

EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2019

143rd Year, No. 91

WINNER OF THE 2018 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50

It takes a village



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Shawn Lockwood, left, could barely speak after being named the Woman of the Year Wednesday at the Hermiston Distinguished Citizens Awards.

Hermiston honorees thank community at annual Distinguished Citizens Awards

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN and JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Hermiston's annual Distinguished Citizens Awards is a gathering of mostly adults, but one of this year's top honorees was noted as much for her youthful nature as for her service to the community.

Shawn Lockwood, an accounting manager at Hermiston Generating Company, was named the 2018 Woman of the Year by the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday night.

"To say that she's the most energetic person in a room full of teenagers is not an understatement," said New Hope Community Church pastor Tim Beal, who presented the award to Lockwood.

Though she was nearly speechless upon receiving the award, Lockwood said she was completely honored.

She said she's primarily motivated by her relationship with God.

"That drives me," she said.

Lockwood spends much of her free time volunteering with local youth, both through New Hope and outside. She has



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Ford Bonney gives a speech after being named the Man of the Year Wednesday at the Hermiston Distinguished Citizens Awards.

volunteered for Campus Life, Hermiston Little League board, has coached cross-country and owned her own business.

Beal described Lockwood's extensive community service — spending a week in California with high schoolers, processing peaches to send to third-world countries, and lead-

ing various youth group activities — all the while keeping a youthful spirit herself.

"This past weekend, I was with her as she mentored kids at Meadowood camp," Beal said, recalling her laughing as she sledged into piles of snow with kids.

Lockwood said she had ini-

tially planned a trip to Las Vegas this week, but her colleagues convinced her to stay, keeping her in the dark about the award.

"It's terrific," she said. "I had no idea. I thought I was supposed to get someone else here."

See Awards, Page A7

Killer convicted in 1999 homicide

Vasquez-Vargas charged with fatal November shooting in Umapine

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Antonio Vasquez-Vargas, of Walla Walla, faces a murder charge for the shooting death of Renee Luiz-Antonio in late 2018 in Umapine.

If Vasquez-Vargas is found guilty, Luiz-Antonio would be the second man he killed.

The *East Oregonian* verified Vasquez-Vargas killed 73-year-old Floyd Murphy almost 20 years ago in a car wreck in Walla Walla.

The *EO* looked into the matter after receiving an email from Murphy's grandson, Matthew Murphy, and an email from a friend of Matthew Murphy that contained clippings of *Walla*



Vasquez-Vargas

Walla Union Bulletin news stories about the fatal crash and subsequent criminal prosecution. The information led to finding more archival news reports about the fatality, a matching date of birth and the photo of Vasquez-Vargas in one edition of the *UB* that resembles his Umatilla County Jail mug shot.

Vasquez-Vargas, on the afternoon of Aug. 10, 1999, drove a 1976 Buick LeSabre from Chestnut Street onto Second Avenue, according to the *Union-Bulletin's* reports, and struck a pickup. No one was injured in that collision, and Vasquez-Vargas didn't stop. Moments later, he plowed the Buick into Murphy's 1992 Dodge Caravan.

The impact knocked the minivan onto its top, according to the

See Conviction, Page A7

Umatilla reviews its ties to Chamber of Commerce

City funding, lodging taxes help keep business association open

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Umatilla Chamber of Commerce could take on a new look and a new relationship with the city in the near future.

The city of Umatilla's contract with the chamber isn't up for renewal until mid-2020, but City Manager David Stockdale said with all of the changes in leadership the city and chamber have both experienced in the past year he felt it might be "appropriate" to look at options for adjusting the chamber's structure and funding.

"I thought it would be a good opportunity to discuss and review the existing contract," he said.

During Tuesday's city council meeting, the chamber board was invited to sit in on the council's closed-door executive session to "conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions." Stockdale also plans to attend the chamber's board meeting on Thursday night.

See Chamber, Page A7

Joe's Fiesta restaurant working on renovation

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

With some help from the Pendleton Development Commission, Joe's Fiesta Family Mexican Restaurant will undergo some dramatic changes, inside and out.

Already approved for a \$6,230 grant to cover 40 percent of the cost of a façade restoration, Joe's Fiesta owner Joe Meda also received unanimous approval from the commission to use a \$70,000 Jump Start loan to expand his restaurant into the neighboring storefront.

Meda originally intended to blast off the current façade to reveal the original brick underneath. But when contractors began removing the façade, the brick began to crumble along with it.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The facade of Joe's Fiesta Mexican restaurant is covered by a scaffolding and a tarp as work restoring the building's facade is underway in downtown Pendleton.

See Fiesta, Page A7

