

SEE PHOTOS
OF CHAMPS
HEPPNER AND
NIXYAAWII
SPORTS, B2-B3

WEEKEND EDITION

MATH TEACHER COMPETES IN SCRABBLE
TOURNAMENTS AROUND THE U.S.
LIFESTYLES, C1

SPRING
FORWARD

Daylight saving time starts on Sunday at 2 a.m. when clocks are turned to 3 a.m.

EAST OREGONIAN

MARCH 9-10, 2019

143rd Year, No. 103

WINNER OF THE 2018 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50

Surplus not gloom and doom of booming marijuana market



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Budtender Nick Krensler uses chopsticks to grab a bud of marijuana while helping a customer on Thursday at Kind Leaf marijuana dispensary in Pendleton.

As trade stabilizes, problems of excess are being sorted out

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission at the end of January issued a study claiming there's enough marijuana to supply the state's recreational market for 6.5 years.

The "2019 Recreational Marijuana Supply and Demand Legislative Report" stated the finding was in theory and stems from over-production.

Brandon Krenzler and Erin Purchase argued just how theoretical the finding is. They own and operate Kind Leaf, one of the three retail marijuana stores in Pendleton, and employ about 30 people. They said the market is far from collapsing, and much of the surplus is stuff that will not sell.

"No one is going to smoke 6-year-old weed," Krenzler said. "There's a lot of unwanted product."

See Marijuana, Page A10



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
A pound of White Tahoe Cookies from Frontier Farms of Hood River waits to be processed at Kind Leaf marijuana dispensary on Thursday in Pendleton.

"NO ONE IS GOING TO SMOKE 6-YEAR-OLD WEED. THERE'S A LOT OF UNWANTED PRODUCT."

Brandon Krenzler, co-owner of Kind Leaf, one of three retail marijuana stores in Pendleton

Chamber sets sights to build on Highway 395

Land will need to be rezoned for development

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Hermiston City Council will consider actions on Monday that will pave the way for two major projects in Hermiston — a new water tower and a new chamber of commerce building.

During Monday's city council meeting the council will consider rezoning a 2-acre parcel of property on the southwest corner of South Highway 395 and East Evelyn Avenue, across from New Hope Community Church.

The chamber was awarded \$1 million by the Oregon Legislature in 2018 to build new offices and workforce development space. According to a memo by city planner Clint Spencer in the council's agenda packet, the chamber has requested the Evelyn Avenue property be rezoned from multi-family residential to outlying commercial, and plans to purchase the property and build a facility there if the rezone is approved.

Monday's meeting will include a public hearing on the issue.

On Monday, the city will also consider awarding a \$3.3 million contract to Premier Excavation of Pasco for construction of a new water tower.

The 1 million-gallon steel tank will be located at the intersection of Punkin Center Road and Northeast 10th Street. It will also include 2 miles of new water mains and major improvements to the Alora Heights booster pump station.

The project will provide adequate water for housing development to more than 300 acres in the northeast part of Hermiston.

According to the city it will also serve the property at the intersection of Northeast 10th Street and Theater Lane, where Hermiston School District hopes to one day build an elementary school, saving the district up to \$2 million in development costs.

Umatilla County is contributing \$2 million to the project using the first four years of payments in lieu of taxes from Lamb Weston's new expansion in the city of Hermiston's enterprise zone. The city will also use its half of the water project's costs.

The council will also hold a public hearing on Monday on a request from the Hermiston School District and Hermiston Irrigation District to annex land off Theater Lane — 19 acres held by the school district and 51 acres by the irrigation district — into the land. The property is currently undeveloped.

The city council meets at 7 p.m. at city hall, 180 N.E. Second St. Visit hermiston.or.us/meetings for the full agenda packet.

Taxpayers to pick up legislature's settlement bill

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE,
AUBREY WIEBER
and MARK MILLER
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — In the next month, the Legislature will write a check for \$1.1 million to finish its settlement of sexual harassment claims at the Capitol.

But it won't be legislators or employees accused of the misconduct who have to pay.

The money comes from taxpayers. The settlement between the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries and the Legislature was announced Tuesday.

Nine victims will receive up to \$415,000 each.

The Legislature will pay for the settlement using extra money initially budgeted for other purposes, according to Legislative Fiscal Officer Ken Rocco.

The Legislative Assembly, which is part of the overall legislative branch of state government, has spent about 70 percent of its \$41 million budget and is 80 percent of the way through its current two-year budget cycle, which ends June 30.

The Legislature gets nearly all of its money from the state's general fund, which is paid by taxpayers, according to state records.

The legislative branch has spent less than expected on personnel, Rocco said. When the economy is doing as well as it is now, fewer

people want the part-time, limited-duration jobs available during the session.

Under the settlement, the Legislature will cut the check to the state labor bureau within 30 days.

Then the labor bureau will distribute the money to the victims of harassment.

The Legislature will pay nearly \$1.1 million in non-economic damages to eight victims, about \$26,000 in legal fees to a state senator who was harassed, and \$200,000 to the labor bureau for attorneys' fees and out of pocket expenses.

The bureau's investigation, released Jan. 3, focused largely on the actions of former state Sen. Jeff Kruse, who resigned a year ago,

although the behavior of three lawmakers was called out in the report.

But it's not clear which lawmakers' actions led to settlement money for which victims.

A spokesman for the labor bureau declined to disclose that information Wednesday.

The settlement caps allegations dating back to October 2017, when Sen. Sara Gelsler, D-Corvallis, publicly accused Kruse of inappropriate behavior.

Internal investigations by the Legislature were followed by the labor bureau's investigation and resulting complaint in January against legislative leaders.

See Settlement, Page A10



7 29467100022 2