



**STARFISH
MAKING
COMEBACK**
NORTHWEST/2A

**50 YEARS LATER,
ICE BOWL STILL
BRINGS CHILLS**
SPORTS/1B



EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2017

142nd Year, No. 50

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Several crashes, but no closures yet on I-84

ODOT has used more than 700 tons of salt so far

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

The snow was a little later this year than last, but it showed up in time for Christmas — and to cause some accidents on Interstate 84.

To combat icy roads this year, the Oregon Department of Transportation began using rock salt on the roads when necessary between Boardman and the Idaho border.

Peter Murphy, a spokesman for ODOT, said the department had been

using salt since Dec. 1 between the Idaho border and the top of Deadman Pass, near Meacham.

Murphy, who is based in Bend, said he spoke to one of the managers for the region about road conditions in Eastern Oregon.

“He said it’s been working well,”

See **ROADS/12A**



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

A salt shed is being constructed off Exit 193 in Echo. It is one of several in Eastern Oregon being constructed by ODOT to help with icy roads in winter.

MILTON-FREEWATER



Courtesy Rocks District Winegrowers

Dramatic cobbles are what distinguishes The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater, Oregon’s newest American Viticultural Area, which was designated Feb. 9, 2015.

Life on the rocks

Oregon’s newest American Viticultural Area attracting development

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
EO Media Group

Three years after it was designated Oregon’s newest American Viticultural Area, Steve Robertson says big things are beginning to happen in The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater.

Robertson, owner of SJR Vineyard and Delmas Winery, was a key

figure in establishing The Rocks District, which was approved by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau in February 2015. He serves as president of the Rocks District Winegrowers, a nonprofit formed last summer to promote the unique landscape and wines within the district.

“We’ve been busy,” Robertson said. “There’s been quite a bit of

progress made over the last couple of years now.”

It can take decades for a new AVA to gain acceptance in the wine world, Robertson said, though The Rocks District is already garnering recognition from some of the industry’s biggest names. Harvey Steiman, longtime editor at Wine Spectator magazine, recently described the district as “the most

distinctive terroir in America” for its rugged, stony soils.

The wines themselves are also receiving acclaim, with 25 local wineries scoring 90-plus points out of 100 with Wine Spectator. Critics are especially impressed with the quality of Syrah varieties.

“When you can taste the

See **WINE/12A**

Voters to get say on how state pays for Medicaid

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

On Jan. 23 Oregon voters will have a chance to weigh in on Measure 101, helping decide how the state pays for its Medicaid program.

President Donald Trump noted earlier this year that “nobody knew that health care could be so complicated” and this measure, which deals with insurance premiums, managed care organizations and federally regulated hospital taxes, is not an easy read. Here are the basics:

- **When do I need to understand this?** Ballots will be mailed to voters between Jan. 3 and Jan. 9, according to the Secretary of State’s Office. Ballots must be received by elections officials by 8 p.m. Jan. 23.

- **Why is this on the ballot?** This summer, Democrats in the Oregon Legislature pushed through a bill providing temporary funding for the state’s Medicaid system. Three Republican lawmakers — State Reps. Julie Parrish, of West Linn; Cedric Hayden, of Roseburg; and Sal Esquivel, of Medford, decided they wanted to refer parts of the law to voters. They led a petition campaign to gather signatures and are now urging voters to vote “No” on the measure, which would repeal those parts of the state’s Medicaid law.

- **Remind me. What’s Medicaid?** Medicaid is a government healthcare

See **MEDICAID/12A**

HERMISTON

New finance director finds hospitality up north

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Mark Krawczyk, left, and his wife Tammy at city hall.

Hermiston’s brand new finance director is still getting settled in, but he and his wife can’t stop marveling about how friendly everyone is.

“It’s a very welcoming community,” Mark Krawczyk said. “Other places I’ve been to, you have to be there six months to a year to get people to talk to you. Here I’ve never met a stranger.”

His wife Tammy Krawczyk had the same first impression when she arrived in Hermiston for the first time.

“He had some training to do, so I just roamed around, and I never met a rude person,” she said.

Mark grew up in Oklahoma and Tammy grew up in Florida and they had

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— **Mark Krawczyk**, Hermiston’s new finance director

been living in Texas. This is their first time living in the Pacific Northwest. They moved away from three children in Texas but will be closer to their other two in Washington and Idaho.

“We kind of left one half of the family to be closer to the other half,”

See **KRAWCZYK/12A**

