



EAST OREGONIAN

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142nd Year, No. 185

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Your Weekend



- Wildhorse Pow Wow all weekend in Mission
- EO Playboys rock out Saturday in Echo
- Movie in the park in Pendleton, lone

For times and places see Coming Events, 6A

Weekend Weather

Fri	Sat	Sun
92/57	84/55	90/60



Pruitt

EPA leader Pruitt resigns

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt resigned Thursday amid ethics investigations of outsized security spending, first-class flights and a sweetheart condo lease.

With Pruitt's departure, President Donald Trump loses an administrator many conservatives regarded as one of the more effective members of his Cabinet. But Pruitt had also been dogged for months by scandals that spawned more than a dozen federal and congressional investigations.

Talking to reporters on Air Force One, Trump continued to praise his scandal-plagued EPA chief, saying there was "no final straw" and he had not asked

See EPA/8A

HERMISTON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Customer Cricket Nicholson grabs her sandwich as Patrick Hunt, owner of the Southern Twain BBQ food cart, stamps her punch card on Thursday in Pendleton. Hunt, a Hermiston resident, wanted to open his cart in Hermiston but could not due to the city's limited licenses.

Food trucks on the table

City reconsidering restrictive rules that limit operation and number of licenses

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Rigo Garcia is a lucky man — he has one of only three mobile food vending licenses available in Hermiston.

Every morning he drives his taco truck down from Pasco and parks across the street from the Hermiston post office, laying out food and firing up the grill in time to open by 10 a.m. Customers park in the public lot there and order up tacos, carne asada, torta and more to eat in their cars or sitting on their tailgates.

Garcia opened Tacos Garcia less than two years ago, but before that he spent years cook-



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Alex Benitez, left, and Javier Diaz fill orders in a Tacos Xavi food cart on Wednesday in Butte Park during the Fourth of July Celebration in Hermiston.

ing in restaurants and at home.

"I've been doing this all my life," he said.

He's grateful to have the opportunity to operate in Herm-

iston, but he said some of the city's rules for mobile food vendors make it difficult. He can't provide anywhere for customers to sit, for example, and he has to

drive his truck back up to Pasco each night.

"I don't understand why they say I have to move," he said.

The Hermiston City Council adopted a mobile food vending ordinance in 2013 after months of study and debate. Food trucks are required to move each night, are subject to certain design and safety standards, must provide parking and can't provide seating.

When the rules were put into place, 10 food trucks were operating in town. The council said once the city issued its first round of \$500-per-year licenses that would be the number of licenses available in the city. Only three of the businesses chose to obtain a license, and since then new vendors can only open in Hermiston if another truck closes and gives up its license.

See TRUCKS/8A

PENDLETON

In-development solar farm gets complaints over glare

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Commuters making the eastbound trip into Pendleton are reporting being greeted with more than the "Welcome to Pendleton" sign.

As Cypress Creek Renewables continues to install solar panels along the southern slope of the Airport Hill, drivers are saying early morning sunshine reflecting off the panels is temporarily blinding them on their way into town.

Pendleton Airport Manager Steve Chrisman said he has fielded complaints himself and forwarded them on to Cypress Creek.

For the company's part, a Cypress Creek spokesman said it's taking the



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Sunlight reflects off of solar panels being assembled on the west side of Pendleton on Tuesday as eastbound traffic drives down Interstate 84.

complaints seriously.

"All of our projects meet FAA standards for no hazard of glare," Cypress Creek Public Relations Director Jeff McKay said in a statement. "Photovoltaic panels are designed to absorb as much light as

possible and are treated with an anti-glare coating. Reflective light from photovoltaic solar installations is shown to be similar to that of a flat body of water and well below

See GLARE/8A

Hermiston watermelons nearing another harvest

Famously sweet summertime treat just about ready

By GEORGE PLAVERN
EO Media Group

One of Eastern Oregon's most popular — and delicious — crops is back in season.

Famous Hermiston watermelons are nearing harvest as summer temperatures rise into the 90s and triple digits. High heat should help to ripen the fruit quickly, and growers anticipate they will begin picking in earnest between July 10-15.

"I think we're pretty much on schedule," said Patrick Walchli, with Walchli Farms. "Quality-wise, it's by all indications looking pretty good, as far as the fruit set."

Hermiston watermelons may be a niche crop in terms of overall acres, with about 750 total, but figure prominently in the city's identity and civic pride.

Driving north into town on Highway 395, the Hermiston logo emblazoned on the water tower features a watermelon backdrop along with the slogan, "Where Life is Sweet."

And it isn't just the locals who have a sweet tooth for Hermiston melons. Shoppers can find the specially branded fruit in Portland, Seattle and all across the West Coast. Some shipments have even gone as far as Texas and Georgia.

The secret lies in the region's sandy soil and desert climate, which provides a perfect combination of hot, dry days and cool nights.

See SWEETNESS/8A



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