

# EAST OREGONIAN

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**EDUCATION**



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File  
**A Hermiston High School graduate exults after receiving her diploma during commencement ceremonies June 9, 2022, at the Toyota Center in Kennewick. Hermiston School District reported 355 students graduated on time. The school had 382 seniors, plus eight students from the district's Next Steps program.**

## Local high schools tout graduation numbers

Preliminary figures show Class of 2022 made it through pandemic years in good shape

By ERICK PETERSON  
*East Oregon*

HERMISTON — Local high schools have reported preliminary stats show promising graduation numbers for the Class of 2022.

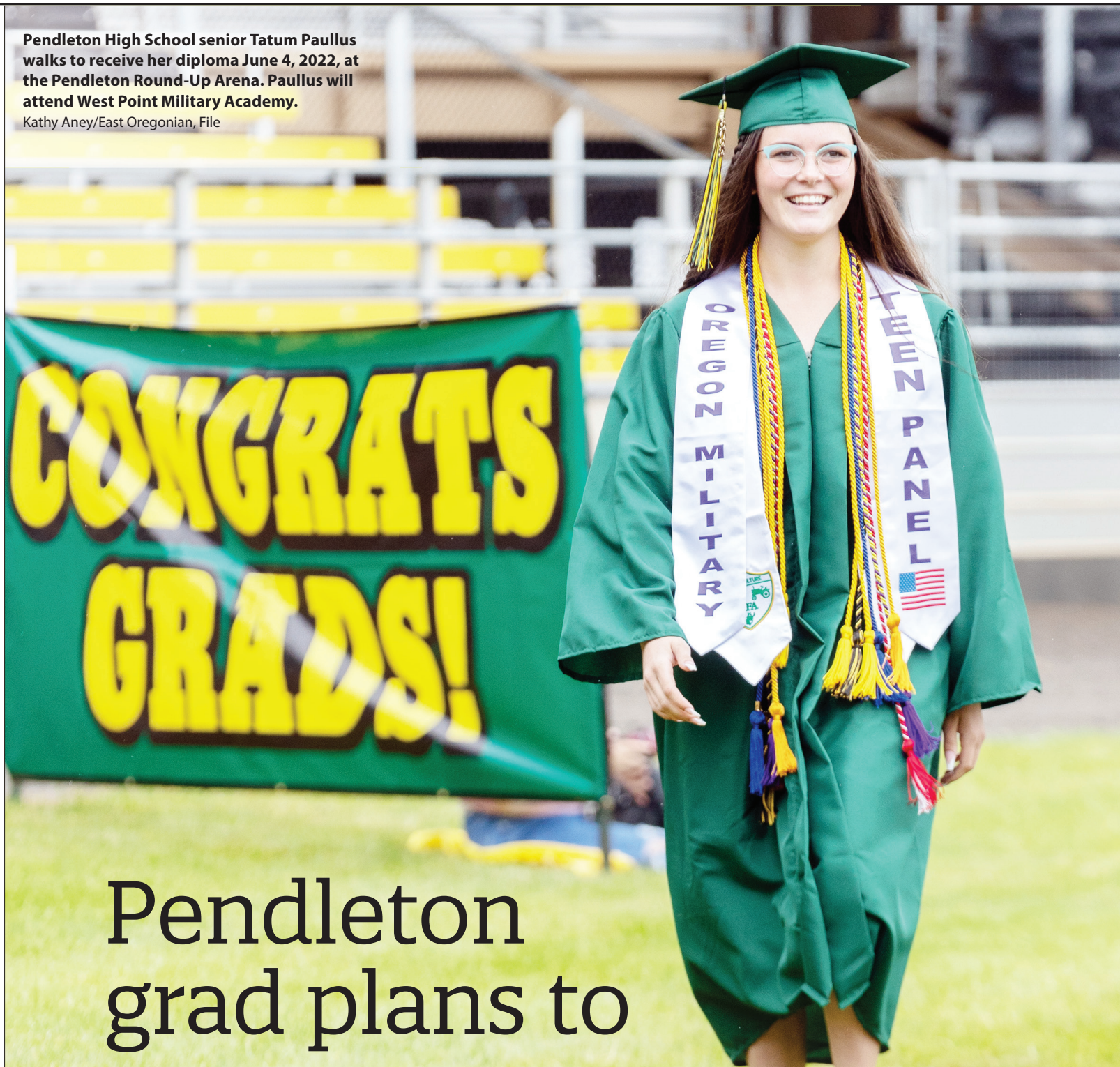
Local school officials and graduates said the Class of 2022 was unique for enduring the coronavirus pandemic, a subject that became a common theme in several graduation speeches. This class adapted through lockdowns with online learning and returned to classrooms to complete their schoolwork.

