

A sole purpose behind EOU senior's project

By DICK MASON
La Grande Observer

LA GRANDE — Peter Eke, an Eastern Oregon University senior from Nigeria, did not travel light when he returned to his homeland last summer.

Sixty-two youths from poverty-stricken families in Nigeria can attest to this.

Eke arrived with seven bags containing 62 pairs of basketball shoes donated by Northeast Oregon residents. Next Eke put his best foot forward. The 6-foot-7-inch EOU student-athlete distributed all of the shoes to the most needy attending a free basketball camp he was putting on. Almost all had never worn shoes before.

The youths seemed as excited as fans who had just seen their favorite college team win a national title on a buzzer-beating shot.

"They were ecstatic, incredibly happy," said Eke, who was one of at least 400 students who received diplomas Saturday at EOU's commencement.

Eke, who performs acts of charity like this through his organization Dreamers Without Boundaries, will be at it again in August, delivering dozens of shoes to youths attending his basketball camp in the state of Ebonyi in South-



La Grande Observer photo by Ronald Bond

Eastern Oregon University senior Peter Eke collected more than 60 pairs of donated basketball shoes to take to Nigeria to distribute for a free camp he put on in the country. For many, it was their first pair of shoes.

east Nigeria. This time he will also be giving T-shirts and more to the children attending from poor families.

Such acts of generosity by Eke are not a surprise, according to EOU men's head basketball coach Carlito Labarda, Jr.

"He has the most gracious heart I've ever seen," Labarda said.

He said Eke's selfless nature personifies altruism. "I am more proud of

him than any of my players because of what he does to help others. It is the ultimate (kindness) to help others who can't help you back," Labarda said.

Eke teaches youths in Nigeria about much more than basketball. He also talks to them about how important it is to learn to love rather than hate. The importance of developing a conscience and learning the difference between right and wrong are also focused upon.

boys in Nigeria. He explained he was once a barefoot boy attending a basketball camp in his country run by Masai Ujiri, who is now president of basketball operations for the 2019 National Basketball Association champions, the Toronto Raptors. Ujiri, who grew up in Nigeria, gave Eke and many other boys at his camp the first shoes they ever had.

Eke said the shoes he received made a huge impact in the development of his basketball skills because he suddenly had the freedom to play harder.

"I didn't have to worry about being injured," Eke said.

Eke's basketball skills were noticed by coaches with Covenant Christian Ministries Academy in Georgia where Eke went for his final two years of high school to play basketball. He played so well he earned a junior college basketball scholarship at Atlanta Metropolitan State College. Eke later put together a highlight video of his junior college performances and sent it to coaches at four-year colleges throughout the nation including Eastern.

Labarda was impressed with what he saw and offered Eke an athletic scholarship, which he accepted.

Coming to La Grande was an eye-opener for Eke. So much was new to him, including the weather. It was here that he experienced snow for the first time.

"I had never felt cold in that way before," Eke said. He has enjoyed his time in La Grande and EOU immensely and speaks movingly about people who have reached out to him. These people include Kris and Dan Martens, who have provided Eke with a place to stay and enjoy meals during holiday breaks when most students have left.

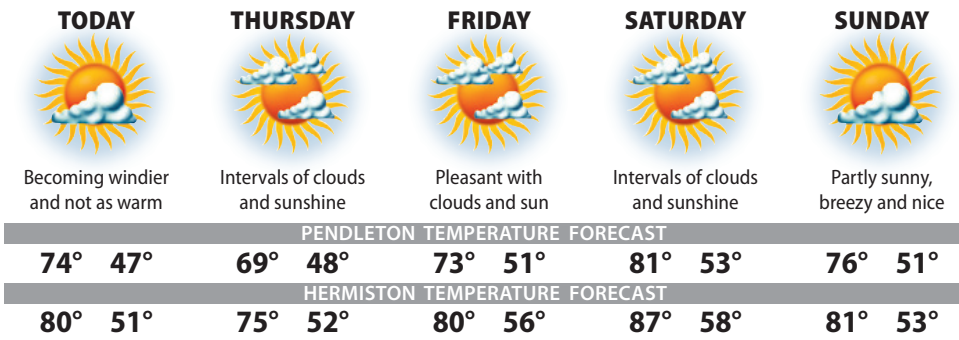
"They have been like a family for me," Eke said. Kris Martens, who works at EOU in events and conference services, describes Eke as someone whose lone purpose in life is to reach out to others.

