

Lightning strikes the Umatilla Indian Reservation Wednesday as a thunderstorm moves through the area south east of Pendleton. Showers and thunderstorms are likely to return Thursday, according to the National Weather Service.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

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## HERMISTON

### Food trucks, flower pots, parking spots in the works for downtown

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Action groups created in February to revitalize downtown Hermiston are putting their plans into motion.

Main Street coordinator Emma Porricolo said input from the citizens' committee on parking helped inform an item on Monday's city council agenda that will change the on-street parking along the east side of Second Street between Main Street and Hurlburt Avenue from parallel parking to diagonal parking and add a new handicapped-accessible spot.

She said the group is also working on plans for wayfinding signs around downtown that would help direct people to public lots.

"We're looking for funding still," she said.

The "retail and restaurants" group has focused on increasing the appeal of

See HERMISTON/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

### Pendleton man loses truck, trailer to fire

Flames engulf a Dodge truck and fifth-wheel trailer it was hauling Wednesday on Trail Road east of Pendleton. For the full story see Page 3A.

## BMCC ARTS & CULTURE WEEK

### Bosnian War refugee shares her story

Serves as poignant reminder of crises today

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
East Oregonian

Selena Hutchins talks cheerfully about college, her drive down from Seattle and the job where she makes mobile games. But she still chokes up talking about the first few years of her life.



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

Selena Hutchins, a refugee of the Bosnian war, shares her story with students at Blue Mountain Community College

Hutchins came to the Blue Mountain Community College Hermiston campus Wednesday as part of BMCC's Arts and Culture Week to talk to students about her escape from the Bosnian genocide.

She sets the stage with some basic facts about the Bosnian War, which happened at a time when many of her audience members were children, or not yet born. From March 1992 to December 1995, the war was the first genocide in Europe since World War II and killed between 25,000 and 329,000 people.

"That number is so disparate because it depends on who you ask," Hutchins said. "Those who started it versus those who

suffered from it."

Every year, she said, the "official" number grows when more victims of the war are identified.

The purpose of the war, she said, was to create a country called Greater Serbia following the breakup of Yugoslavia. But some wanted only a Christian population, and so began the genocide of thousands of people, most of whom were Muslims.

Hutchins is from a town called Bijeljina, where the war started.

"They took over the radio and TV stations first," Hutchins said. "So when they started killing people there was no way to report it."

Hutchins talked matter-of-

"They took over the radio and TV stations first. So when they started killing people there was no way to report it."

— Selena Hutchins, survivor who escaped the Bosnian genocide

factly about her experiences to a silently engrossed audience, recalling the time her father spent as a soldier, as all men were required to do, how she slept in street clothes with her shoes right next to her bed, and the time her family spent in a refugee camp.

She noted that the camp where she stayed in Hungary is now being used to house Syrian refugees.

When the United States and Australia began accepting refugees, Hutchins' family applied to come to both countries. Her mother, who had learned English in college, helped hundreds of others with their applications.

They got accepted to both, and her family chose to live in America. They moved to a small town outside Seattle, where it took her about two months to learn English.

The transition was difficult,

See HUTCHINS/8A

## PENDLETON

### 'Fresh start' program to help build new veterinary clinic

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

Faced with unusual funding requests, the Pendleton Development Commission took unusual steps to approve them.

Neither the Pendleton Veterinary Clinic nor the Pendleton Downtown Association used one of the commission's established programs, but they still got at least some of what they wanted, even if it took creating a new program and an unusually close vote to get it done.

The commission agreed to give the Pendleton Veterinary Clinic a \$100,000 grant to help build a new clinic on Southwest Emigrant Avenue, between First Community Credit Union and Papa Murphy's.

Clinic owner Fiona Hillenbrand already has financing in place for the \$1 million project and wants to purchase blighted property across Emigrant and replace it with new housing in the future.

In a presentation, Hillenbrand explained that the Pendleton Veterinary Clinic had outgrown its current building at 1901 S.W. Court Ave., which was originally built in 1949.

The new 5,000-square-foot facility would allow Hillenbrand to hire a new veterinarian, two support staff and several part-time employees, she said.

See PENDLETON/8A

