

# UNC REDEMPTION

SPORTS



# EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

High school senior Ruby Kennedy, who is home schooled, listens to her teacher via teleconferencing while taking a math 70 class Monday at BMCC's new Workforce Training Center in Boardman. Kennedy was teleconferencing with classrooms in John Day and Baker.

## Education expansion

### First BMCC bond project comes to fruition

BY KATHY ANEY  
East Oregonian

The first of the Blue Mountain Community College bond construction projects is at the finish line.

After voters approved a \$23 million bond two years ago, BMCC broke ground on three capital construction projects in Boardman, Hermiston and

Pendleton.

"We started west and moved east," said vice president of public relations Casey White-Zollman.

On Monday, BMCC's new Workforce Training Center in Boardman opened to the public. A couple of hours before the first class, coordinator Anne Morter looked harried, but happy. She described the building as three

times the size of the old facility and abundantly more high-tech.

"It's wired to the hilt," she said. "We have all the bells and whistles."

The structure houses three light-drenched classrooms, an early childhood education center and an industrial systems technology lab. Morter, who had a desk in the foyer in the old building, now has an office with

windows and a door.

She looked around her new digs with a smile, but also a hint of exhaustion. Chairs in the computer lab and conference room still wore plastic covers. Mops, a stack of carpets and empty boxes gave evidence of a last-minute rush. The first class would start at noon; the room, gleaming and stocked with 30 computers, stood ready.

Down the hall, instructor

See BMCC/9A

## Petition aims to preserve drug court

State budget proposal leaves program \$516K in the hole

By GEORGE PLAIVEN  
East Oregonian

Former employees and graduates of Umatilla County drug court are rallying to save the program after it was recently cut due to a half million dollar budget shortfall.

An online petition to raise public support has garnered 78 signatures as of Monday. A small group of advocates also met Monday via video conference with state Rep. Greg Smith (R-Heppner) to discuss how the program benefits the community.

Umatilla County announced last month it will eliminate drug court effective June 30 as state funding has shriveled over the last several bienniums. The latest budget proposal released by Gov. Kate Brown would leave the program \$516,000 in the hole.

Drug court was established in 2006, providing court supervised drug and alcohol treatment for offenders. Today, the program serves about 90 people.

The decision to end drug court was made by the Umatilla County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council, or LPSCC. Susan McHenry, chairwoman for the council, said nobody disagrees with how important the program is, but they cannot continue to support it without state funding.

"This decision was purely an economic one," McHenry said.

Now, supporters of drug court are pushing to maintain services they say are vital for offenders and their families. Amy Marvin, union representative for the local American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees chapter, has started a petition on Change.org that will be delivered to both LPSCC and the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners.

In the petition, Marvin says drug court has "improved the lives of drug addicted offenders, promoted family stability,

See PETITION/9A

## Employers seek more changes to schedule bill

By PARIS ACHEN  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Despite proposed revisions to a bill that would mandate two weeks' notice for employee

schedule changes and penalty pay for changes without the required notice, employers continued to voice opposition to the regulations during a hearing Monday, April 3.

The legislation is "an ill-conceived attempt to more formally systematize what is inherently a very fluid and dynamic process," said Chris Girard of Plaid Pantry Inc.

Girard said the bill "would actually reduce flexibility in meeting employees' scheduling needs." Many employees request last-minute changes, and the two-week notice requirement makes it harder for employers to accommodate those requests, he said.

A proposed amendment to the bill, however, would give employers a big concession. The amendment removes a requirement for "on-call pay." The provision would have required employers to pay for up to four hours of work if the employee is on call but works no hours. The agriculture community and other businesses cheered

See SCHEDULE/9A

## HERMISTON

## Students contemplate toll of distracted driving

Wrecked car of Alexxyss Therwhanger on display at high school

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
East Oregonian

Students trickled out of Hermiston High School on their way to lunch Monday afternoon, and many stopped at the corner of the parking lot to examine a large metal case, only to discover that they were looking at a crumpled-up car.

It was a sobering realization. "My mom and I drove by there yesterday as she was teaching me to drive," said freshman Lylyana Jaime. "She told me, 'That's what happens when you text and drive.' I will never do that."

That reaction is exactly what Shannon Moulton hopes observers will take away from the display. Moulton's daughter, Alexxyss Therwhanger, died on February 19, 2016, as she was driving from Long Creek to Pilot Rock. Therwhanger's 1998 Buick Century sedan, traveling north, failed to negotiate a left-hand curve in the roadway, and crossed over into the southbound lane. It collided with a 1994 Lincoln Continental.

Therwhanger, who was 19 at the time, was alone in the car and was



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The wrecked car of Alexxyss Leigh Therwhanger, who died while distracted by her phone while driving on Highway 395 last year south of Pilot Rock, sits on display outside of the Hermiston High School Monday.

"There's not any text so important that this should be the end result." — Shannon Moulton, mother of Alexxyss Therwhanger

pronounced dead at the scene. The driver and passenger of the other car, Frank Wimberley and Donnetta Marie Kulis, were transported to the hospital with serious injuries.

Oregon State Police later determined that Therwhanger was distracted by

her phone at the time of the crash. The display, which features Therwhanger's car exactly as it was found, is a visceral reminder of what can happen with even a slight distraction.

See DRIVING/9A



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