



SANTA TO TOUCH DOWN IN UMATILLA
COMMUNITY/6A



EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2017

142nd Year, No. 30

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

PENDLETON

New projects surge at convention center



A recent paint job has changed the Pendleton Convention Center from beige to a darker shade of brown.

Facility gets fresh paint job and high-speed internet

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

Shortly after taking over the Pendleton Convention Center manager position in July, Pat Beard put his stamp on the former National Guard armory.

There's been plenty of activity inside the convention center, but the most noticeable change — a new paint job that turned the building's color scheme from beige to dark brown — is on the exterior.

"It's a much warmer color," he told the Pendleton City Council at a Nov. 7 meeting. "It's representative of Eastern Oregon."

Both at the council meeting and in a following interview, Beard listed some of the upgrades made to the convention center in recent months.

In addition to the new paint both inside and outside the facility, the center added new projectors, installed new wayfinding signs, repainted the curbs and lines in the parking lot, created a new promotional video and doubled bandwidth on the convention



Beard

center's wi-fi.

The latter is important to media-heavy events like the Oregon School Activities Association 2A basketball tournament, where media members and the crowd are all competing for internet bandwidth as they share information online. Beard added that unlike other convention centers, high-speed internet at Pendleton's facility remains free to use.

Beard said these aesthetic and service improvements are needed

See **PENDLETON/10A**

Health inspection scores get online database

All restaurants inspected once every six months

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

Umatilla and Morrow County residents can now easily check how their favorite restaurants scored on their latest health inspections.

Depending on how much you want to know about your food, that can be good or bad news. But it's a more complex process than diners might expect.

"Every restaurant we license has to be inspected [...] once every six months," said Joseph Fiumara, Umatilla County's environmental health supervisor.

Though restaurant health scores have always been public, customers had to request them directly from the health department. They're now accessible in an online database.

"It has been available for Umatilla and Morrow counties since May or June," Fiumara said. Most counties across Oregon will soon be following suit, he said.

Fiumara said the format on the website is more comprehensive than previous presentations of the data, which he thinks will benefit restaurants and educate diners. Rather than just the numerical score, diners can now see the specific areas where restaurants lost points and how they were instructed to correct them.

"To me, unless you really understand these scores, they don't tell you much, and can have negative pushback that's not deserved,"



A cook puts tomatoes on a bun for a hamburger order on Tuesday at the Midway Bar and Grill in Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

he said. "So I prefer being able to see the broader process. I can tell you that you could score a 100 and I could walk out of there and say I'd never eat there. A lot besides the score goes into it."

Restaurants start out with 100 points, which are deducted for each violation. A business must score at

least 70 points to be considered compliant. The scoring process is broken down into three types of violations: priority, priority foundation and code violations.

Priority violations are those that directly lead to food-borne

See **RESTAURANTS/10A**

Hermiston

Delish Bistro	100
Walker's Farm Kitchen ...	100
Nelly's	100
Kobe Hibachi Sushi	97
Nookies	95
Ixtapa	95
Lawan's Thai Garden	92
Taste of Thai	82
Hale's	74
La Palma	74

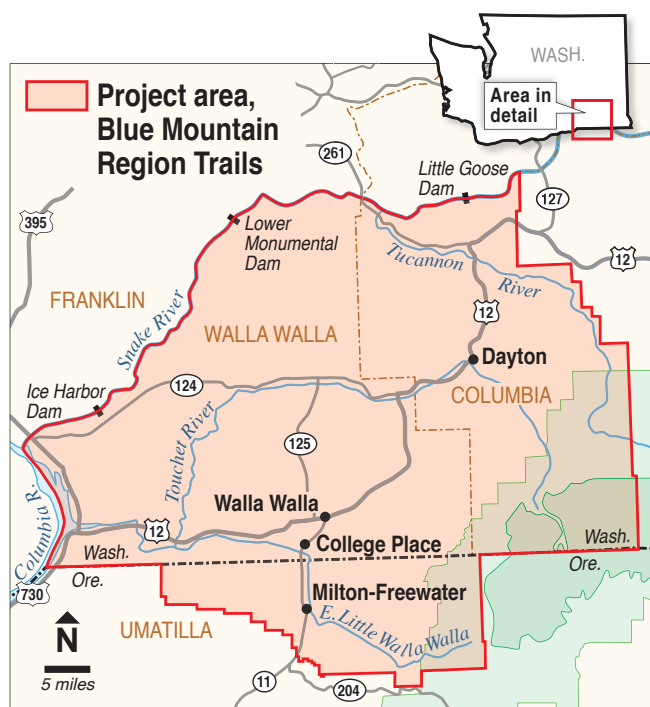
Pendleton

Hamley Steakhouse	100
Dickey's Barbecue Pit	100
Hal's Hamburgers	97
Prodigal Son	95
Joe's Fiesta	95
Great Pacific	92
Sister's Cafe	92
Rooster's	92
Thai Crystal	90
Virgil's at Cimmityoti's	74

The most recent scores for 10 popular Hermiston and Pendleton restaurants

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— **Joseph Fiumara**, Umatilla County's environmental health supervisor



Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

Forming a path to more connected communities

Plan calls for connectivity of non-motorized trails

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

A diverse group of stakeholders in the Walla Walla Valley — including Umatilla County and the city of Milton-Freewater — is nearly ready to unveil its master plan for developing new hiking, biking and other non-motorized trails across the region.

After three rounds of public outreach, project leaders expect to release a draft version of the Blue Mountain Region Trails plan later this winter, striving to boost outdoor recreation and connectivity

between local communities.

The project area is limited to northeast Umatilla County, along with neighboring Walla Walla and Columbia counties in Washington. Planning is focused exclusively on public lands and existing public right-of-ways, but may also consider easements with willing landowners.

Bob Waldher, Umatilla County planning director, said the plan also takes into account sidewalks and bike lanes within city limits. The goal, he said, is to adopt a region-wide blueprint that will lay the groundwork for future trails projects and make it easier for municipalities to apply for grant funding.

"Unless you have a plan, a lot of these

See **TRAILS/10A**

