

Frozen fog collects on the edges of a road sign off Highway 206 on Tuesday west of Heppner. The freezing fog will persist in the area until Friday, according to the National Weather service.

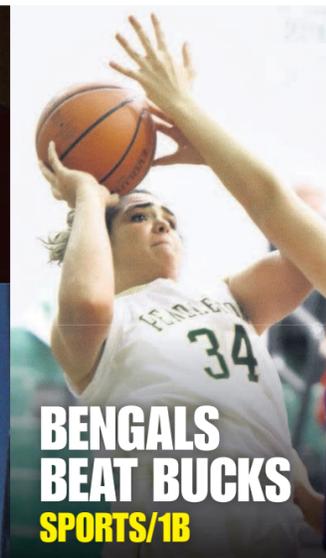
Staff photo by E.J. Harris



TASERED TROOPER GETS SWEET APOLOGY
REGION/3A



JONES WINS IN ALABAMA UPSET
NATION/6A



BENGALS BEAT BUCKS
SPORTS/1B

EAST OREGONIAN

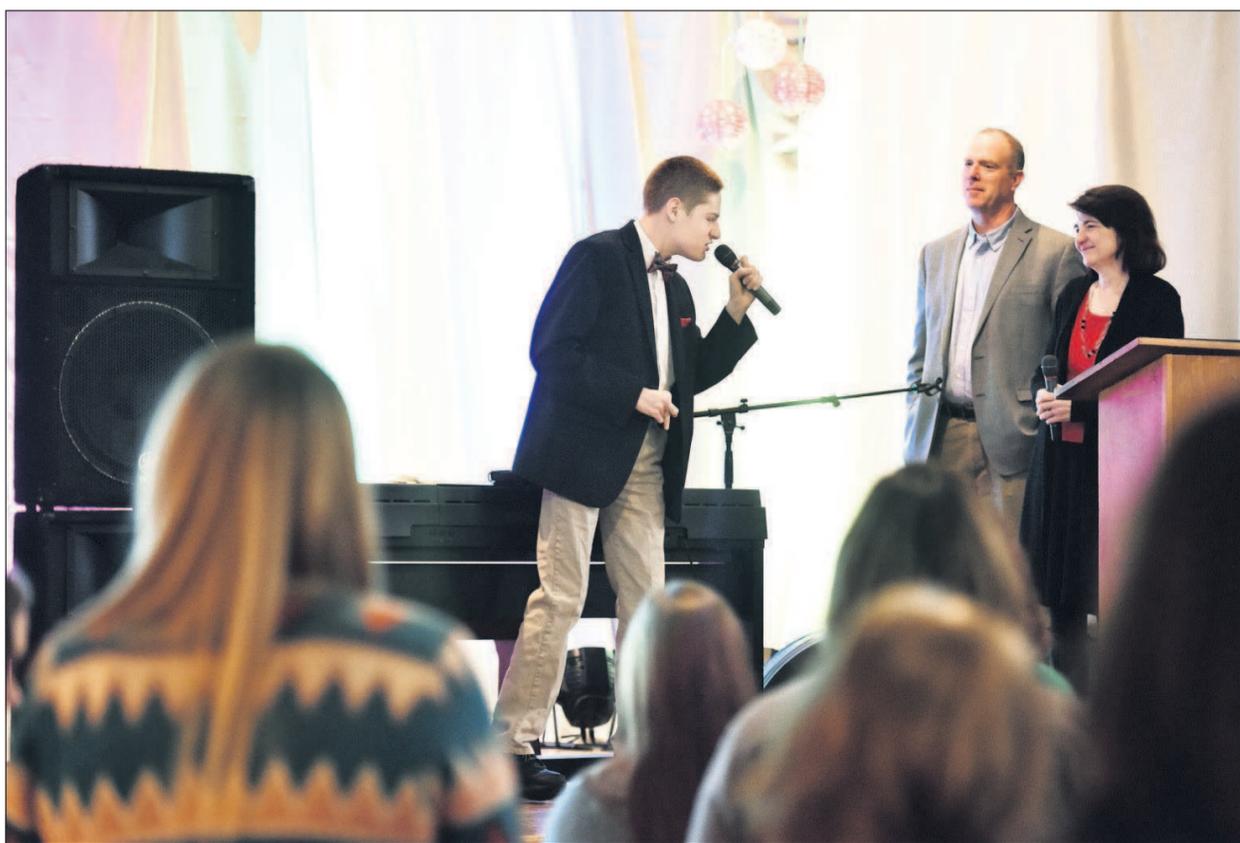
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017

142nd Year, No. 40

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Teenager overcomes blindness and autism through music



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Internet sensation Christopher Duffley sings an original number called "Keep On" during the annual Christmas party for Community Counseling Solutions on Tuesday in Heppner.

