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Ballots coming in slow

National groups keep pumping money into governor's race

By **PARIS ACHEN** and **AUBREY WIEBER**
Capital Bureau

Voters are turning ballots in more slowly than the last time Oregon elected a governor, according to the state Elections Division, as big money continues to flow to the campaigns of Democrat Kate Brown and Republican Knute Buehler. About 11.6 percent of registered voters turned in ballots as of Friday — 12 days before the election — compared with 17.4 percent at this point in the 2016 election, when Brown defeated Republican challenger Bud Pierce. In other recent general elections, the return rate in 2012 was 14.9 percent and in 2014, it was 12.5 percent.

Umatilla County is slightly ahead of the rest of the state, according to elections manager Kim Lindell. As of Friday, 5,974 ballots were returned — about 13.7 percent.

Ballots are due by 8 p.m. Nov. 6 and were mailed Oct. 17.

Out of 333,767 ballots returned as of Friday, 46 percent came from Democrats, who make up about one-third of Oregon's 2.7 million registered voters.

About one-third, 31.6 percent, of Republican voters have so far returned their ballots. They make up 26 percent of the state's electorate.

Meanwhile, nonaffiliated voters — who are 32 percent of registered voters — have returned less than 16 percent of all ballots reported so far. They remain a wild card in state elections this year.

Most notable from Friday's update on returns was unaffiliated voters' low turnout rate, Moore said.

"They are not as engaged," he said.

See **BALLOTS/12A**

Growing local teachers



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Student teacher Shelby Spriet points to where she wants second-grader Kylee Lucero to start reading while teaching a class about the brain on Friday at McKay Creek Elementary School in Pendleton.

Schools working to close student-teacher color gap

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

The fall has been a watershed moment for Shelby Spriet.

A Pendleton native, Spriet has spent the school year student teaching second grade at McKay Creek Elementary School and is closing in on a lifelong dream.

"Ever since I knew I had to have a job (when I grew up), I wanted to be a teacher," she said.

It's been a watershed moment for Eastern Oregon University too because Spriet represents the first graduate from its Oregon Teacher Pathway program.

A partnership between the EOU College of Education and several local school districts

that began in 2014, Oregon Teacher Pathway is meant to create a "grow your own" pipeline to school districts in the region by stoking high schoolers' interest in teaching before offering them discounted tuition to the university.

But as the first class of Pathway graduates begin to look for work, EOU is still trying to fulfill the other part of the program mission — to produce more teachers of color in a rapidly diversifying region.

The wide disparity between the students who go to public schools and the educators who teach them isn't restricted to Eastern Oregon. According to the Oregon Educator Equity Report, there's nearly a 28-point gap between students of color and minority teachers across the state.

Oregon has seen the percentage of teachers

who identify as "ethnically diverse" rise six points from just 3.9 percent in 1997-98.

But nonwhite students have grown at a much faster rate, creating a stubborn gap in a state where more than a third of the student body are now children of color.

Statewide issue

Anay Mendoza of Umatilla has also wanted to be a teacher for quite some time.

Mendoza said she started expressing interest in the profession when she was in fifth grade, and when she wrote a report about it, she was drafted into Umatilla High School's Pathway program.

Required to take a class and complete a project to qualify to reduce their per credit

See **SCHOOL/12A**

"Ever since I knew I had to have a job (when I grew up), I wanted to be a teacher"

— **Shelby Spriet**, student teacher at McKay Creek Elementary School



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Family Health Associates of Hermiston is opening a clinic on Nov. 15 in the location that formerly housed Encore Wellness 4 Life in Umatilla.

UMATILLA

Medical clinics on the rise

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Umatilla, a town of 7,132, is headed toward a future of three medical clinics.

Family Health Associates of Hermiston will open a new clinic in Umatilla on Nov. 15 at the building that formerly housed Encore Wellness 4 Life. Jennifer Armstrong, the nurse practitioner in charge of Encore, plans to open a new wellness clinic at a different location in Umatilla. And Columbia River Health, which recently announced a new partnership with Carlson's Umatilla Drug, has purchased property to place a clinic of their own in Umatilla.

It's a lot of changes, but should result in better access to health care for Umatilla residents. It could also have spillover benefits for Hermiston residents, said Umatilla Hospital District board member Danice McBee, as Umatilla residents currently seeking care at the Hermiston Family Health Associates location switch to receiving care in Umatilla.

"They've kind of outgrown their space at the hospital (in Hermiston),"

See **HEALTH/12A**

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