"He is an incredible kid (with) a great heart. His real drive is helping people," Martens said. "We will miss him terribly."

Martens said Eke is also an outstanding cook, preparing dishes popular in his country that they found delightful. The family's favorite is a rice dish called jollof.

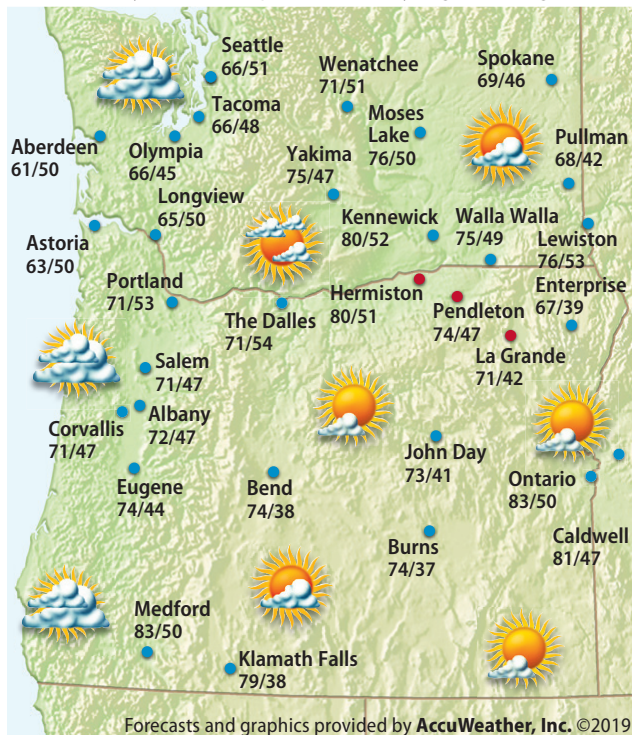
Eke graduated with a degree in physical activity and health with a concentration on exercise science. He wants to become a physical therapist for athletes after leaving Eastern.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



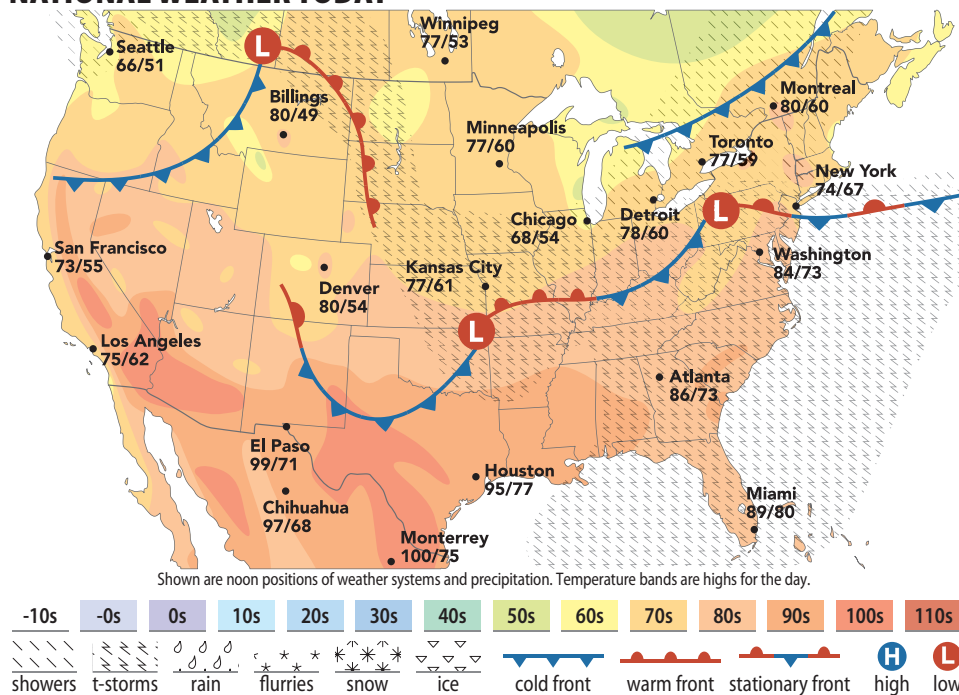
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	83°	60°	
Normals	79°	53°	
Records	100° (1961)	38° (1902)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.05"		
Normal month to date	0.86"		
Year to date	9.33"		
Last year to date	6.40"		
Normal year to date	7.37"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	86°	64°	
Normals	80°	54°	
Records	108° (1961)	40° (2010)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	Trace		
Normal month to date	0.41"		
Year to date	4.42"		
Last year to date	5.10"		
Normal year to date	5.52"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Thu.	Thu.	
Boardman	WSW 10-20	WSW 8-16	
Pendleton	WSW 10-20	W 10-20	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	5:05 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	8:48 p.m.		
Moonrise today	10:54 p.m.		
Moonset today	7:11 a.m.		
Last	New	First	Full
June 25	July 2	July 9	July 16

