



Seniors (left to right) JJ Fitzgerald, Laine Whelan and Rogelio Lemus, and junior Adamaryz Lopez Naverette, won the Congressional App Challenge for Oregon’s District 2 this week.

Hermiston high-schoolers win Congressional App Challenge

By JESSICA POLLARD
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The office of U.S. Rep. Greg Walden recognized a team of four Hermiston High School students this week as winners of the 2019 Congressional App Challenge for Oregon’s District 2.

Seniors Rogelio Lemus, JJ Fitzgerald and Laine Whelan, and junior Adamaryz Lopez Naverette, won the competition for their creation of an application known as FINANA (Finances Incorporated Nationally Allowing

Nonprofit Automation).

According to a press release recently issued by the school district, the app assists nonprofits in fundraising efforts by allowing users to inventory their proceeds and acts as a point-of-sale system.

“It’s a web app that allows many nonprofit organizations to manage their fundraising using an SQL database to store and track all items being sold,” Lemus said in a video used to explain the application.

The four high-schoolers utilized multiple program-

ming languages and two web servers to create a webpage for the application.

This is the second year in a row that Hermiston teens have won the App Challenge for District 2.

Last year, Lemus was a junior when he and Ethan Orozco developed BANANA (Basic App to Notify Authorities of Non-Authorized Abductions), which utilizes facial recognition technology to locate missing people.

Lemus got the idea for FINANA while helping out with a church fundraiser.

In 2016, Courtney Cash, Marvin Hozi and Jordan Liebe were the first high-schoolers to win the Congressional App Challenge.

This year’s winning team has been invited to a springtime reception in Washington, D.C., to show Congress members how FINANA operates.

“The FINANA app stood out because it had a great amount of detailed coding,” stated Hermiston High School computer science teacher Robert Theriault in the recent news release.

Enrollment numbers decline at BMCC

By JESSICA POLLARD
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — An enrollment rise had administrators at Blue Mountain Community College feeling hopeful before the start of the term, but that increase has since been replaced with a decline.

“Things looked pretty good in late July,” BMCC President Dennis Bailey-Fournier said in a recent report. “By September, new enrollments had completely dropped off.”

The reason for the drop is uncertain as of now, according to interim Vice President of Student Affairs Bruce Clemetsen.

“We can’t put our finger on what happened,” he said.

For two weeks in late summer, enrollment sat at a notable high, he said. In late August, there was a 5% increase in full-time equivalent enrollment.

But into the final week of fall term at BMCC, the headcount stood at 2,356 students compared with 2,750 students at the same time a year ago.

The headcount, which represents the number of students taking classes, has increased a bit since then, but full-time equivalent enrollment — which indicates how many hours of classes are being taken — remains down 6% from a year ago.

“I can say we’ve noticed the declines in the amount of students enrolling in early college credits,” Clemetsen added.

In response, the community college has been making calls to degree-seeking students to ensure they’ll register for winter term. Clemetsen added some students might initially register for classes but not follow through on the whole process.

Registration for win-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

After touting improved enrollment prior to fall term, Blue Mountain Community College ended up experiencing a 6% drop in full-time equivalent enrollment since this time last year. BMCC attributed the positive early numbers to students who began, but may not have finished, the enrollment process. BMCC is looking into what factors may be responsible for the overall drop.

ter term closes on Jan. 10, according to the school’s website.

“There are a number of students that might wait to see what their grades from the fall term are, and then they’ll register,” Celemtsen said.

Some of those students may have their tuition funded by a third party, like a relative or employer, and funds may be contingent on satisfactory grades.

The college is also strategizing ways to increase full-time equivalency by encouraging students already registered to take on more credits.

And while the drop hits campus, there’s a 24% spike in full-time equivalent enrollment for GED classes from last year, Celemtsen said.

“I know the folks involved

in that program have really been getting out there to help people register,” he said. “That’s a plus.”

This November, unemployment in Oregon fell below 4% for the first time since the late 1970s, according to the Oregon Department of Employment and has held historical lows for the past three years.

But with that comes a decline in the number of people interested in signing up for community college, Clemetsen said, which can affect the total headcount of students each year.

“At the same time, students can find employment which may reduce how many credits they’re taking,” he added.

Keeping full-time equivalent up doesn’t just mean filling the hallways with people

excited to learn. It matters financially, too.

According to recent documents, tuition makes up about 28% of BMCC’s funding resources this school year.

State funding is affected too. This year, the school identified a projected 3% decrease in state funding, in part due to full-time enrollment numbers, from the last three years compared to the state average.

“What we’re trying to watch is if we’re above the growth or shrinkage rate statewide,” Clemetsen said. “We’re not too far away from the average.”

Officials locate missing man from Irrigon

Jose Fernandez found after going missing Wednesday afternoon

By ALEX CASTLE
East Oregonian

IRRIGON — An Irrigon man reported missing Wednesday afternoon was located by search and rescue personnel on Thursday.

The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office confirmed Jose Fernandez, 85, was found at 11:41 a.m. and transported to a local hospital Thursday after wandering off from a residence between 4-5 p.m. on Wednesday from Southwest Nevada Avenue.

