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EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

WESTON



Fitness celebrity Jake Steinfeld and Josh McDowell team up to cut a ribbon with a giant pair of scissors, signifying the opening of Weston Middle School's new \$100,000 fitness center. Josh's video helped the school get chosen as one of three in Oregon to receive the workout equipment.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

WORKED UP TO WORK OUT

Weston Middle School opens fitness center to keep up with PE standards

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

More online

To see the student-made video that helped secure the grant visit eastoregonian.com

On a dreary Wednesday morning, the students of Weston Middle School set an example for adults everywhere on how to get excited for a workout.

All it took was a home-made video by Weston students, a visit from fitness entrepreneur Jake Steinfeld and the prospect of opening a new, \$100,000 fitness center.

The fitness center was funded by a grant from the National Foundation for Governors' Fitness Councils and its ribbon cutting ceremony brought Steinfeld, the students and several local government officials to the middle school auditorium.

Steinfeld, the foundation's chairman and the founder of the Body by Jake fitness brand, encouraged the students to continue the rapturous rounds of applause they had showered on middle school Principal Ann Vescio's announcements all morning.

"The more you clap, the more calories you burn," he said.

See WESTON/8A



Lyla Rogers and Kelsey Graham work out Wednesday in Weston Middle School's new \$100,000 fitness center.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Tapping into Eastern Oregon's natural resources

New U of O study touts juniper tree mill

By GEORGE PLAVER
East Oregonian

Like much of the high desert landscape across central and Eastern Oregon, the community of Ritter in rural Grant County is dealing with a scourge of unwanted Western juniper trees, crowding out native vegetation for wildlife and livestock.

In response, a collaborative

group of landowners known as the Ritter Land Management Team recently purchased a small portable sawmill to turn the pesky plants into valuable lumber, while also providing much-needed jobs for the area.

The first juniper logs were milled at Ritter last week, and the team expects to sell the finished product to Sustainable Northwest Wood, a Portland lumberyard owned by the nonprofit Sustainable Northwest. Juniper sales now make up 50 percent of the company's annual business.

Patti Hudson, executive director of the Ritter Land Management Team, said harvesting juniper will not only help ranchers keep their land healthy and productive, but may revitalize the local timber industry in a new way.

"We eventually hope to have a number of people employed doing both the restoration work and the mill work," Hudson said.

The operation is a prime example of what University

See JUNIPER/8A

BOARDMAN

Alvarez gets 8 years for manslaughter

Pleads guilty to 2016 shooting of Evencio Salas Birrueta

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

An 18-year-old pleaded guilty Tuesday to manslaughter in a shooting death that happened last September in Boardman.

David Alvarez, who was charged with killing Evencio Salas Birrueta, pleaded guilty in a settlement to manslaughter in the second degree and was agreed to an enhanced sentence of 100 months to the Department of Corrections, instead of the presumptive Measure 11 sentence of 75 months.

Alvarez was charged with the murder of Salas, 27, on Sept. 11, 2016 at Wilson Road Mobile Home Park in Boardman. Alvarez was 17 at the time of the shooting. Alvarez was transferred from a juvenile correctional facility in The Dalles to the Umatilla County Jail in February when he turned 18.



Alvarez

Police arrived at the scene of a crash at a Boardman mobile home park and found Salas shot in the "shoulder area of the arm." They began lifesaving efforts, but Salas died from the injuries. Alvarez fled, going to his father's home near Longview, Washington. He turned himself over to police in Washington the next day.

Alvarez was charged with murder, second-degree manslaughter and two counts of unlawful use of a weapon.

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson said the conflict may have been due to a drug deal between the two men.

"I believe Mr. Alvarez said he had somehow loaned (Salas) some money,"

See ALVAREZ/8A

PENDLETON

Council approves settlement with Quezada family

Old city hall has new roof, owners to focus on new windows

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The Pendleton old city hall could be ready for occupancy, more than three years after it exploded.

After meeting behind closed doors Tuesday, the Pendleton City Council unanimously agreed to a settlement with the family who owns the fire-damaged building at 34 S.E. Dorion Ave.

Both sides were set to meet in Pendleton Municipal Court in August over thousands of dollars the city has fined the Quezadas, but the settlement means the owners will avoid the family.

Old city hall originally exploded in July 2015, killing Eduardo Quezada, a member of the family that owns the building, and severely damaging the interior and exterior. The city council voted to fine the Quezadas \$500 per day starting in January, after the family failed to install a new roof and seal the building by the end of 2016.

Following the council's vote, City Attorney Nancy Kerns shared the terms of settlement.

In exchange for dropping the fines, the Quezadas will plead guilty to the nuisance ordinance violations.

The family will again be required to meet certain benchmarks to avoid penalties. With the building now roofed and other openings boarded up, the benchmarks focus on installing new windows.

The windows facing Southeast Dorion Avenue and Southeast First Street must be installed by mid-January and the rest of the windows replaced by mid-April. Addition-

See PENDLETON/8A

