



EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 2018

142nd Year, No. 114

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Tyree Houfmuse listens to his defense attorney Kara Davis during a pre-trial hearing on Tuesday at the Stafford Hansell Government Center in Hermiston.

Houfmuse pushes for his release

Hermiston man claims he shot Cragun in self defense

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

A Hermiston man accused of murder and jailed for nearly a year could be free next month. Attorney Kara Davis claims Tyree Houfmuse was acting in self-defense during a fatal confrontation with a man who threatened to kill him.

Houfmuse, 35, has been in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, since his arrest in June 2017 following the fatal shooting of James Cragun at a Hermiston apartment complex over Memorial Day weekend.

A hearing that began Tuesday is circuit court in Hermiston will continue April 18. Judge Eva Temple will consider releasing Houfmuse, who faces charges of murder, manslaughter, and felon in possession of a firearm.

His trial was originally scheduled for late April, but in February the district attorney's office requested to postpone until November as prosecutors waited for results from the state crime lab. Davis said if the trial is postponed, Houfmuse will have been in jail for more than a year while presumptively innocent.

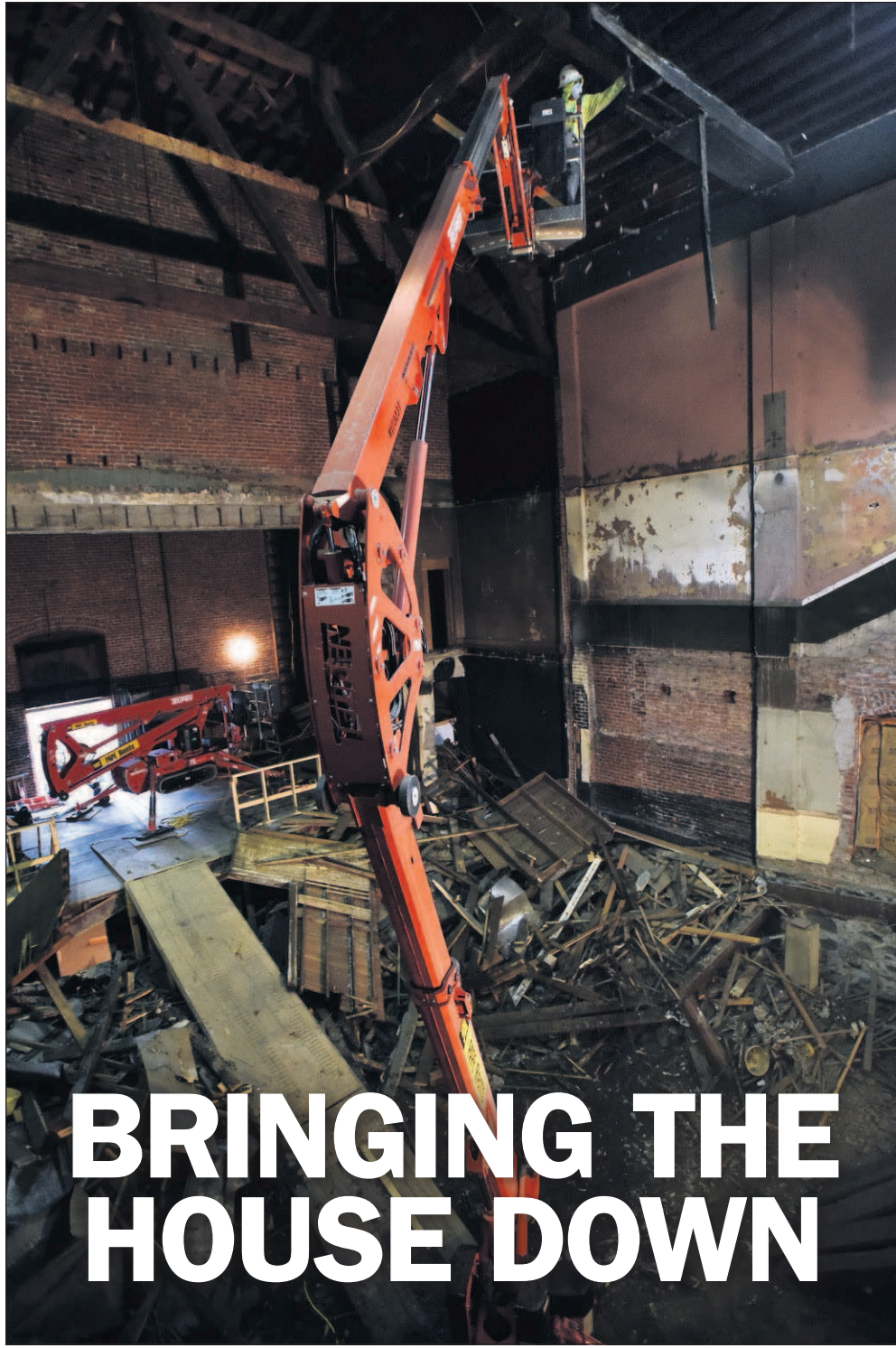
Temple allowed both sides to give opening statements Tuesday but said hearing had to conclude another day due to the amount of evidence. Temple said she has to review more than 14 hours of video, audio and written evidence. That includes interviews with witnesses who were with Houfmuse the night of the shooting, Hermiston police as well as Houfmuse himself. She also will review text messages between various parties, including between Cragun and his ex-girlfriend, who was with Houfmuse the night Cragun died.

According to witness accounts from that night, detailed in a search warrant affidavit from Hermiston police, Cragun came to his ex-girlfriend's apartment and charged toward her. Houfmuse and Cragun fought, the accounts stated, and a gun went off in Cragun's hand while they were fighting.

