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NORTHEASTERN OREGON

Vets air concerns at virtual town hall

Sen. Ron Wyden says Eastern Oregon vets need to have say in changes to VA service

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Veterans in Northeastern Oregon raised a number of questions and issues Saturday, June 4, during a virtual town hall meeting to discuss possible Veterans Administration changes to delivering health care in the area.

This was the first of three virtual meetings Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, D, is holding for veterans to give input in the wake of vets at a recent Union County town hall expressing concerns over a proposal to move some VA health care services from Walla Walla to Spokane.

“The veterans who participated were particularly troubled about what they felt was the direct touch that’s so important for veterans health care was just going away from the rural part of the state,” Wyden told those attending the June 4 event.

Following the Union County meeting, he said, he contacted Dr. Teresa Boyd, network director for VISN 20, the VA Northwest Health Network, and Scott Kelter, medical center director of the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center in Walla Walla, where many veterans in Northeastern Oregon go for services. They both agreed to participate in the three town halls.

Wyden said local veterans are “troubled by a whirlwind of hasty changes, involving a new electronic health record system, delays in delivery of care and recommendations to move VA care further away from Eastern Oregon.” He added he was concerned Eastern Oregon veterans did not get enough voice in the changes and proposals, and he wanted to make sure the Veterans Administration was not making “some shortsighted cost cutting” at the expense of veterans.

Wyden then opened the floor to questions for Boyd and Kelter.

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MEMORIES and PERSEVERANCE

Pendleton High graduates 210 in Class of 2022

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton High School Class of 2022 trod across turf soggy with recent rains as they stepped into the next phase of their lives.

The wet grass didn’t bother them one bit.

As senior speaker Melinda Cramp would point out, these 210 Buckaroos made it through much more to earn their diplomas Saturday morning, June 4.

Pendleton High’s 130th commencement ceremony began in the Pendleton Round-Up Arena with words from Principal Pat Dutcher.

“It’s a day many of you looked forward to for a long time, and also a day many of you thought would not happen,” he told the class and their families and friends looking on from the arena stands.

None of them made it this far alone, he said, a theme Senior Class President Kyle Liscom echoed.

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Photos by Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

A Pendleton senior acknowledges the crowd before collecting her diploma on Saturday, June 4, 2022, during commencement at the Pendleton Round-Up Arena.

A Pendleton graduate exults after getting his diploma on Saturday, June 4, 2022, during commencement at the Pendleton Round-Up Arena.



5A STATE SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Savoring the moment

By ANNIE FOWLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Winning a state championship is a once-in-a-lifetime moment for most athletes. The Pendleton softball team is going to soak up every minute of its state title.

Pendleton (28-2) defeated Wilsonville 2-0 on Saturday, June 4, to win the 5A state title in Eugene.

Bucks senior right fielder Chloe Taber was still trying to process the win a day later.

“It was just crazy,” she said. “There were so many emotions. Oh, my gosh, we just won a state championship. For us seniors, it was ‘we are graduating in like 5 minutes.’”

Graduating at home plate is something the players look forward to, Taber said.

“In Pendleton, if you play sports, it’s one of the most iconic things that can happen,”



Ben Lonergan/For East Oregonian

Pendleton players hold up the Oregon School Activities Association Class 5A state softball trophy Saturday, June 4, 2022, after defeating the Wilsonville Wildcats at Jane Sanders Stadium in Eugene.

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