

STUDENTS: 'It's a great way to introduce them to America' says organizer

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of 10 young people selected from across China to compete in the international competition. The theme of this year's contest is "Earth," and Wong said her speech is about biodiversity.

Felicity said she's been to the U.S. before, but she was enjoying her first trip to a small town as opposed to a big city.

Tobby Wang, a rambunctious 10-year-old from Guilin, talked about how much he enjoyed Pendleton's dry climate. Tobby's hometown in southern China has a subtropical climate with high humidity and an average rainfall of 74 inches per

year. "It feels like a boiler room," he said.

The student's trip was organized by Kerry Yu, the fiancée of Hamley's co-owner Blair Woodfield.

Yu said she reached out to the group because she wanted to give them an authentic experience in a place where few Chinese tourists venture.

"It's a great way to introduce them to America," she said, adding that tours from China to Eastern Oregon could increase in the future.

Kristen Dollarhide, tourism and hospitality manager for Travel Pendleton, said she's talked with Yu about organizing a week-



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Jack Jing, 10, of Hong Zhou, China, looks up while trying on a cowboy hat Monday while touring the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds.

long camp for Chinese tourists revolving around Pendleton's western and tribal

cultures. The Round-Up and Travel Pendleton have

worked with European and Asian media organizations and tourism groups to promote Pendleton for years, but there's been some new developments in the international tourism industry.

Later this month, Dollarhide said a representative from the Globe-Trotter Travel Guidebook will come to Pendleton to create an entry about Pendleton and some of its attractions.

A recent filming of the Dutch reality TV show "The Mole" continues to pay dividends for the Round-Up and Pendleton: Round-Up General Manager Casey Beard said he continues to field inquiries from Dutch tourists every week about stop-

ping by Pendleton to sneak a peek at the filming location.

In the meantime, the Chinese students made the best of their time in Pendleton before they head for the East Coast.

As the tour browsed through the store at the Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame, Yu said they were going to take a quick trip to D&B Supply for cowboy gear before ending the night at the Slickfork Saloon, where the students would model their brand new Western duds for their parents.

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MERKLEY: Toured saw mill, ag research station

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rate children from parents as a deterrent to illegal immigration, but that's indeed what Attorney General Jeff Sessions said was the goal. He said the administration created a "big mess," and after a belated decision to change the policy, it is now just incarcerating families who have applied for legal asylum.

"Family incarceration is what we did in World War II with Japanese-Americans," he said.

And the whole scene is unnecessary, he said. Customs and Immigration Services had a Family Case Management Program to process asylum seekers, until the Trump administration spiked it. The program provided asylum seekers with someone who spoke their native language, monitored them and kept them on track for hearings. Merkley said the Homeland Security inspector general report found participants in the program showed up for asylum hearings nearly 100 percent of the time.

Merkley also said the confirmation of the next Supreme Court justice should wait not just until after the election, but until special counsel Robert Mueller concludes the Russia investigation. The senator also pounded on the Supreme Court's 5-4 decision from 2010 on Citizens United, which decided political spending is a form of free speech under the First Amendment. Presi-



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, listens to a question during a town hall meeting Sunday at the Pendleton Early Learning Center.

dent Thomas Jefferson said the heart of the Constitution is giving equal voice to the people, Merkley asserted, and the Citizens United decision did away with that principal.

Protecting Medicare and Social Security were top issues from questioners at the events. Merkley said he and others are fighting for health care and to keep Social Security solvent.

On the road
Merkley and his team on Friday visited the lumber mill in John Day.

He and Oregon's senior U.S. senator, Ron Wyden, also a Democrat, supported lengthening forest stewardship contracts for logging, which kept the mill open.

Merkley said the mill now has two dozen openings and is looking to hire.

And Sunday morning he toured the Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center, Adams. He and Wyden worked to include funding for ag research in the farm bill, which passed the Senate in late June on a 86-11 vote. The bill now is in the conference committee to work out differences in the House version.

During a meeting with reporters, Merkley said staunching the flow of immigrants has not harmed wheat country, probably due to the mechanized nature of harvest and production. But certainly other crops feel the pinch.

COURT: Dems face choice

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and effective writing style, universally regarded as one of the finest and sharpest legal minds of our time," Trump said in his prime-time televised White House announcement. He added: "There is no one in America more qualified for this position, and no one more deserving."

With Kavanaugh, Trump is replacing a swing vote on the nine-member court with a staunch conservative. Kavanaugh, who serves on the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, is expected to be less receptive to abortion and gay rights than Kennedy was. He also has taken an expansive view of executive power and has favored limits on investigating the president.

Speaking at the White House, Kavanaugh pledged to preserve the Constitution and said that "a judge must be independent and must interpret the law, not make the law. A judge must interpret the Constitution as written."

Some conservatives have expressed concerns about

Kavanaugh, questioning his commitment to social issues like abortion and noting his time serving under President George W. Bush as evidence he is a more establishment choice. But his supporters have cited his experience and wide range of legal opinions.

With Democrats determined to vigorously oppose Trump's choice, the Senate confirmation battle is expected to dominate the months leading up to November's midterm elections. Senate Republicans hold only a 51-49 majority, leaving them hardly any margin if Democrats hold the line. Democratic senators running for re-election in states Trump carried in 2016 will face pressure to back his nominee.

"Tonight the president begins a forced march back to the days when women's health care choices were made by government," Oregon Senator Ron Wyden said. "There can be no mistaking Trump's Supreme Court nomination for anything but what it is: a direct attempt to overturn Roe v. Wade."

TIRE: Grandchild first noticed roof

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Emmons first noticed the depression in the roof on Saturday morning when his grandchild called him out back to point it out. Thinking termites had caused the damage, Emmons went to investigate in the attic. He found the tire had smashed through the roof and plywood, cracked a two-by-four support beam, and nestled itself in the insulation.

"I look out here on the freeway and I don't understand how it could have got-

ten here," said Emmons. There is little evidence of destruction in the path from the freeway to the house. The outermost fence was damaged diagonally from where the tire landed.

What's more, Emmons isn't the owner of the house. He's been renting the property for about a month with his wife, two daughters, and two grandchildren. He moved in two weeks after Memorial Day, when his own home caught fire and is now being repaired.

"People say, 'You're hav-

ing some bad luck,'" said Emmons. "But I'm having some good luck. We've had two catastrophes and no one is hurt."

A police log from around the same time states that a blue Dodge Caravan struck a semi-truck tire while traveling eastbound on I-84 around mile marker 210. The vehicle was damaged significantly and had to be towed.

Emmons filed a report with Oregon State Police about the damage, but no one at the office was available Monday to comment on the case.

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