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Buehler seeks PERS changes to fund Oregon schools

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Knute Buehler aims to position himself as Oregon's education governor and the reformer of the Public Employee Retirement System.

The orthopedic surgeon and Republican state representative from Bend challenging Democrat Gov. Kate Brown in the November election swung through Eastern Oregon this week. From Tues-

day through Friday, he and his team held meet-and-greets and other campaign events in six counties and nine cities, including Burns, Ontario and La Grande. Buehler stopped Thursday afternoon in Pendleton for an hour-long discussion with the *East Oregonian* editorial board.

Buehler stressed Oregon needs more and better leadership, and it starts with education.

"I think the single biggest failure of Gov. Brown is her indiffer-

ence to our public schools," he said.

Oregon schools rank in the bottom five across crucial metrics, he said, namely length of school year and graduation rates. And that is occurring while state revenues are at a robust \$2 billion. Too much of that money, he said, is paying for PERS.

Buehler said as governor he could move Oregon schools from

See BUEHLER/12A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

State Rep. Knute Buehler speaks with the East Oregonian editorial board on Thursday in Pendleton. Buehler is running as the GOP's candidate for governor of Oregon.

Sheriff Matlack plans trip to Washington to discuss immigration

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Morrow County is almost 2,000 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. But its sheriff has taken a vocal stance against illegal immigration, and will be traveling to Washington, D.C., this month to discuss it with the President, and 40 other sheriffs nationwide.



Matlack

wide Sheriffs Fly-In."

Matlack states in the letter that the White House has invited sheriffs from each state to talk about their experiences on issues of immigration and the impact it has had on their communities.

He said President Donald Trump is expected to host the group.

Matlack said he's not exactly sure what conclusions the group will reach at the meeting.

"I don't know what direction other people will be taking," he said. But he said he hopes to discuss potential solutions to what he believes is a major problem.

"Perhaps (Trump) may hear a few new ideas on working to repair our broken immigration system," he said.

Matlack said they intend to tell Congress that their failure to deal with immigration for 20 years has compromised the safety of local communities.

"We will also take the opportunity to express and thank President Trump and his

See MATLACK/12A



Photo courtesy of Kari Greer with the U.S. Forest Service

A helicopter using a drop bucket works on extinguishing spot fires on the Taylor Creek and Klondike fires in the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest west of Grants Pass, Oregon.

Spread thin by wildfire

Oregon fires have already cost \$321 million in 2018

By BRITTANY NORTON
East Oregonian

Warren Giles is in the wildfire fighting business. And business is booming.

Giles got involved more than 20 years ago after a friend, who wanted to start his own firefighting company, asked him to join in.

"You're perfect for this job, why don't you give it a shot?" he said.

So Giles became his partner and they worked together for a few years. Then Giles



Photo courtesy of Cecilio Ricard with the U.S. Forest Service

A presenter talks during the morning briefing in preparation for the Taylor Creek Fire in Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, Oregon.

took over the business and his son stepped in to help him run it.

The company, A-Team

Wildfire Contract Engines, Inc. is a family-run business in La Grande that operates eight engines and can be con-

tracted to a fire anywhere in the country.

It was an endeavor that began with the help of his son and continues today with the assistance of his two daughters, who lead engines into fires across the nation.

Giles said the number of fires his team is called out to in recent years has increased drastically.

"The weather is not kind to what's going on with fires," he said.

The company is low on the priority list, and is only called when other resources have been exhausted. And it only gets paid if it is called to an incident. The team shows up fully staffed and fully loaded

See WILDFIRE/12A

Mike Huckabee to visit Pendleton Oct. 6

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

In the midst of a competitive primary, future President Barack Obama and former President Bill Clinton, stumping for his wife, made campaign stops in Pendleton in 2008.

He's a decade late, but Mike Huckabee, a former Arkansas governor and a Republican presidential candidate in 2008 and 2016, will be making an appearance in Pendleton.

Huckabee will be speaking at the Pendleton Convention Center on Oct. 9, not as a part of a campaign, but to promote Preg-

nancy Care Services, a Pendleton anti-abortion nonprofit that provides counseling services, parenting classes, and other resources to expecting mothers and fathers.

Pregnancy Care Services Executive Director Laura Jensen was at an anti-abortion conference where a speaker asked them to "think big."

An event featuring Huckabee immediately sprung to Jensen's mind and when she reached out to Huckabee's representatives, she was surprised to hear back that he accepted the invitation.

Jensen said the event where Huckabee



Huckabee

will speak, "Unite for life," will not be a political rally.

Instead, the event will be focused on Pregnancy Care Services and their plans to expand.

Within the next few years, Jensen said Pregnancy Care Services wants to add a nurse to their staff and upgrade its 311 S.E. Dorion Ave. facility to include prenatal services like ultrasound

services. While the event isn't supposed to be explicitly political, Jensen said she hoped

See HUCKABEE/12A



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