

EAST OREGONIAN

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PENDLETON

City gives Corbett salary bump

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

City Manager Robb Corbett left the Pendleton City Council meeting Tuesday with higher pay and more job security than when he started it.

The council went behind closed doors to discuss Corbett's contract and when members re-emerged, they unanimously raised his salary from \$123,256 annually to \$133,500. Corbett had worked on one-year contracts since he was hired in 2011, but the council also amended his deal so that he now serves on a "rolling contract."

The council gave Corbett a sterling evaluation on May 15 but didn't renew his contract. Tuesday was the last scheduled meeting before the end of the fiscal year.

Having only received cost-of-living increases in prior years, the increase in pay represents the largest raise in Corbett's Pendleton career.

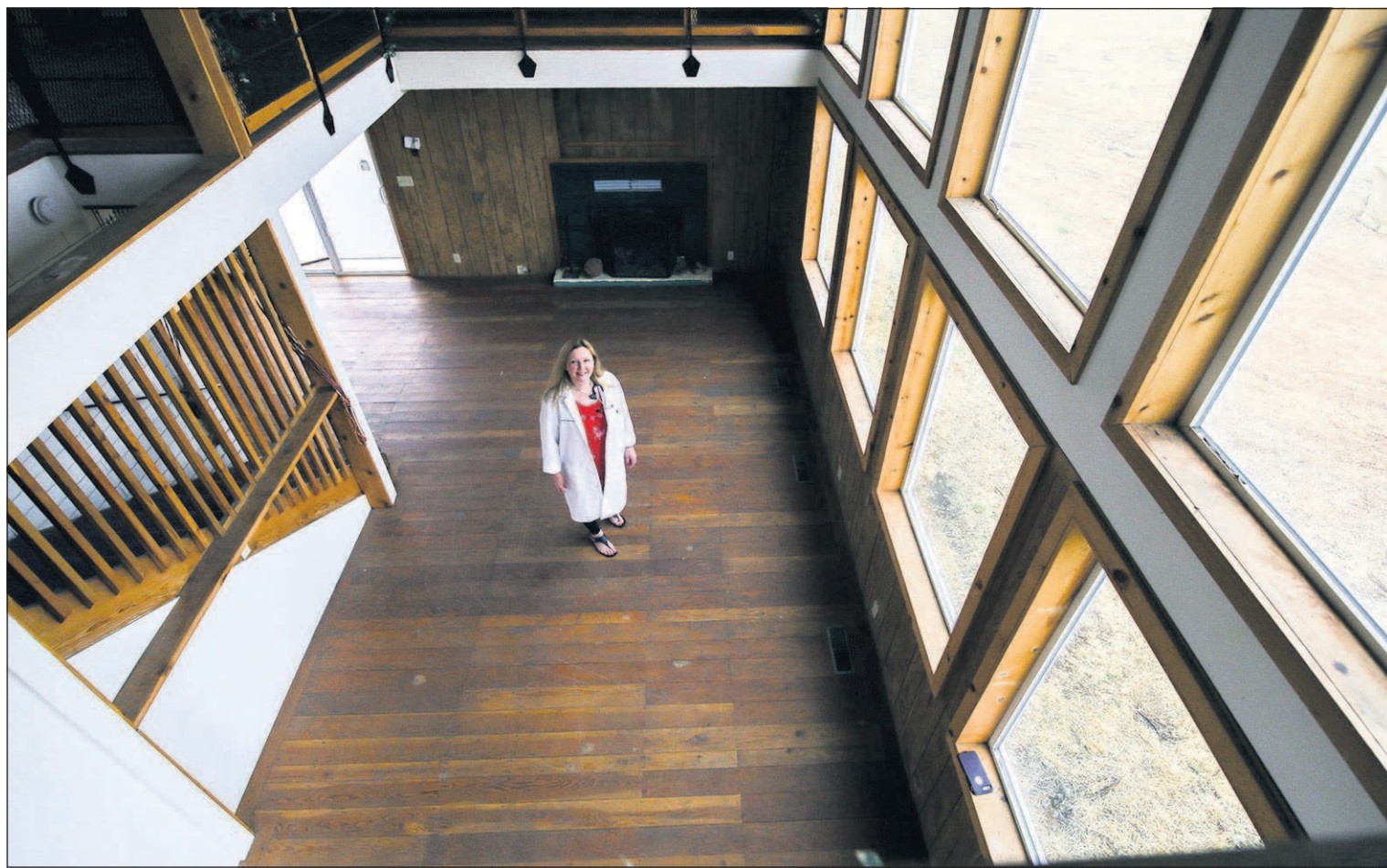
When the council returned to an open meeting, Mayor John Turner said the city determined Corbett's new salary by finding the average between the salaries of the Hermiston and La Grande city managers. Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith earns \$137,330 per year while La Grande City Manager Robert Strope brings in \$129,675 annually.

