

**NEW SMOKE RULES  
TO ALLOW MORE  
PRESCRIBED  
BURNS**  
NORTHWEST, A2

**WEEKEND EDITION**  
**SMALL TOWN  
UNITES FOR  
PRESCHOOLER IN THE  
FIGHT OF HER LIFE**  
LIFESTYLES, C1

**LADY BUCKS  
SLIP PAST  
THE DALLES**  
SPORTS, B1

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## NEWEST 'SIN' PITCHES IN



Staff photos by E.J. Harris  
**Sin tax revenue collected by the city of Pendleton for marijuana topped that of taxes collected for both alcohol and cigarettes combined.**

### Marijuana revenue tops Pendleton's tax allocations, but future is unknown

By PHIL WRIGHT  
*East Oregonian*

**T**ax revenue Pendleton received for marijuana in 2018 exceeded what it received for liquor and cigarettes.

City Manager Robb Corbett recalled the early estimates leading up to recreational marijuana sales in Pendleton showed the city would make about \$25,000. That zoomed to \$200,000. Now the city is receiving about \$300,000 a year, he said, but he remains cautious about the tax stream.

"The concern I have about revenue from marijuana is how it's going to level off," he said. "Is this a blip because it's new?"

The city received \$269,218 in 2017-18 from liquor revenue, according to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, and about \$20,000 in state ciga-

**"THE CONCERN I HAVE ABOUT REVENUE FROM MARIJUANA IS HOW IT'S GOING TO LEVEL OFF. IS THIS A BLIP BECAUSE IT'S NEW?"**

Robb Corbett, city manager

rette taxes, per the city's 2018 budget. Corbett said tax revenue from those vices is long established and reliable enough for the city to budget with. Marijuana is delivering the cash now, but Corbett explained plenty of forces could eat into the revenue.

Tourism is an increasing part of

Pendleton's economic picture, and Pendleton is the only town in Morrow, Umatilla and Union counties that allows recreational marijuana sales. But other Eastern Oregon communities could change that, and Corbett said La Grande is tossing around the idea. If stores open there, buyers would not make the trip to Pendleton, and the city would lose some revenue.

Oregon shares marijuana tax revenue with cities that allow recreational sales, and the law allows local governments to tack on their own 3 percent tax, which Pendleton does. According to the Oregon Department of Revenue, the state in 2018 distributed more than \$14.4 million in pot revenue to cities and counties. Corbett said more communities allowing retail pot sales also could mean each one receives a smaller share of the total.

See Pot, Page A12

**PSU STUDY**

### Speeds, crashes are rising on local highways

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
*East Oregonian*

Nearly two years after speed limits were increased on highways in central and Eastern Oregon, a state-funded analysis shows that serious wrecks on those roads have gone up at a faster rate than places where the limit was unchanged.

Using four years of data on crashes across state highways and automatic traffic recorders to measure speeds, the Oregon Department of Transportation and Portland State University found that fatal crashes went up by 36 percent on highways raised to 70 miles per hour and rose 67 percent on roads that were increased to 65 miles per hour.

The Oregon Legislature voted to raise the speed limit on Interstate 84 from Ontario to The Dalles, Interstate 82 in Umatilla County, and Highway 95 in southeastern Oregon from 65 miles per hour to 70. Sections of Highway 395, Highway 97, and Highway 20 jumped from 55 to 65. The bill received bipartisan support in both chambers of the Legislature, was signed into law by Gov. Kate Brown and ODOT made the changes in March 2016.

Portland State's study looked at the year following the speed limit increases, comparing it to data from the three years prior.

Chris Monsere, a PSU professor and the chair of the university's civil and environmental engineering department, said he previously collaborated with ODOT on two different reviews on the literature surrounding speed limit increases.

Monsere and researchers Sirisha Kothuri and Jason Anderson found that speeding increased once the speed limits were relaxed.

In 70 mile per hour zones, vehicles traveling faster than 75 went up by 12 percent while drivers going past 85 went up by nearly 1 percent. In the 65 mile per hour zones, the most significant jump was in the percentage of vehicles going

See Study, Page A12

### Shutdown may have impact on local meal programs

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
*East Oregonian*

President Donald Trump agreed on Friday to temporarily end the federal government shutdown, reopening the government through Feb. 15.

It's good news for the nearly 800,000 furloughed federal workers who were not working or receiving pay during the shutdown, but depending on what happens next, local people and pro-

grams could still be affected.

Area school districts rely on grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to fund food programs for low-income students.

Most said they were covered for the next few weeks, but if a shutdown lasts beyond next month, they'll be more concerned.

"We're really watching the February deadlines," Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe said. "Currently, we're not seeing an impact on child nutrition; however, if the

shutdown continues past February, we may have some struggles."

According to a press release from the Oregon Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs, the ODE will continue processing and paying for claims for federal assistance on food programs throughout March 2019. The press release stated that USDA, which contracts with vendors to ship food products to school, would

See Shutdown, Page A12



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