



Pendleton and the Blue Mountains glow as the sun sinks in the sky Monday evening. Staff photo by Kathy Aney

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EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY The rural advantage



Regional advisor Wendy Sorey speaks to Umatilla seniors Celeste Rodriguez, left, and Daisy Garcilazo at an information booth for Eastern Oregon University at a job fair at the SAGE Center on Wednesday in Boardman. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

EOU hopes to leverage new designation to grow enrollment, funding

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Eastern Oregon University has always been a home for students looking for a smaller, more rural college experience in Oregon, but that role is now official.

The La Grande-based school has been designated by the state legislature as Oregon's Rural University.

"It defines our role in the state

and shows our unique mission," said Tim Seydel, EOU's vice president for university advancement.

The designation — which passed both chambers of the legislature unanimously and was signed by the governor on Tuesday — doesn't come with a boost in state funding or new rules for how the university is run. But Seydel said it could help set EOU apart when applying for state and federal grants

for programs that are targeted toward helping first-generation college students, for example, or those from rural communities.

"When they say, 'Why Eastern?' we can say, 'That's what we do,'" he said.

Seydel said it could also help with recruitment at the university, which was at 3,016 students during the fall term. He said some students are searching for a smaller, more rural experience where their professors know

them by name.

Many of those students come from Umatilla and Morrow counties. Umatilla County students have made up roughly nine percent of EOU's enrollment for the last decade, and this year there are 311 students from Umatilla County and 48 students from Morrow County. The university has increased recruitment efforts in both counties as it looks to boost its numbers.

See EOU/8A

Missing Liam

Pilot Rock community embraces grieving family

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

The death of a child is a parent's biggest nightmare.

For Sara Hebard, the nightmare came true in January when her eight-year-old son died suddenly after crashing his bike and developing a rare infection called necrotizing fasciitis. As flesh-eating bacteria attacked the boy's soft tissue, surgeons tried to get ahead of the deadly bacteria by amputating parts of his body during four separate operations.

Liam Flanagan died on Jan.



Liam's family keeps his ashes in a special Batman urn in the living room. Staff photo by Kathy Aney

21, leaving behind a devastated mother, stepfather Scott Hinkle, and three stepbrothers. The death stunned the family's tiny community of Pilot Rock.

The weeks since losing Liam have been a barrage of emotions for Hebard.

See LIAM/8A

PENDLETON



Motivational speaker Cory Greenwood talks to a young audience about his life's struggles Wednesday at the Attitudes for Success Conference at the Pendleton Convention Center. Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Reformed bully at the pulpit

Speaker talks about a changed life at leadership conference

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Cory Greenwood laid his pride aside Wednesday as he addressed students at the Pendleton Convention Center.

As a motivational speaker, Greenwood regularly tears himself down to inspire kids in those tough formative years. As an insecure, unfocused and irresponsible teenager, he had bullied others to make up for the attention he wasn't getting from his unaffectionate father. He became a teenage father himself.

No more, though. The Minnesota native now travels the country giving kids the message that they can make a positive impact on the world just by becoming comfortable in their own skin.

The young audience at the 28th Annual Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Conference alternated between hilarity and rapt attention.

He psychoanalyzed his former bully self.

"I tore people apart and belittled them, thinking the smaller I could make people feel, the bigger I would feel," he said. "I felt big and tough for a second, but at night, I felt even smaller."

The keynote address came halfway through the conference, attended by about 350 students in grades 6-12 from Umatilla and Morrow counties. They came to learn leadership skills and explore career ideas. The students attended breakout sessions on a smörgåsbord of subjects: various careers, goal setting, communicating feelings, college admission and stress management.

See BULLY/8A

