



# EAST OREGONIAN

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One dollar

## PENDLETON



Guests move through a pizza buffet at Washington Elementary during a family night for American Indian students and their families on Tuesday in Pendleton. The Pendleton School District received improved marks in a 2016 survey of their American Indian student population.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

## Officials seek state help for businesses hurt by fire

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — This summer's harsh fire season left behind economic damages that Oregon officials and members of the business community are still trying to quantify.

Although the state is still researching the extent of the impact, economic development officials want to ask the Legislature in the upcoming short legislative session for funds for low-interest loans for small businesses affected by wildfires, perhaps triggered by an official disaster declaration by the governor.

Reduced revenues and cash flow for businesses due to disruptive wildfires this summer could impact their credit ratings and their access to capital, Jason Lewis-Berry, director of Regional Solutions and jobs and economy policy adviser to Gov. Kate Brown, told legislators on Tuesday.

The state's employment department said late last month that the fires didn't impact the unemployment rate statewide, but certain regions suffered higher job losses in September.

About 600 more leisure and hospitality jobs in Central Oregon, the Columbia River Gorge and southwest Oregon were cut in September than is typical, according to the Oregon Employment Department.

Lewis-Berry said the state is still collecting data on lodging tax receipts and

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## Culture & community

### Tribal students give good grades on district's cultural responsiveness

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

Following years of sustained efforts to improve the outcomes of its Native American population, the Pendleton School District recently received high marks from its American Indian students.

At the Pendleton School Board's annual meeting on the Umatilla Indian Reservation Monday, Julie Smith, the district's director of special programs, shared the results of a student survey conducted by the University of Oregon.

During spring 2016, the university surveyed 178 eighth, 10th and 12th-grade students and asked them questions about their feelings toward their teachers, schools and cultural identities.

Of the students interviewed, 16 identified as American Indian/Native Alaskan while an additional 13 students identified



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Matt Yoshioka, director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment for the Pendleton School District, speaks with Keirsen Spencer, 12, Brad Spencer and Karter Spencer, 7, during family night Tuesday at Washington Elementary.

as American Indian/Native Alaskan and another ethnicity. A total of 14 percent of respondents were either full or partially American Indian and include members the Confederated

Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

"Native students who participated in the survey felt overall positive about their school environment," the study concludes.

"Their average ratings of each survey domain were around the scale's midpoint, meaning that tended to "somewhat agree" that the academic and instructional supports provided by their teachers were culturally responsive, that they were proud of and felt connected to their cultural identity, and that the school had good relationships with their families and communities."

But some of the statistics provided by the survey showed that the district has more work to do.

One in four American Indian students felt that none of their teachers knew about their cultural backgrounds, and three of every four multi-ethnic Native American students said the same. Thirty percent of American Indian students felt that neither their education or their curriculum understood their culture. Thirty-eight percent said their

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**"The majority of students felt the school welcomed their family and community, but that teachers did not always reach out to their family members to invite them to the school."**

— Julie Smith, Pendleton School District's director of special programs

## HERMISTON

### UCFD celebrates success, plans for future after first year

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
East Oregonian



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hermiston firefighter/paramedic Carry Munro, right, gives a chemical weapons incident training on Tuesday at the main station in Hermiston.

In the 18 months since voters approved a bond to merge the Hermiston and Stanfield fire districts, the resulting Umatilla County Fire District 1 has seen swift changes. But with the exception of minor growing pains, Fire Chief Scott Stanton said the transition has been smooth.

"There have been very few bumps in the road," Stanton said. "There were no surprises on my radar. We put in a lot of groundwork and labor, and mitigated any possible pitfalls that could happen from this."

So successful has the new district been that they were awarded the "Oregon Fire District of the Year" award last week at the Oregon Fire District Association conference.

Stanton attributed the award to several changes they implemented shortly after forming the new district.

"The biggest deal was getting the second station staffed, finally," he said. "We've already seen lives saved and fires put out that wouldn't have otherwise."

The second station, at East Punkin Center and Diagonal roads, has been around for 31 years, but was never been staffed full-time until March 2017.

The district has hired six people to staff the station.

Stanton said he was also proud of the community paramedic program, which the district began in June in conjunction with Good Shepherd Medical Center's ConneXions program, which connects people with community health resources. The program allows paramedics to

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