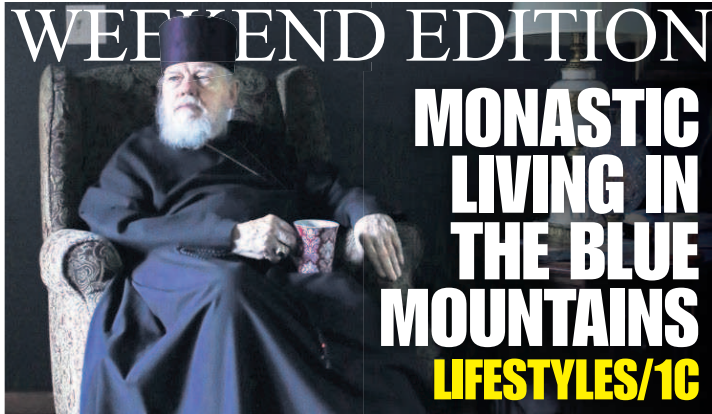




ETHICS INVESTIGATION TO MOVE FORWARD 2A



WEEKEND EDITION MONASTIC LIVING IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS LIFESTYLES/1C



PORTLAND CLEANS DIRTY RIVER NORTHWEST/7A

EAST OREGONIAN

JULY 15-16, 2017

141st Year, No. 195

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50

Another day, another \$10

Minimum wage up 50 cents in Umatilla County

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Workers in Oregon are seeing bigger paychecks this month after minimum wage rose to \$10 per hour in rural areas on July 1.

The 50 cent hike is part of a 2016 compromise to slowly phase in a series of wage increases tied to geography. By 2022, the “standard” wage will be \$13.50 an hour, while Portland workers will make \$14.75 and rural employers

will have to pay at least \$12.50 an hour. When the bill was passed last year, the minimum wage across the state was \$9.25.

Workers around the country have been pushing for a \$15 per hour minimum wage, but the state put the more modest measures into place to soften the blow for businesses.

Cherie Bumpaous, owner of the Pheasant Blue Collar Bar and Grill in Hermiston, said this month’s 50 cent increase still has an impact on small

local businesses and their clientele. She said what many people don’t realize is that an increase in wages also means an increase in taxes and benefits that the employer has to pay out as well, expanding the total cost of the raise beyond 50 cents.

“Of course it’s going to trickle down to the customers,” she said. “A nickel or dime you can absorb, but 50 cents you really can’t absorb.”

That means higher prices for customers.

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Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Bartender Meagan Shaver pours a drink Thursday at the Pheasant Blue Collar Bar and Grill in Hermiston.

Athena teen’s lifelong goal of going to Ivy League fulfilled



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Weston-McEwen High School graduate Michael Shafer stands on Athena’s Main Street Friday. After vowing to attend Harvard University as a four or five-year-old, Shafer will attend the Ivy League university in the fall.

HARD ROAD TO HARVARD

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

On Friday, it seemed like everyone in Athena stopped to say hello as Michael Shafer posed to get his picture taken for his latest achievement.

As Michael stood on Main Street across from the Athena Post Office, a man walking by stopped

to talk with his father about the media attention being bestowed on the 18-year-old wearing a “Harvard Class of 2021” shirt.

“He got his brains from his mother,” John Shafer quipped.

One of the owners hopped out of the Sugar Shack Espresso Bar & Sweet Shoppe across the street to wave at Michael and a UPS driver briefly stopped to joke that

she wanted to get into the picture before speeding off. This is life in downtown Athena. It’s Michael’s life, until he switches coasts to attend the most prestigious university in the country.

Michael’s shirt isn’t aspirational. He will start taking classes at Harvard University this fall.

Applying to the Cambridge, Massachusetts college isn’t a

fly-by-night proposition: it takes years of careful groundwork and rigorous study to gain admission.

Although that preparation usually starts before high school, going to Harvard has been Michael’s near lifelong dream.

Amy Shafer remembers talking with her sons about

See **HARVARD/14A**

STANFIELD

‘Sometimes it smells like dead flesh’

Stench from dehydration plant irks residents

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

Stanfield residents have long looked forward to summer as a time when the air is perfumed with the smell of local mint harvests.

But this year the small town has been inundated with a not-so-pleasant scent that has caused many to complain — and some to vomit.

Leland Winebarger has a welding business in Stanfield that is located close to the factory.

“It was just awful,” he said of the smell on Wednesday. “Today I threw up.”

Several others have complained about the harsh stench emitting from a local dehydration plant run by 3D IdaPro, the product from which is primarily used to make dog food.

“Sometimes it smells like dead flesh,” said Kathy Baker, a longtime Stanfield resident who owns a store, Fun Fashions Boutique, down the street from the factory. “It hurts your nose.”

Other Stanfield residents described the smell as that of rotten or burnt potatoes, which is the primary product the plant deals with.

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality representatives said they contacted the factory earlier this week after receiving 17 complaints in a single day, and that the company had immediately responded.

“We contacted the facility and said we’d received complaints and we need to look into reducing the odors,” DEQ’s Greg Svelund said Wednesday. “That was on Monday. The company already sent us information about what they think the odors may be, and have come up with a rough plan to repair it. It was remarkably fast.”

See **STENCH/12A**

The future of farming is coming to Pendleton



Contributed photo by Robert Delahanty
The Remote Operated Vineyard Robot, or ROVR, will be on display during the 2017 Future Farm Expo in Pendleton.

Expo to showcase latest in farm technology

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

Imagine putting on a pair of virtual reality goggles and being able to control a robot that mimics human movements to prune clusters of premium wine grapes.

Sounds futuristic, but the Remote Operated Vineyard Robot, or ROVR, may become an integral tool for U.S. winegrowers sooner rather than later.

Engineers at Digital Harvest, a Virginia-based company specializing in precision agriculture, have spent the last 18 months working to build the ROVR system, which will be on full display during the 2017 Future

Farm Expo coming Aug. 15-17 at the Pendleton Convention Center.

The Future Farm Expo is a three-day summit and trade show that invites local agriculture professionals — including growers, consultants and food processors — to meet with high-tech developers and learn how they can use drones and droids to make their operations run more efficiently.

This year’s expo will feature drones capable of flying beyond the pilot’s line of sight, mobile farming apps, advances in irrigation technology and, yes, a live demonstration of ROVR, which was built from scratch at Digital Harvest’s research outpost at the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range.

The ROVR has already been

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