



EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2017

141st Year, No. 201

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

HERMISTON

Mooney selected as interim superintendent

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

The Hermiston school board selected Tricia Mooney to lead the district for the next year and a half.

Mooney, who is currently the district's assistant superintendent of human resources, was unanimously elected by

the board Monday to serve in the temporary role while Superintendent Fred Maiocco takes a leave of absence to serve a tour of duty in Europe for the U.S. Army Reserves. She assumed the role immediately, stepping in as superintendent for the rest of that evening's board meeting.

"I'm humbled and honored

to head the district during Dr. Maiocco's absence," Mooney said. "We're going to be ready for over 5,600 kids on August 28."

Mooney was one of three finalists for the position. The others were Philip "Buzz" Brazeau and Richard Rundhaug. The board spent nearly four hours interviewing candi-

dates on Monday before deliberating in executive session. During the open session, the board conducted all three interviews before a crowd of 30 to 40 administrators, teachers and community members. Audience members could turn in sheets grading the candidates on their capability and their perceived fit for the district.

Mooney has spent most of her education career in the Hermiston School District, beginning in 1995 as a teacher at Sunset Elementary School. She has also spent time as the principal of Rocky Heights Elementary School and Armand Larive Middle School.



Mooney

See MOONEY/9A

PENDLETON



Lori Abell exults as officiant Sandy Smith announces that Abell and Skip Cripe are now husband and wife. The "biker wedding" was part of Pendleton Bike Week.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Task force scrutinizes state assets to reduce PERS costs

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — From the state's liquor control commission to its approximately 4,600 parking spaces, a group appointed by the governor is starting to scrutinize ways to make the most of state assets to reduce its pension obligations.

In April, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, announced she was appointing a "task force" to address the unfunded actuarial liability in the Public Employee Retirement System, which now stands at about \$21.8 billion.

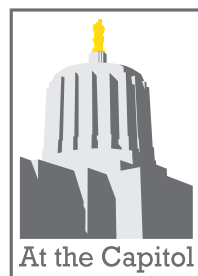
The seven-member group, tasked with finding a way to reduce that amount by \$5 billion, had its first meeting Monday.

The unfunded actuarial liability of the system is the amount of money that the state's obligations exceed the system's assets currently will be able to pay.

And the \$21.8 billion amount may grow, though it's not yet clear by how much. On Friday, the PERS board is expected to adopt rules reducing the rate it assumes investments of the Public Employees Retirement Fund will earn annually.

You can think about PERS like an algebra equation: Since a certain amount of benefits are guaranteed to employees, reducing the assumed earnings rate will increase the amount of money that public employers — such as school districts, cities and counties — will have to contribute to the system to pay those benefits.

Membership in the task force draws on the public and private sector, and ranges from the CFO of Oregon Health and Sciences University to the CEO of the Portland tech company Zapproved.



At the Capitol

See PERS/9A

Love during Bike Week

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

This wasn't your typical wedding.

The groom didn't enter quietly from a side door, nor did the bride float demurely up the aisle wearing a white, lacy dress.

Instead, groom Skip Cripe hopped aboard his Harley Davidson motorcycle, gave the

throttle a twist and roared into the room. In place of a tuxedo, Cripe wore a black leather vest, jeans and HOG gloves. He parked his glossy red Road Glide bike and stood waiting.

Bride Lori Abell, in a shimmering, sleeveless top, rhinestone-encrusted skinny jeans and black biker boots walked to her groom with a smile of certainty that this ponytailed biker would

More inside

New events provide summer boon for local businesses
Page 9A

forever be her man.

Cripe reached out his hands to Abell, his tattooed sleeve extending from his right wrist to his shoulder. A patch on the front

of his vest declared, "For some there's therapy, for the rest of there's motorcycles."

This was a biker wedding, smack dab in the middle of Pendleton Bike Week. A few dozen fellow bikers, friends and family watched the short ceremony from chairs in the Pendleton Convention Center's main room on

See WEDDING/9A

BOARDMAN

Food science finds young fans at OMSI exhibit

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry turned the second floor of the SAGE Center into an experiment lab.

OMSI took over the space at the Boardman museum Saturday for its Celebrate Oregon Agriculture event, a chance to share some of their popular exhibits and further hone the food science exhibits they use in their outreach program.

As a part of an Oregon Department of Agriculture program, OMSI developed several ag exhibits that local children eagerly engaged,

"It's a missed opportunity in Eastern Oregon for kids not to learn about agriculture."

— Jane Waldher, of Athena

poked, prodded and played with.

On one table, kids could clip a microscope to their cell phones and check out the surface of a piece of fruit. Across the floor, children could use baking soda or vinegar to make paper coated in blackberry or

See OMSI/9A



Photo by Antonio Sierra

OMSI food science educator Rebecca Reilly helps Abbigail Burleson of Hermiston with one of the museum's agriculture-themed exhibits at the SAGE Center Saturday.

