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EAST OREGONIAN

WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 2018

142nd Year, No. 183 WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD One dollar

PENDLETON



Ron Gavette sits on a park bench in the small park he has created off the Umatilla River near the Main Street Bridge in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

PARKING IT

Octogenarian created unofficial Pendleton park

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Ron Gavette isn't one of those octogenarians who sits on his porch watching the world go by. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but Gavette just has a rather intense to-do list.

Back in 2012, he decided to create a small park on the north bank of the Umatilla River near Pendleton's Main Street Bridge. Recently, he added a trail.

It all started when he decided to get rid of an eyesore. He and wife Penny regularly walked downtown from their North Hill home and had a good view of the bank as they crossed the bridge.

"It was a mess," Gavette said. "There were overgrown blackberries, wild roses and locust trees. People threw mattresses and other debris down there, along with cuttings from their yard."

With the city's blessing, Gavette set out to transform blight into a tiny oasis. First, he created a short path down to the river from Northwest Bailey Avenue, near the Pendleton Center for the Arts. In the center of the park, he cleared out a spot for a burn pile, then began chopping out weeds and vines. A crew from Lost & Found Youth Outreach helped



A tree bows out over the Umatilla River in a park created by Ron Gavette near the Main Street Bridge in Pendleton.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

for a day, with the city providing two trucks and two drivers to haul trash and other debris to the dump.

Gradually, the park took shape. About a year ago, neighbors placed a sign at the top of the path (across the street from First Christian Church) that reads "RON GAVETTE PARK: This area was cleared and made a place of respite by Ron Gavette — a neighbor and advocate for all that is good. Rest and be thankful for the beauty and the peace that has been created here."

Gavette has observed an increasing number of people using the unofficial park. He often notices people sitting on the bench or picnic table, strumming guitars, eating lunch or just gazing at the water. During a visit on Tuesday, he smiled as he watched a woman stroll along the river's edge with her dog.

Those who visit the park will likely see an assortment of animal life. During Gavette's recent visit, a great blue heron

See PARK/8A

Sanctuary repeal on Nov. ballot

Rep. Barreto sponsored IP 22

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

An initiative petition to repeal Oregon's sanctuary law has qualified for the Nov. 6 general election ballot, according to the Secretary of State's Office.

More than 86 percent (97,762) of the 111,039 signatures submitted in favor of Initiative Petition 22 were validated. Only 88,184 were needed to land the measure on the ballot.

Meanwhile, the Oregon Department of Justice continues to investigate allegations from voters that they were tricked into signing "Stop Oregon Sanctuaries." The Secretary of State's Office received 39 complaints with similar allegations.

The statewide sanctuary law prohibits the use of state and local resources to enforce federal immigration law, when a person's only crime is being in the country illegally.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Justice threatened to yank federal law enforcement grants from sanctuary states, including Oregon.

Gov. Kate Brown's office said last week that officials have not received any recent communication from the justice department on that matter.

See SANCTUARY/8A

Oregon senators protest Bounds nomination on Senate floor

East Oregonian

Oregon's senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley began a protest on the Senate floor Tuesday against the nomination of Ryan Bounds to the 9th Circuit Court.

A Senate vote could come as soon as this week for Bounds, a Hermiston native who is now an assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

The protest could delay the vote on Bounds, but because of the 51 Republican majority in the Senate it can't block the vote entirely. The Oregon Democratic senators were joined by a handful of allies from the Senate Democratic Caucus in the protest.

Bounds, twice nominated by the Trump administration without a customary consultation of Wyden and Merkley, was eventually put before a bipartisan committee of Oregon attorneys appointed by the senators and Rep. Greg Walden. He was selected as one of

See BOUNDS/8A

Volunteer shortage leaves charities asking for help



Volunteer Claudia Abney sorts through food donations in the warehouse at Agape House on Tuesday in Hermiston.

Volunteer Claudia Abney sorts through food donations in the warehouse at Agape House on Tuesday in Hermiston.

Nonprofits see aging, dwindling populations

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Food banks, warming shelters and donation centers are all held together by a sometimes invisible force: volunteers. But finding people to fill those roles has become increasingly difficult due to an aging volunteer base and a lack of new people stepping in.

Paula Hall, director and CEO of Community Action Program of East Central Oregon, said they tend to have more luck when they go out and search for volunteers for a specific project, such as the Dancing with the Stars event, or the Homelessness Point in

Time Count. "We don't have a large pool of volunteers," Hall said. "It seems to be more successful if the volunteer project is a time-limited duration instead of ongoing."

CAPECO serves as a regional hub for services to low-income and disadvantaged people, and many volunteer efforts for things like food banks are coordinated through specific agencies. But she said there are difficulties with getting consistent volunteers.

"We are unable to secure enough volunteers to have an ongoing volunteer program on a long-term basis," she said. "We have volunteers who want to come in and do a couple hours once every couple of weeks. It's very

See VOLUNTEER/8A



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