According to a news release, Fernandez has advanced stages of dementia and struggles with foot problems but wasn’t in an immediate medical emergency without his daily medications. He was located in a field near Nevada Avenue and was conscious, alert and “seemed to be in good condition.” He is expected to make a full recovery.

Officials located Fernandez after the sheriff’s office, the Irrigon Fire Department, Irrigon Ambulance, Oregon State Police and United States Fish and Wildlife,

along with family members and local residents, searched the ground from 5:30 p.m. to midnight on Wednesday.

While most personnel were released after midnight, a Thursday morning press release from the sheriff’s office said family members, community members and personnel from the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office continued searching until the morning without new sightings or leads.

A briefing occurred at 7 a.m. Thursday in Irrigon to set up a grid area search map to continue looking for Fernandez, and more than 55 personnel from Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office, Umatilla Police Department, Boardman Police Department, and search and rescue personnel from the Boardman Fire District joined the effort.

A news release thanked Michelle Luna from Irrigon for purchasing food for the searchers and Java Junkies for preparing and delivering it.

“Thank you to all the agencies and community members who worked together to make this a successful outcome,” Sheriff Ken Matlack said in a statement. “We could not have achieved this goal without everyone working together as a team.”

BRIEFLY

The Nickel closes its doors

HERMISTON — Online advertising claimed another victim this week when The Nickel closed its doors Thursday.

The want ad newspaper, based in Hermiston, published classified ads covering Umatilla, Morrow and Gilliam counties for 42 years. It announced on Thursday that it was closing for good, both in print and online.

“We greatly appreciate

the support from hundreds of the most loyal customers over those years,” the staff wrote on Facebook. “While we still have the support of many, it is just not enough to keep our doors open.”

Newspapers across the country have seen their classified ad revenue decline steeply over the past two decades, as more customers migrated to using free online services, such as Facebook and Craigslist, to advertise items for sale.

— EO Media Group

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FRIDAY, DEC. 20
PENDLETON DELPHIAN CLUB, 1:30 p.m., Vert Club Room, 345 S.W. Fourth St., Pendleton.
PENDLETON MASTERS SWIM CLUB, 5-6 p.m., Roundup Athletic Club pool, 1415 Southgate, Pendleton. \$5 per session coaching fee; non-RAC members pay \$8 pool fee per session. (Tania Wildbill 541-310-9102)
PENDLETON EAGLES LADIES AUXILIARY KITCHEN, 6-8 p.m., Pendleton Eagles Lodge, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Members and guests welcome. (541-278-2828)
COLUMBIA GRANGE, 6:30 p.m., Columbia Grange Hall, 32339 Diagonal Blvd., Hermiston. 6:30 p.m. potluck, 7:30 p.m. meeting. (Doris Reid 541-567-8663)

SATURDAY, DEC. 21
PENDLETON EAGLES STEAK AND LIVE MUSIC, 6-11:59 p.m., Pendleton Eagles Lodge, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Dinner from 6-8 p.m., music from 8 p.m. to midnight. Members and guests welcome. (541-278-2828)

SUNDAY, DEC. 22
PENDLETON EAGLES BREAKFAST, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Pendleton Eagles Lodge, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Open to members and guests. (541-278-2828)
UNION PACIFIC EMPLOYEES CLUB, 1:30 p.m., Hermiston VFW Hall, 45 W. Cherry, Hermiston. All UP employees, working or retired, welcome to attend. Bring a main dish or dessert and table service. (541-567-5260)

MONDAY, DEC. 23
BOARDMAN QUILT GROUP, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St., Boardman. Quilt construction, quilting updates, education, history and friendship. Free. (Kathy Hyder 541-571-7009)
NARFE OF HERMISTON, 12 p.m., Desert Lanes Bowling Alley, 1545 N. First St., Hermiston. No-host lunch. All federal employees, retirees and spouses are welcome. (541-567-2648)

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WINTER CLEARANCE SALE!
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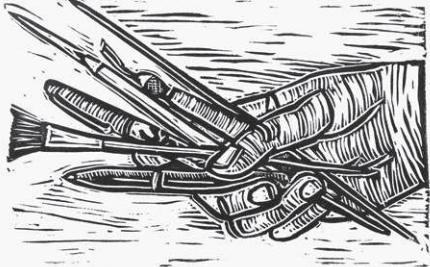
- **PNDNC CLASSIFIED** - Daily Newspapers
29 newspapers - 1,187,980 circulation
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Cost: \$540 (Runs 3 consecutive days including wkds.)
- **PNDN 2x2 DISPLAY** - Daily Newspapers
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More info: Cecelia@cnpa.com or call (916) 288-6011



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PENDLETON CENTER for the ARTS


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Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie
Showing Wednesday @ 12p
Elf

Star Wars:
The Rise of Skywalker (PG13)
2D 12:10p* 3:20p* 5:50p
6:30p 9:40p **ED** 1:00p* 9:10p

Cats (PG) 12:30p* 3:00p*
4:10p 6:40p 9:00p

Jumanji:
The Next Level (PG13)
2D 1:10p* 4:00p 6:50p 9:30p

Richard Jewell (R)
12:20p* 3:10p* 6:00p 8:50p

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