



**BULLDOGS  
FINISH  
STRONG  
SPORTS/1B**



# EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2017

141st Year, No. 156

WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Hermiston freshman Anthony Jimenez, second from left, seals bags of protein fortified macaroni and cheese during the Meals of Hope food drive Saturday in Hermiston. More than 100 local FFA members and volunteers gathered to package 40,000 packets of macaroni and cheese for food banks in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

## Macaroni and hope

FFA students donate 40,000 meals to food banks in 'Meals of Hope' effort

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Four months of fundraising and a morning's worth of elbow grease from students of local FFA chapters added 40,000 meals to local food banks Saturday.

"It really pumps you up to know you made an impact," said Hannah Walker, a junior at Hermiston High School. She was one of the blue-shirted leaders at the school directing teams of students measuring out and packaging meals of fortified macaroni and cheese, paid for by \$10,000 the students raised themselves from local businesses and organizations.

Walker and classmate Reed Middleton brought the idea to Hermiston from a national FFA leadership conference in Washington, D.C.

"Going to that kind of thing lights a fire under you," Middleton said. "You say, 'This world needs help. What can I do?' And now here we are with \$10,000 and 40,000 meals."

The service project was part of a national program called Meals of Hope, which helps organizations around the country host food-packaging events like the one on Saturday. Middleton and Walker said they helped package food for Meals of Hope in D.C. as part



Each packet of macaroni and cheese is fortified with soy protein to add nutritional value.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

of the conference, and decided then that they wanted to do a similar event back home.

They emailed back and forth with Meals of Hope and convinced their own FFA chapter and six more in the area (Pendleton, Echo, Heppner, Ione, Weston-McEwen and Milton-Free-water) to join in their fundraising

efforts. They ended up with enough cash for 40,000 meals, and the Hermiston FFA kicked in some extra money for T-shirts with names of sponsors who donated.

The project culminated in Saturday's two-hour event, where about 85

See MEALS/8A

"I really just like helping out in the community. I don't mind volunteering."

— Austin Mota, sophomore at Pendleton High School

## Steelhead face tough summer after drought, Pacific 'blob'

Returns down significantly on Umatilla

By GEORGE PLAVERN  
East Oregonian

The Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife is forecasting dramatically low returns of summer steelhead to the Columbia and Snake rivers, which will likely result in fishing restrictions for Northwest anglers.

Tucker Jones, Columbia River program manager for ODFW, said the agency is predicting a total run of just 131,000 steelhead based on a number of factors, including the suffocating 2015 drought and warm water "blob" over the Pacific Ocean.

The agency met May 11 in The Dalles, and will meet again Wednesday in Clackamas to hear public input on recreational summer steelhead fisheries. However, Jones said some restrictions will be necessary to meet federal guidelines under the Endangered Species Act.

"Things don't look great for steelhead this year," Jones said. "The forecast is very low, and we have to operate under ESA constraints."

Fisheries managers are considering a plan that would close steelhead retention downstream of The Dalles Dam

See STEELHEAD/2A

### HERMISTON

## Senior center, trail, water meters top city's \$57M budget

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

If a city budget is a road map to projects planned for the upcoming year, Hermiston's proposed 2017-2018 budget leads to a new senior center, utility upgrades and parks projects.

Construction is already underway for the Harkenrider Center, located on Northeast Second Street, but most of the work for the new senior center will take place in the next fiscal year. The center is expected to open in spring of 2018.

The parks and recreation department will also have another busy year, according to the \$57.3 million budget approved by Hermiston's budget committee Thursday and set to go before the Hermiston City Council in June.

The department will be moving into the Hermiston Conference Center in January and taking over operation of that building, contributing to an increase in the recreation budget from \$565,808 to \$679,995.

The West Highland Trail project should also begin construction in early 2018, creating a bicycle and pedestrian path parallel to the south side of West Highland

See HERMISTON/8A

### More inside

City will allow food trucks downtown for First Thursday in July. Page 8A.

## Travel Pendleton switches target from tripsters to baby boomers

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Travel Pendleton last year went after hipsters to boost local tourism. Now it seeks to entice an older crowd.

Like the last campaign, the tourism arm of the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce wants Umatilla County to help with some economic development money.

Pat Beard, Travel Pendleton director, made the pitch to county commissioners Monday morning in Pendleton. Beard said the "tripster" campaign in 2016 was "wildly successful," and the new effort is "One More

Day," targeting another generation — baby boomers.

The set of folks in their mid-50s to mid-70s, he said, are "mature, inquisitive travelers" with the income for extended stays, and getting visitors to stay an extra day brings significant benefits to the local economy.

Tourists in 2016 brought \$137 million into Umatilla County, Beard said, and 170 overnight visitors create one job. Likewise, each \$58,000 in direct tourism spending creates one job.

See PENDLETON/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Ken Jacobs, dressed as a sheriff, interacts with Debbie Hiergesell of Richland during the Pendleton Underground Tours Comes to Life on Saturday in Pendleton. For more on Saturday's tours pick up the weekend edition of the East Oregonian.



**Hermiston Office:**  
**GLENN SCOTT**  
Veteran's Service Officer • 435 E Newport Ave.  
Ph: 541.667.3125 • Cell: 541.848.8120  
glenn.scott@umatillacounty.net

**Pendleton Office:**  
**JENNIFER OLSON**  
Veteran's Service Officer • 17 SW Frazer  
Ph.541.278.5482  
jennifer.olson@umatillacounty.net

**VETERANS SERVING VETERANS** ★ **LET US ASSIST YOU WITH YOUR BENEFITS**