

**FINAL HAIL TO THE CHIEF**  
RECORDS/5A



**BRAZILE READY TO SLOW DOWN**  
RODEO/1B

# EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2018

143rd Year, No. 36

WINNER OF THE 2018 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

## Wildhorse expansion trimmed to fit budget

Courtyard hotel slated for closure on March 31, 2019

East Oregonian

Wildhorse Resort & Casino has trimmed back its upcoming major expansion to stay within an

\$85 million budget. The resort detailed the final plans for the expansion in an announcement on Wednesday. "Sticking to the original spending plan became a challenge when the price of steel increased drastically," according to the announcement. "The planning team carefully prioritized

elements of the overall vision and created a realistic and innovative strategy that works within the \$85 million budget." That vision in July included a second 11-story hotel, a 32-lane bowling alley, four more screens in the cineplex and five new

See WILDHORSE/8A



Contributed photo

The Wildhorse Hotel & Casino expansion will include a new hotel tower, bowling alley and food court.

## Local ski area expected to open this winter



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The Spout Springs Ski Area is one of the oldest ski areas in the state of Oregon and has been in continuous operation since 1927.

## Spout Springs revived

Owner says opening will follow 'another good storm'

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Spout Springs Ski Area will open this season after a two-year hiatus.

Hill manager Richard Murray said the ski area in the Blue Mountains isn't open quite yet, but should be soon.

"We've got 18 inches of pack

and we need another good storm to open," he said.

He said when the ski area opens they will announce it on their Facebook page and their website, [www.spoutspringsski-area.com](http://www.spoutspringsski-area.com).

The National Weather Service predicts clear and sunny weather for most of the rest of the week at Spout Springs, with a 20 percent chance of snow on Saturday. Its seven-day forecast states that snow is "likely" on Sunday night, Monday and Tuesday. Sunday is expected to

be the warmest day in the next week, with a high of 32 degrees.

Murray said he will be taking applications for jobs at Spout Springs on Dec. 14 from noon to 4 p.m., Dec. 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Dec. 16 from 9 a.m. to noon. Positions include lift operator, general labor, restaurant jobs and a rental shop tech. Interested applicants can visit the rental shop during those days.

The family-owned and operated business, located on Highway 204 between Weston and

Elgin, has not opened some years due to insufficient snow pack, and last year did not open due to health problems faced by owner John Murray.

Richard Murray said Spout Springs sometimes opens later in the season than other ski resorts because they want to make sure there is enough snow to protect skiers.

"We want everyone to be safe," he said.

According to the ski area's

See SPOUT/8A

## Courtesy police ride ends with two arrests

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Oregon State Police Sgt. Seth Cooney's act of kindness led to the arrest of two suspects in recent car thefts and high-speed chases.

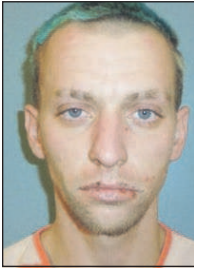
Cooney said he responded Tuesday morning to a report of a male "stumbling on the road and almost falling into traffic" on Interstate 82 near Hermiston.

"As I'm looking at him, he's got blue hair," Cooney said. "That's kind of a giveaway. You don't see that very often."

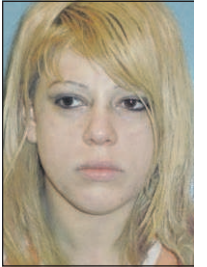
The man said he was in withdrawal and sick, and Cooney agreed to give him a "courtesy transport" to his home on Frontage Road near Hermiston. Cooney said the man identified himself as David James Rushfeldt, 26, of Portland, which the cop connected to an Oct. 24 car chase involving state police trooper John Lombardi.

Lombardi stopped to help a dark gray Subaru Outback on the eastbound side of Interstate 84 near milepost 176. While talking to the two occupants, the female driver floored the gas, and the trooper gave chase. Oregon State Police reported the Subaru exceeded 122 mph and ditched police after taking exit 177 to Frontage Road.

Rushfeldt was the passenger in that car, Cooney said, but that was not a rea-



Rushfeldt



Tattooed

See ARRESTS/8A

## Eastern Oregon tops in preventing kids from missing class

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

Eastern Oregon education is often negatively compared to Portland and Salem, said Landon Braden, so when the region exceeds expectations, he likes to celebrate it.

The InterMountain Education Service District chronic absenteeism coordinator

has had something to trumpet in recent months: Eastern Oregon's 18.7 percent chronic absenteeism rate is nearly two points lower than the state's 20.5 percent rate and represents a slight decrease from the year before.

Students are considered chronic absentees when they miss 18 or more days of school per year, 14 days

if they attend a four-day-per-week district like Pilot Rock or Stanfield. Low attendance can lead students to poor academic performance and dropping out from school entirely.

The Oregon Department of Education eventually considered absenteeism enough of a problem that it drafted a statewide plan, dividing the state into regions and hir-

ing Braden in July to work through the IMESD to assist the 26-district Eastern Oregon region that spans Umatilla, Morrow, Union, Baker, and Wallowa counties.

Every district in Oregon is rated on a three-tiered system, based on their relation to the state chronic absentee rate and graduation rates.

Braden said he came into a situation where districts

were already putting work into decreasing absenteeism.

"I wouldn't trade places with any of you for a million bucks," he tells his fellow absenteeism coordinators in other parts of the state.

Eastern Oregon is the only region where no schools are in Tier 3, the lowest tier that spurs the department of

See ABSENTEEISM/8A



CHI St. Anthony Hospital

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