

A light layer of fog hangs over the city of Pendleton and the foothills of the Blue Mountains on Wednesday morning.
Staff photo by E.J. Harris

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One dollar



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

BMCC recruiter J.J. Hill speaks to a classroom of senior high school students on Wednesday in Echo.

BMCC recruiter goes full-throttle

College enrollment jumps 11 percent

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Last year, J.J. Hill drove about 10,000 miles from high school to high school in his ride — a silver Subaru Crosstrek emblazoned with the Blue Mountain Community College logo.

On Wednesday, the BMCC recruiter chatted with 25 Echo High School seniors about college. He blended with his audience, sporting a ball cap, jeans and T-shirt. The Pilot Rock native came to this position as head of the BMCC recruitment program by way of Eastern Oregon University, where he majored in theater, and New

York and Chicago, where he did theater and stand-up comedy. Hill told a few jokes, but mostly kept the teens trained on the future.

“Who’s going to college?” he asked.

Almost two-thirds raised their hands.

“We’re going to do a little word association,” Hill told the students. “When I say ‘community college,’ what’s the first word that comes into your head?”

Words flowed back to Hill: small, cheap, more affordable, future, cost.

Hill flung out another phrase — four-year college — and got

See BMCC/8A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

BMCC student Lizzi Cox leads a group of middle school students on a recent campus tour.

Bean bag shotgun dare leaves one injured

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

A Nevada man is in the hospital after a dare at a Umatilla County campground left him with a gunshot wound.

According to reports from the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Department, two men — part of a group of about a dozen other people drinking and celebrating at Frazier Campground outside Ukiah on Tuesday — agreed to shoot each other with bean bag rounds from a shotgun on a dare. According to sheriff’s reports, one man who was shot received a serious wound on his thigh.

Umatilla County Undersheriff Jim Littlefield said the incident was still being investigated.

“I think what happened, is there were a group of people camping, highly intoxicated,” he said. “They decided they were going to shoot each other with bean bag rounds to see how they felt.”

Umatilla and Union County Sheriff’s Deputies responded to the scene around 9:21 p.m., and found a medic that had been nearby treating the 29-year-old victim. A private party took the man to Grande Ronde Hospital in La Grande. He was still in the hospital for treatment on Wednesday.

Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan said they could not release the names of the victim or the other person involved yet, because the victim was not yet in a condition to be interviewed. He said the bullet went all the way through the man’s thigh.

“There was some muscular damage, some bone damage,” Rowan said.

Rowan said the individuals were staying in a bunkhouse that is a temporary home to about 20 people from all over the nation.

“I believe they were working for the Forest Service,” he said. “It sounds like they were celebrating the end of fire season and likely were a little overindulgent.”

Rowan said from what he knew, only one gun was involved.

“Bean bag rounds” are less-than-lethal ammunition that can be fired as a shotgun shell. Law enforcement officials sometimes use them for riot control.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Matt Dietrich, youth development coach with the Portland Trail Blazers, leads a group of children in a defensive drill on Wednesday at Sunset Park in Hermiston.

HERMISTON

City celebrates new playground

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Children of all ages and abilities were soaking up the sun on the playground and on the basketball court Wednesday afternoon as Hermiston celebrated a newly revitalized Sunset Park.

A central piece of the new playground, which was paid for by a grant from Moda Health and the Portland Trail Blazers, has yet to

arrive, but several pieces — including swings, climbing equipment, giant plastic drums and two large bears for sitting and climbing — have joined the new basketball court installed last year after the city doubled the neighborhood park’s size.

City councilor Doug Primmer described the online voting competition that led to the grant for the new playground during the

See PLAYGROUND/8A

