

**HEIMLICH WON'T JOIN BEAVERS IN OMAHA**  
SPORTS/1B



**RAINBOW FAMILY TO GATHER NEAR SENECA**  
NORTHWEST/2A

**Pendleton Coffee Bean shuts down**  
REGION/3A

# EAST OREGONIAN

FRIDAY, JUNE 16, 2017

141st Year, No. 174

WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

## Your Weekend



- Ural Thomas & The Pain in Pendleton on Main
- Inland Northwest Musicians concert
- Pendleton Men's Chorus Concert at BMCC

For times and places see Coming Events, 5A

### Catch a movie



Disney-Pixar via AP

In a world populated entirely by anthropomorphic vehicles, one car deals with the harsh realities of getting old, in Disney-Pixar's "Cars 3."

For showtime, Page 5A

### Weekend Weather

| Fri   | Sat   | Sun   |
|-------|-------|-------|
|       |       |       |
| 67/49 | 74/55 | 84/57 |

## HERMISTON High school looks at new venues for graduation

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
East Oregonian

Hermiston High School boasted a record number of graduates this year — but with that came unprecedented crowds filling the gym, auditorium and commons to watch those students walk across the stage.

In the coming months, the Hermiston School District will look at options to better accommodate those crowds, which will likely keep growing. The district is examining three new venues in which graduation could be held: the school's Bulldog Stadium at Kennison Field, the rodeo grounds at the new Eastern Oregon Trade and Events Center, and the Toyota Center in Kennewick.

Hermiston superintendent Dr. Fred Maiocco said the

See HHS/10A

# Learning from adversity

BMCC grad overcomes health challenges, addiction to finish college

By KATHY ANEY  
East Oregonian

Christopher Smith looked out at a sea of fellow graduates, family and friends and smiled a nervous smile.

Smith, a speaker at the Blue Mountain Community College commencement ceremony on Thursday night at the Pendleton Convention Center, had surmounted some daunting barriers on the way to this podium.

Now 38, he started life with multiple health challenges, including brittle bone syndrome and an autoimmune disease that ate away the enamel on his teeth, eventually requiring all of them to be pulled. He weathered dozens of ear and knee surgeries. He endured teasing from other kids.

"I was constantly bullied and told that I was stupid, dumb or even a freak of nature," Smith said. "There was one thing that I always dreamed about, and that was having the opportunity to go to college and to do something more with my life. I used to fantasize about being one of the few people with the privilege to say something inspirational at graduation."

That moment had come. The Seaside native described how he struggled with dependence on prescrip-



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

BMCC graduate Christopher Smith first bumps fellow classmate Sydney Saxton-Siaki before a commencement ceremony on Thursday at the Pendleton Convention Center.

tion drugs that progressed to heroin addiction.

"Unfortunately, growing up there was nothing positive for me to look forward to," Smith said. "My mind was stuck focusing on all the negative things that I had

gone through and I could never hold onto anything positive long enough to make a change. Eventually, I just needed an outlet to stop thinking."

See BMCC/10A

**"Anyone can change the course of their life, anyone can achieve what they set out to accomplish and dreams can save lives."**

— Christopher Smith, BMCC graduate



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

BMCC graduate Samantha Ball wears the phrase "Follow Your Heart" on top of her mortar board during the commencement ceremony on Thursday in Pendleton.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Elainna Howland of Pilot Rock holds a cutout of her daughter, BMCC graduate Megan Matthews, during the commencement ceremony on Thursday in Pendleton.

## HERMISTON Chamber turns down library space

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

The Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce is looking for a new home after officially turning down the city of Hermiston's offer to use the basement of the old Carnegie Library on Gladys Avenue.

Board chair Josh Burns said the chamber is hoping to find something more visible.

"We need adequate space that says 'We're a thriving business community,'" he said.

The chamber must move out of the Hermiston Conference Center, which it has been operating under a contract with the city, by the end of the year after the city council voted in April to turn management of the center over to its parks and recreation department. The

**"The fact that the city offered us any location illustrated that the city wants to keep working with the chamber."**

— Josh Burns, Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce board chair



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

New diagonal parking spaces have replaced parallel parking on the north side of Gladys Avenue, including the front of the Carnegie Library.

city is planning to remodel the basement of the former Carnegie Library to create offices, a reception area and a conference room and had offered to let the chamber move in after the remodel is complete.

Instead, the chamber is striking

out on its own. Burns said they're looking to lease something visible from a main thoroughfare like Main Street or Highway 395 that has office and storage space, a lobby and hope-

See CHAMBER/10A

## HERMISTON City looks for ways to afford road projects

Considers increasing fee for utility providers

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

As the Oregon legislature looks to raise revenue for transportation projects, the city of Hermiston is working on a plan of its own.

The city's public infrastructure committee has been working to put together a comprehensive capital improvement plan, and recently moved on to the street department portion of the project.

That could include a plan to raise franchise fees on providers of electricity,

See HERMISTON/10A



7 294671 10001 5