The power of song

Duffley learned to sing before he could carry on a conversation

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

One day last December, Kimberly Lindsay mindlessly browsed her Facebook feed before clicking on a YouTube video. She sat back and watched.

A 10-year-old boy named Christopher Duffley sang "Open the Eyes of My Heart." As the Heppner woman watched, she felt intensely moved by the boy's sweet voice.

"Open the eyes of my heart,
Lord

Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see you
I want to see you"

Lindsay learned Christopher's story. At birth, he weighed less than two pounds and had cocaine in his system. He was



More online

For video of the performance visit eastoregonian.com

blind and autistic. His aunt and uncle, Christine and Steve Duffley, adopted the baby from foster care after a lot of prayer. He learned to sing before he could carry on a conversation. A music therapist used music as a way to help him communicate, discovering the first day that Christopher had perfect pitch.

A video of Christopher singing "Open the Eyes of My Heart" at the Capitol Center for the Performing Arts in Concord, New Hampshire, got more

See DUFFLEY/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Kimberly Lindsay introduces Christopher Duffley at the annual Christmas party for Community Counseling Solutions on Tuesday in Heppner. Lindsay saw a viral video of Duffley while on Facebook and worked for nine months to get him to perform for the party.

HERMISTON

City claims different approach to tourism

Embraces trade shows, sports tournaments to draw visitors

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

A proposed Umatilla County tourism tax was killed last week after Pendletonians expressed the sentiment that Hermiston doesn't care about tourism, but the city of Hermiston is pushing back on that notion.

"The proof's in the pudding that we are investing in tourism assets and infrastructure, but you don't start marketing the car before you build the car," assistant city manager Mark Morgan said.

Residents from both ends of the county expressed opposition to the proposed 2 percent tax, added to hotel customers' room bill, which would have been earmarked to promote tourism in Umatilla County via grants, product development and marketing. But their reasons for opposition highlighted two very different approaches to tourism.

In Hermiston, the city has invested heavily in the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center on the southeast edge of town, including a \$1 per room per night tourism promotion assessment on hotel rooms that goes directly to marketing EOTEC (a second dollar per night, added last year, is being used to pay off bonds used to complete EOTEC's construction). The project started out the 2017-2018 fiscal year with more than \$350,000 in TPA funds in the bank. Now that construction is complete and venue-management company VenuWorks is set to take over management on Jan. 1, the EOTEC board

"The proof's in the pudding that we are investing in tourism assets and infrastructure, but you don't start marketing the car before you build the car."

— Mark Morgan, assistant city manager

See TOURISM/8A

HERMISTON

Chamber to move temporarily into Cornerstone Plaza

Office will open in new location on Jan. 2

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

After a months-long search for a new home, the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce will be moving into the Cornerstone Plaza in early 2018.

The chamber offices will be closed the week of Christmas, re-opening in the new location at 1055 S. Highway 395, Suite 111, on Jan. 2.

Board chair Josh Burns said the plaza will not be the chamber's permanent home, but will allow them to continue providing services for chamber members and the community as they look for the best fit.

"We're excited to continue to do what we're doing for members," he said.

The chamber's offices have been located at the Hermiston Conference Center as the organization managed the building under a contract with the city of Hermiston. In April, however, the city council voted to end the contract with the chamber on Dec. 31 and transfer management of the conference center to the city's parks and recreation department.

According to reasoning given by the city at the time, the change was spurred by a 35 percent decrease in revenues for the conference center, likely due to competition from the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center. By taking over management of the conference center the city hopes to better leverage both resources, directing

See CHAMBER/8A



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

The Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce is moving its offices to the Cornerstone Plaza, two doors down from Kobe Hibachi Sushi.



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