



87/58



**NIKE OVERHAULS
HEPPNER FOOTBALL
UNIFORMS**
SPORTS/1B



**U.S. CLEARS NEW
GENE THERAPY
FOR CHILDHOOD
LEUKEMIA** 5A

EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2017

141st Year, No. 228

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

BOARDMAN



Grace, 3, and Cora Schoerfelder, 2, look at wooden cars at a play station in a classroom Wednesday during a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Neal Early Learning Center in Boardman. Grace Schoerfelder will be attending class at the learning center this fall.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Neal Early Learning Center opens

Collaborative project finished in two years

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

The Neal Early Learning Center will serve as a hub for teaching Morrow County's youngest residents, but for those who envisioned the center it's much more than that.

"We're incubating minds," said Kathy Neal on Wednesday, making some opening remarks at the new facility's ribbon cutting. "It's designed and dedicated to nurture every child in the county."

The center, a collaborative effort between the Port of Morrow, InterMountain Education Service District, the Morrow County School District and Umatilla-Morrow Head Start, stands at the Port of Morrow in Boardman, adjacent to the Sage Center and Blue Mountain Community College's Workforce Training Center. Representatives from all those organizations spoke at the event, praising the resolve of those groups to get the project up and running. State Representative



The Neal Early Learning Center is a collaborative effort between the Port of Morrow, InterMountain Education Service District, the Morrow County School District and Umatilla-Morrow Head Start.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Greg Smith, who helped get state funding for the project, was also present.

"Innovation in the education

world can be slow, and very methodical," Neal said. "Not in this case. It took two years at the most. That's unheard of for a ground-up

project — it's lightning-fast."

Neal and her husband Gary,

See NEAL/8A

"We're years out before we will know the actual difference it makes, but it will make an immediate difference in kids' lives."

— Kathy Neal, proposed the idea of an early learning center to IMESD in 2015

Bag limits lowered for summer steelhead

Fish counts down at Bonneville Dam

By GEORGE PLAGEN
East Oregonian

Low projected returns mean anglers can expect to keep fewer summer steelhead on the Grande Ronde and Imnaha rivers when the season opens Friday.

The Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife announced Tuesday it has lowered the bag limit to one fish per day on both tributaries. The mainstem Snake River, meanwhile, has been limited to catch and release only, mirroring regulations implemented earlier this month in Idaho.

Summer steelhead returns have



AP file photo

This undated photo shows a steelhead caught in the Rogue River near Central Point.

been historically low so far in 2017. As of Monday, only 70,000 hatchery and 25,000 wild steelhead

have passed Bonneville Dam,

See FISH/8A

STANFIELD

School board spreads bond back payment over two years

Residents will see 1.78 percent increase in their property taxes

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

The Stanfield School Board voted at a special meeting on Wednesday to re-issue a \$636,866 levy for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

The decision came after the district received backlash for a recently-discovered error in levying taxes to pay off a school bond. The district sent out a letter last week informing residents that they had been collecting too little for a bond that paid for a new elementary school nearly 20 years ago, and that they would be increasing residents' property taxes for the next fiscal year to compensate.

After receiving criticism from community members, the board met with auditors and Paul Chalmers, the county assessor, to re-assess the amount they would levy. The board determined it could spread the payments out over two years so that taxpayers will pay the difference in smaller increments than initially announced.

Six Stanfield residents were present at the meeting. Each told board members they had been shocked by

See TAXES/8A

PENDLETON

City makes housing pitch to developers

Officials tout seller's market, workforce at convention

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

According to city officials, Pendleton has approximately 1,109 acres of land available for housing development.

How those acres could be developed to boost Pendleton's housing stock is an open question.

The city convened its first Pendleton Housing Convention at the convention center Wednesday to attempt to answer some of those questions.

Mayor John Turner, who also chairs the city's housing committee, explained to the audience of about 90 developers, landowners and government officials that a 2016 housing study commissioned by the city showed that Pendleton needs 125 more rental units and 90 for-sale units.

But whether its Pendleton's uneven topography, its rocky soil, a lack of utilities or other factors, building affordable housing in Pendleton won't be an easy task.

The market

Having worked in Pendleton real estate since 1994, Jef Farley of Coldwell Banker Whitney & Associates has experience with the local real estate market.

Farley said Pendleton is currently a seller's market — it would take 3.8 months for all the current homes for sale on the market to sell. A balanced market is set at five months.

Pendleton is especially lacking in modern housing. Farley calculated that only 2 percent of the city's current housing market is comprised of three-bedroom/two-bathroom homes with a garage built within the past decade.

Although the rental market is just as tight, Farley said Pendleton is a wide-open market for new housing developments compared to more competitive areas like the Tri-Cities.

Greg Galloway has a few coals in

See HOUSING/8A



7 29467 10001 5