Phil Wright

Fabian Meza and Donovan Carmack, students at Riverside Junior/Senior High School, Boardman, work on the blades for their team's wind turbine Saturday during the KidWind Challenge at their school. They were one of three teams seeking to earn the opportunity to compete at the national level.

## Proposed bill would seal names of sex crime victims, witnesses

Opponents argue it would violate rights to open courts

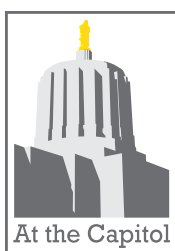
By **PARIS ACHEN**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Civil rights activists, defense lawyers and journalists voiced concern Monday over legislation that would give pseudonyms to sex crime victims and witnesses in grand jury indictments and keep their names out of public court records.

District attorneys and victim advocates say the legislation is designed to protect victims and their families who might otherwise

refuse to testify in front of a grand jury out of fear of retribution from the defendant. They said that is especially true in the case of accused sex traffickers who may have multiple victims.

"The fear of victims testifying against their traffickers cannot be over exaggerated," said Nita Belles, executive director of In Our Backyard, a Bend-based anti-human trafficking nonprofit organization. "They and (their families) have been threatened, and the traffickers have carried out enough threats against them in the past to make



At the Capitol

believers out of them."

However, opponents argued during a hearing in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee that the proposal would violate the public's constitutional rights to open courts and an open press.

Journalists are "sympathetic to those victims of sex crimes who are often required to relive their experiences multiple times throughout the trial process," said Keith Shipman of the Oregon Association of Broadcasters. "However, our member

See **BILL/8A**

## PENDLETON Old bridge wanted for new project

Group asks for \$20K to help move Eighth Street Bridge

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

A community organization wants the city of Pendleton's blessing to re-use the Eighth Street Bridge, and is asking for some money to help do it.

The Pendleton City Council will meet Tuesday to discuss supporting the Pendleton Enhancement Project's goal of re-using components of the original Eighth Street Bridge and reconstructing them in the downtown area.

By the time the council decides on moving the bridge, its members will have already met as the Pendleton Development Commission and considered a Pendleton Enhancement Project request for \$20,000 to cover some of the costs of re-constructing the bridge. The Pendleton Enhancement Project started its life as Project Exploration, a group of nonprofits and government officials interested in creating and supporting new civic endeavors.

Although the name has changed, the Pendleton Enhancement Project objective remains the same, with much of its focus directed toward the 500 block of South Main Street.

See **BRIDGE/8A**