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 105° in Needles, Calif. Low 30° in Climax, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife File Photo

The Wedge Wolfpack has resumed killing livestock in Stevens County, Washington.

NORTHWEST IN BRIEF

Wedge wolfpack attacks livestock in NE Washington

SPOKANE — A northeast Washington wolfpack killed a cow last week in northern Stevens County, the first confirmed wolf attack on livestock in Washington since early January.

The cow was attacked in a private pasture and was found by the rancher June 11, a state Department of Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman said.

Another the dead cow was found about one-quarter mile away the day before, but investigators were unable to determine the cause of death, she said.

Fish and Wildlife attributed the depredation to the Wedge pack. The department counted three wolves in the pack at the end of last year. The pack's territory crosses into Canada, according to Fish and Wildlife.

The department killed seven wolves in the Wedge pack in 2012 to protect cattle. Last week's attack was the first confirmed recent depredation by the pack.

Non-lethal measures — range riders, trail cameras and hazing — were in place before the attack to protect cattle.

The bill has been a priority for pro-immigration groups who say that undocumented immigrants often live in rural areas, which requires having a car. Those without proof of residence say they live in fear that they could be deported over a traffic stop.

Opponents say that the measure should be sent to the ballot considering voters already shot down a similar proposal in 2016.

Oregon's unemployment rate drops to 4.2 percent in May

SALEM — The state's unemployment rate was slightly down, the Oregon Employment Department reported Tuesday.

According to a press release from OED, May's unemployment rate dropped to 4.2%, down from 4.3% in April.

The state's unemployment rate has been between 4% and 4.4% for 31 months, dating back to November 2016. The U.S. unemployment rate was 3.6% in both April and May.

During this economic expansion, Oregon's unemployment rate has been lower than at any time since comparable records began in 1976. The previous low was reached in January and February 1995 when Oregon's rate touched 4.7%.

In addition to the very low level of Oregon's unemployment rate, it has been lower longer than ever before. Since the late-1970s, during the prior five economic expansions, the unemployment rate would generally drop to a bottom in the cycle and then start moving upward within a few months. In contrast, during the past three years, Oregon's unemployment rate dropped down close to 4%, remaining near there for 31 consecutive months.

Oregon advances bill allowing undocumented immigrants to drive

SALEM — Undocumented immigrants in Oregon could legally obtain drivers licenses under a measure approved by the House.

Lawmakers voted 39-21 on Tuesday to send the Senate a plan expanding driving privileges to all Oregon residents regardless of their immigration status.

CORRECTIONS: The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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