If the council had chosen not to raise Corbett's salary at all, he would have fallen behind one of his subordinates. As both the police chief and the public safety director, Stuart Roberts is set to earn \$124,109 per year starting July 1.

Human Resources Director Andrea Denton explained that Corbett's new rolling contract requires a specific action from council to end his employment with the city. If the council takes no

See CORBETT/8A

UMATILLA



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Nurse Practitioner Jennifer Armstrong stands in abandoned two-story home that is being remodeled into a medical clinic, just west of Highways 730 and 395.

City's only clinic forced to move

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

When her contract with the Umatilla Hospital District ends on Oct. 29, Jennifer Armstrong wants her patients to know she isn't going anywhere.

Armstrong, a nurse practitioner, plans to open up a private wellness center in Umatilla after the hospital district board voted in May to not renew her contract to continue providing services at the Encore Wellness 4 Life clinic — the city's only medical clinic.

Danice McBee, who sits on the board, said the special taxing district wanted to "go in a different direction" but they were still discussing what that would look like and are not ready to announce anything yet. She declined to elaborate on what had prompted the decision. They do plan to continue using the tax money collected by the special district to provide medical services to the community in some form after Armstrong's contract ends, she said.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Nurse Practitioner Jennifer Armstrong will move the Umatilla Clinic to an abandoned two-story home that is being remodeled.

Armstrong and her husband Mark Keith, who have already opened a second Encore Wellness 4 Life location in Kennewick, are hoping to open the new private clinic on Nov. 1 so that Umatilla doesn't see any gap in services. They have purchased a three-acre lot just west of the intersection of Highway 730 and

Highway 395. The abandoned white two-story house will be converted into a medical clinic by November if all goes according to plan, while the "wellness complex" will add hospice housing, walking trails and other features later.

"It's going to take a while to get all the other things built, but

a lot of the same services (as the current clinic) are going to be here," she said. "It's not going to feel like a clinic, but we will still do what patients are accustomed to."

Those extra services will include living quarters for hospice care, adult respite care and even longterm care, Keith said. They also plan to sell products such hemp-based CBD supplements and kombucha, a fermented tea (the Mayo Clinic's website states that while kombucha does contain health-promoting substances such as probiotics, in light of health claims about things like preventing cancer, currently "valid medical studies of kombucha tea's role in human health are very limited"). They want to add RV spots for family members of patients to be able to stay overnight during visits if needed and create walking trails around the property.

A group of practitioners who Armstrong currently contracts with have agreed to follow her to

See CLINIC/8A

Playing spashketball



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Airk Schaaf, 10, watches as Deven Barkley, 17, shoots a basket while swimming at the Pendleton Family Aquatic Center on Wednesday in Pendleton.

HERMISTON

Brazilian farmers learn about precision irrigation in the U.S.

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Fred Ziari of IRZ Consulting and most of the 30 Brazilian farmers he hosted in Hermiston this week don't speak the same language — but they do share a common goal.

"We are blessed because we have food," Ziari said, gesturing to nearby trays of fruit and pastries laid out for the guests from Brazil. "But I travel to Africa and other places every year where people are extremely hungry. As well, our state of Oregon looks beautiful but we have hunger here, too.

All of us, Brazilian and American, need to play a vital role in feeding the world."

IRZ Consulting, one of multiple businesses that Ziari has founded, helps farmers around the world increase their efficiency and yield through high-tech irrigation. Ziari said the Hermiston-based business hosts visiting farmers from other countries for an "international exchange of ideas."

Leonel Olivira, a soybean farmer from the Brazilian state of Bahia, said Tuesday he was most impressed by "how you can remote

See FARMERS/8A



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