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EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Fire held back from homes

Neighbors, fire crews battle Southgate fire

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

A grass fire endangered homes and forced the evacuation of the Burger King restaurant in Pendleton Monday, though quick work by neighbors and fire crews stopped it from causing major damage.

Interim Pendleton Fire Chief Shawn Penninger said the fire department received a call of a brush fire at 11:58 p.m. and had it out about 1:30 p.m., although fire crews were on hand long after to make sure the fire did not restart.

Penninger said no one was hurt and no structures were damaged, but the fire but burned an estimated 25 acres and came close to threatening the old U.S.

Forest Service building.

The fire was complicated by strong winds and the hilly terrain, but Penninger said the fire-fighting effort was helped by a quick response by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and other area agencies.

Penninger said the fire department suspects the fire was caused by a person riding a motorized dirt bike through the brush — the sparks from the engine or a hot muffler can cause fires — but the exact cause has not been confirmed.

Charred brush was still visible from the Burger King drive-through window, but business had returned to normal an hour after the fire was extinguished.

Supervisor Emily Laurson said staff continued to work after smoke was spotted but began evacuating the building once flames were visible.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
A firefighter with the Oregon Department of Forestry fights a wind-swept wildfire off of Southwest Hailey Avenue on Monday in Pendleton.

Laurson said eight staff members and 12-18 customers were forced from the restaurant, with employees shutting off all the

kitchen equipment and locking the doors behind them.

See **FIRE/13A**

District 2 challenger looks for common ground

McLeod-Skinner thinks unique upbringing and life story give her an edge

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

On paper, Jamie McLeod-Skinner might seem a long shot to win Oregon's conservative Second Congressional District.

She's female, a Democrat and gay. McLeod-Skinner, 50, last year joined a crush of other female candidates vying for a Congressional seat nationwide. The wave of women included 339 Democrats and 92 Republicans.

McLeod-Skinner prevailed over six rivals to win the primary and take on Oregon Rep. Greg Walden in November. The Republican incumbent leads the state's massive Second Congressional District, encompassing Eastern Oregon and most of southwestern Oregon. Walden, who has breezed through the past 10 elections with ease, chairs the House Energy & Commerce Committee.

Eastern Oregonians have known Walden for 20 years, but McLeod-Skinner is a less familiar name, though she's logged around 40,000 miles in a quest to get to know the constituents in the 65,491-square-mile district.

Recently, she agreed to talk about her life and what led her to run against an incumbent who is lodged firmly in the upper echelons of Congress. She sat down

See **CANDIDATE/13A**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

An award-winning citizen

Heppner fourth-grader Rylee Palmer holds her first place winning entry in the national "Character Counts!" essay and drawing contest. Palmer wrote her essay on being a good citizen. For more on Palmer's essay and philosophy on citizenship, see Page 13A.

HAPPY FOURTH!

We hope you enjoy this expanded holiday edition of the *East Oregonian*. We will not publish a paper on Wednesday, July 4, but have included both comics (Page 9A) and the TV listing (Page 10) for that day in today's paper. We will publish our next edition on Thursday, July 5.

Columbia River keystone of NW ag economy

Agriculture, navigation, power, the environment are all factors in the Columbia River Treaty negotiations

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
EO Media Group

As they meet this summer to update the Columbia River Treaty, U.S. and Canadian negotiators hold Northwest farmers' futures in their hands.

The treaty was adopted in 1964 for the cooperative development and management of the Columbia River, the 1,243-mile-long river that winds through British Columbia, Canada, and Washington state and whose tributaries are as far-flung as Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Oregon.

Some provisions of the treaty are set to expire in 2024, and U.S. and

Canadian negotiators met in Washington, D.C., in May to begin talks on how to update them. The next round of negotiations will take place Aug. 15-16 in British Columbia.

"The Columbia River Treaty is a huge deal for farmers," said Clark Kagele, a farmer in Odessa, Wash., and secretary of the Columbia Basin Development League. "It's basically going to have control of all future water supplies."

For farmers such as Kagele, who depend on the Odessa aquifer, having access to Columbia River water is crucial. He estimates he has less



Dan Wheat/Capitol Press

See **COLUMBIA/14A**

The Columbia River at Crescent Bar, Wash., near Wanapum reservoir.

