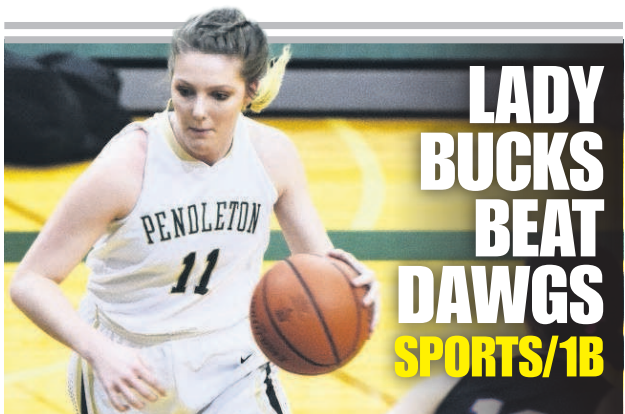




EAST OREGONIAN

FEBRUARY 10-11, 2018

142nd Year, No. 83 WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD \$1.50

Accusations of partisanship rile audits chief

Gov's spokesman says audits are political; secretary of state office fires back

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A public accusation by a gubernatorial staffer that the secretary of state's audits are politically motivated has created a dust-up between Oregon's two top offices, public records show.

Top advisers from each office now plan to meet in person to discuss their working relationship. Allegations of partisanship have popped up on occasion since Oregon's Republican Secretary of State Dennis Richardson took office a little over a year ago. But the most recent flare-up

began last week after Richardson's office released a lengthy and critical audit of the state's foster care system. Over a year's worth of work, auditors found numerous problems at Oregon's Department of Human Services that could put kids' safety at risk. After the audit came out, a

spokesman for Democratic Gov. Kate Brown told the Salem Statesman-Journal that Richardson's audits "are just about politics." The spokesman, Chris Pair, also told the newspaper that the Governor's Office had already identified the issues raised by the audit and that DHS had begun addressing most of the auditors' recommendations.

Problems in the state's foster care system are longstanding and well-documented. In 2016, outside consultants Brown hired the year before to dig into child safety issues found DHS Child Welfare needed a culture change and other "foundational" shifts.

See **AUDITS/12A**

UMATILLA



Umatilla senior cheerleader Maria Fernanda Hernandez leads a class cheer off with her fellow teammates during a pep rally on Friday at Umatilla High School.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

THEY GOT SPIRIT

Umatilla High School cheer team ready for state competition

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

As the Umatilla High School cheer team flips and tumbles its way to the state competition this weekend, they are already proud of what they've done. "For most of these kids, it's their first year doing cheer," said coach Randi Garrett. "And we're first year coaches."

The team of 16 — 10 girls

and six boys — will compete at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland this weekend for a shot at the OSAA state title in the large school co-ed division. They'll perform a two-and-a-half minute routine, featuring tumbling, dance, jumps, stunts and a cheer. Though they keep a smile on their faces the whole time, cheerleaders said the sport is more strenuous than many think. "It's really challenging," said

Courtney Daniel, a sophomore in her first year as a cheerleader. "I don't think people realize that. We have football players as our stuntmen, and even they agree — it's different than anything they've done." The team got a boost from several football players who joined the team after their season ended. Demonstrating their routine for the rest of the school at an assembly Friday morning, both boys and

girls cartwheeled and somersaulted on the mats before lifting three girls up in the air and tossing them, where they made a full revolution before coming down. "The most challenging thing was learning the technique. I've never thrown girls in the air before," said Darian Smith, a sophomore who joined as a stuntman after his football season ended.

See **CHEER/12A**

HERMISTON

Police chief addresses increase in assaults

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

Though overall crime in Hermiston stayed fairly stable in 2017, aggravated assault saw a spike. Of the eight categories the Hermiston Police Department tracks for its annual crime report, the numbers remained mostly flat. But the department recorded 36 incidents of aggravated assault, a jump from last year's 20 incidents. Of the assaults tracked, more than half were related to domestic violence and controlled substances — usually alcohol — were also a factor in more than half.



Edmiston

Other categories tracked annually are homicide, robbery, burglary, larceny, auto theft, arson and rape. In 2016 the instances of rape increased to seven, but were down to four in 2017. There was also one homicide in Hermiston in 2017, about the same as Hermiston sees each year. Other categories that saw increases included larceny, which saw a growth from 395 incidents to 412. Auto theft also saw an increase, from 27 incidents to 41. Police Chief Jason Edmiston said some of the increased numbers were a result of having more patrol officers. "If I added another patrol officer, they're going to find more," he said. But he said the numbers for aggravated assault were troubling.

See **CRIME/11A**

Friends rescue pit bull shot twice in the head



By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Who shot Rez? The two bullet holes in his head show somebody wanted him dead. They failed, but even as the victim recovers from surgery there are no suspects. It's difficult to interview a dog, which is why his caretakers are hoping that if they spread the word of his recovery wide enough, a human witness may come forward and help solve the mystery of where Rez came from and who tried to kill him. "Someone needs to be held accountable for what they did," said Angela Zilar of A2Z Animal Sheltering Services of the Tri-Cities. She is caring for the

black and white pit bull until his original owners or a new home can be found. Three Pendleton residents found Rez — named for the Umatilla Indian Reservation — up on Cabbage Hill two weeks ago. Charles Roe, Brandon Kellogg and Linsey Kellogg were coming home from a day up in the mountains scouting locations for Brandon Kellogg Outdoors, Brandon's guide business. Near the westbound viewpoint on Interstate 84, they spotted the dog. "He was laying in the brush when we drove by and poked his head out," Roe said. The dog was emaciated, covered in dried blood and a little

See **DOG/11A**

Rez walks around a yard as he recovers from being shot twice in the head.

Contributed photo by Angela Zilar