Davis said Houfmuse was within his rights because he acted in self-defense.

She cited case law that details what a person is allowed to do if they feel their

See HOUFMUSE/8A



Staff photos by E.J. Harris
Jamie Salazar, with Kirby Nagelhout Construction Co., pulls down parts of the wooden ceiling from a man-lift in the Rivoli Theater on Tuesday in Pendleton.

Demolition underway at Pendleton's Rivoli — with a second act in store

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Piles of boards, beams and plaster cover either side of the basement of the old Rivoli Theater in downtown Pendleton. Some of that includes what had been the ground floor.

The place is all but gutted.

Andrew Picken, president of the Historic Rivoli Theater Performing Arts Center Restoration Coalition, said the project is in full demolition mode.

"I'd say nearly 70 percent done now, and we hope to complete demolition by April 15," Picken said. "That's getting it all down."

Volunteers started the demolition last year. The nonprofit coalition also hired Kirby Nagelhout Construction Co. to handle the tough parts. The Bend-based business staffs an office in Pendleton and built the Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center, and in 2015 handled the security upgrades at Pendleton High School and Sunridge Middle School, as well as the installation of larger air



The demolition at the Rivoli Theater is 70 percent done with the goal for a completion date of April 15.

conditioning units at Sunridge.

Jon York is the Kirby Nagelhout project superintendent. He said crews have removed walls, stage arches and more. Much of that took place on two mechanical lifts, the largest capable of raising workers more than 50 feet in the air. The bigger machine is battery powered and weighs about 5,200 pounds,

See RIVOLI/8A

Governor signs addiction bills, executive order

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

PORTLAND — Gov. Kate Brown on Tuesday declared drug addiction a public health crisis and signed two pieces of addiction-related legislation into law.

"Unfortunately, right now, our federal government is recognizing the problem, but it is certainly focused on punishment," Brown said. "That leaves us, the states, to right the wrongs of a war on drugs that has done absolutely nothing to address the issues that drive this public health crisis while our prisons and our foster care systems are filled to capacity with its victims."

The declaration is part of an executive order she issued Tuesday that charges the state Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission and certain state agencies with developing a statewide strategic plan for addiction prevention, treatment and recovery.

Addiction is the main driver of foster care placements in Oregon, Brown said.

Nearly 60 percent of children in foster care have at least one parent with a substance abuse disorder. Addiction also heavily contributes to the nation's high rate of incarceration.

"The criminal justice system should not be Oregon's safety net for persons suffering from the disease of addiction," the executive order states.

Reducing barriers to comprehensive behavior health care could help "lift a burden" off of families, hospitals, law enforcement, prisons and the state foster care system, Brown said.

The governor signed the executive order and signed House Bills 4143 and 4137 during an event at Lines for Life, a Southwest Portland-based nonprofit agency that provides a 24-hour substance abuse and suicide crisis line.

House Bill 4143, proposed by Gov. Brown, is the work of her Opioid Epidemic Task Force, which began convening in September.

Among other things, the bill requires medical providers to register with the Oregon Health Authority's prescription drug monitoring program. The monitoring system allows physicians to look up patients to find out if they have misused opioids or have been shopping for a doctor



Gov. Brown

'The criminal justice system should not be Oregon's safety net for persons suffering from the disease of addiction.'

excerpt from the executive order

See BILLS/8A

ODOT plans \$11 million safety projects on Interstate 84

Construction will begin in 2019 and is expected to conclude in 2020

East Oregonian

The Oregon Department of Transportation announced plans this week for a series of construction projects along Interstate 84 between Pendleton and La Grande to make the stretch of freeway safer for motorists.

The work is based on the Interstate 84 Corridor Management Plan, a study that looked at road safety between Boardman and Ontario. It determined a high need to reduce speed-related crashes, crash severity and distracted driving on the entire stretch of roadway, and to add better

real-time information on weather and traffic.

The first phase includes \$11 million worth of projects, including \$4 million funded by the transportation bill passed at the end of the 2017 Legislative session. Work will begin in 2019 and is expected to conclude in 2020.

Projects include:

- More than a dozen new message boards mounted above the interstate. According to a press release from ODOT, some will be linked to sensors to display real time information, including temperature, presence of ice or fog, and chain requirements.
- Ten additional road and weather sensors.
- Nine miles of cable barrier between eastbound and westbound lanes along two stretches to prevent

crossover crashes (roughly between mileposts 229 and 238 and mileposts 249 to 250.)

- Twenty LED lights along two miles of the downhill, westbound curves of Cabbage Hill east of Pendleton, with more lights added as funding allows. There will also be more than 12 miles of yellow reflective markers attached to guardrail in that area.

- A new road camera (westbound MP 247.4), snow zone sign (eastbound MP 220.6), and ramp gate (westbound Exit 224 at Poverty Flats).

- More than 10 miles of buried power line to support these enhancements and future upgrades.

- Twelve curve warning signs with flashing beacons in the Grande Ronde River Canyon west of La Grande.

A separate project will add a third lane for eastbound trucks in Ladd Canyon, east of La Grande, in the coming years. The stretch is closed often as trucks spin out and there is not enough room for traffic to get around disabled vehicles.

The corridor management plan has a list of goals it hopes to accomplish by 2025, including reducing serious and speed-related crashes by 20 percent and weather related crashes by 25 percent, communicating dangerous road conditions to all travelers within five minutes of the condition being recognized and preventing truck parking from spilling back onto freeways.

The study also notes that during the summer a key cause of severe crashes is speed, while in the winter a key cause is following too close.

