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PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Pendleton's new city councilor Chuck LeValle was sworn in during the city council meeting Tuesday in Pendleton.

Meet the newest councilor

Newcomer LeValle brings new view to city council

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

It didn't take long for Chuck LeValle to ingratiate himself in Pendleton.

It was September 2016, and LeValle was looking for a cold beer after finishing a four-day, 3,500-mile trek from Savannah, Georgia, to his new South Main Street apartment.

He was welcomed into the bar at the Fraternal Order of Eagles Lodge across the street. Within 30 minutes, he joined the Eagles and within a day he would meet John Brenne.

A year-and-a-half later, LeValle would be sworn in as Brenne's replacement at Tuesday's city council meeting.

There wasn't a lot of time between being the new guy in town and joining Pendleton's governing body, but LeValle, 43, spoke about his quick ascent and what came before it.

LeValle (pronounced luh-vell) grew up and lived in Savannah, where his family goes back generations.

He recalled how his grandmother had eight children but still managed to attend Savannah State University while her two youngest were also attending, eventually earning a master's degree in education.

See LEVALLE/12A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Eighth-graders Juniper Sorensen, Tatum Paullus, Natalie Sieders Molly Magill and Keilah Mossman discuss an activity they want to perform in a charade Tuesday during a suicide prevention awareness class at Sunridge Middle School in Pendleton.

Protecting one another

Students learning to care for their own mental health, and those around them

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

The Sunridge Middle School students thought they were just sharing their favorite activities — sports, art, music and exploring the outdoors.

In reality, they were coming up with ways to handle stress and help each other during difficult times.

"You have all shared some great things to do for self-care, and that you can encourage others to do," said Amanda Walsborn, prevention education coordinator for the Umatilla County Health Department.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, Walsborn taught students a course in suicide prevention and mental health promotion, explaining that making time for your own mental and physical well-being is important in times of stress or trouble. During the class, she taught students to recognize risk factors and warning signs for someone who may be considering suicide, and ways they can reach out to a friend who might be struggling.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Members of the Hermiston High School leadership team have been placing posters with positive messaging on them all over the campus as part of their "We Care Project."

Though similar to the "Question, Persuade, Refer" method of suicide prevention that Walsborn teaches to adults, these lessons were tailored to adolescents.

Walsborn had students identify

some common myths and facts about suicide.

Some were more obvious, such as the statement: "Only experts can prevent suicide."

"Myth," students recognized.

Safe at school

Through the month of March, the *EO* will report on the many ways schools protect students, both on and off campus.

Some questions were a little more challenging.

"Suicidal people keep their plans to themselves," Walsborn said. "Myth or fact?"

Students weren't sure. Walsborn said while people often think this is true, those considering suicide will often communicate what they are thinking and how they are feeling, but not always directly.

"They may do it through writing, drawing, music — other ways to communicate pain and suffering," Walsborn said.

She cautioned students not to try and be the only person that helps.

"Why might a friend not want you to tell an adult?" she asked students.

Walsborn said while students may be nervous about betraying a

See PROTECT/12A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Former NFL quarterback Drew Bledsoe speaks at the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce's Economic Outlook Event as Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock look on Friday at Wildhorse Resort & Casino in Mission. For more on the event, see Page 2A.

HERMISTON

EOTEC future rests in council's hands

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Hermiston City Council will have plenty to talk about Monday, including an agreement to take full control of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, a tour of the Harkenrider Center and a proposed joint water project with Umatilla County.

The EOTEC discussion has been in the works since January, when Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock proposed that the county withdraw from its 50/50 partnership

with the city and give Hermiston full ownership of the project. The board of commissioners approved their side of the deal on Thursday, the components of which include:

- The city takes full ownership of EOTEC and the land it is on, including liability for operational, marketing and maintenance costs.

- The city takes ownership of Ott and Airport roads after the county improves them to a certain standard, including adding a center turn lane to Airport Road, paving a portion of Ott and chip

See EOTEC/10A



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