Hermiston High School had 355 students graduate on time, according to Hermiston School District communications officer Briana Cortaberria. The school had 382 seniors, plus eight students from the district's Next Steps program. The Pendleton School District saw 223 students from Pendleton High School and Hawthorne Alternative High School earn diplomas, and another five earned a GED diploma.

Matt Yoshioka, director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment for the Pendleton School District, explained the state of Oregon bases graduation rates on the number of students who enter a freshman class and then finish as seniors. But it does appear the PHS Class of 2022 is going to finish with a very high graduation rate.

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Pendleton High School senior Tatum Paullus walks to receive her diploma June 4, 2022, at the Pendleton Round-Up Arena. Paullus will attend West Point Military Academy.  
 Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File



# Pendleton grad plans to 'SLAY the BEAST'

## Road to West Point held many twists and turns

By KATHY ANEY  
*East Oregonian*

**P**ENDLETON — The phrase “steely determination” seems custom made for 18-year-old Tatum Paullus. The recent Pendleton High School graduate powered her way through all the necessary tasks

to secure nomination and acceptance to the United States Military Academy West Point, where she begins cadet basic training at the end of the month.

The to-do list for applying to West Point is daunting. A U.S. senator or representative must nominate a candidate, who also has to write essays, pass academic muster, send evaluations from teachers and complete an ethics test that analyzes such qualities as resiliency and study habits. A fitness assessment requires performing a mile run, pushups, a shuttle run, sit ups and other physical tasks.

Paullus obtained recommendations from Oregon Rep.

Cliff Bentz and Sen. Jeff Merkley. Bentz contacted her at school.

“I was all giddy and ran out of the classroom to find a quiet place to go,” she said.

When Merkley called on Feb. 10, she let it go to voicemail, not recognizing the number. She has no plans to delete the voicemail — ever.

“I wanted to call and congratulate you on your appointment to West Point,” Merkley said. “That is terrific. Your record was stellar in high school and you really earned this.”

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## Left, right and unaffiliated

### Gubernatorial candidates take stage at 2022 Eastern Oregon Economic Summit

By ERICK PETERSON  
*East Oregonian*

HERMISTON — Oregon's three gubernatorial candidates took the stage Friday, June 17, at the Eastern Oregon Economic Summit in Hermiston and spoke of lessons from the pandemic, crossing the urban/rural divide and how they would make the state better.

Tina Kotek, Democrat, and Betsy Johnson, unaffiliated, were in person, while Republican Christine Drazen appeared via prerecorded video.

Johnson on June 16 issued a

statement challenging Drazen and Kotek to participate in seven debates or forums across Oregon during the gubernatorial campaign.

Kotek's campaign the same day announced she agreed to eight debates and candidate forums across the state. The Kotek campaign also challenged Republican Drazen and Johnson to agree to an issue-specific forum on gun safety policy.

Johnson and Kotek included the event at the economic summit on their lists.

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Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

**Oregon Republican gubernatorial candidate Christine Drazen speaks via video Friday, June 17, 2022, at the Eastern Oregon Economic Summit, Hermiston.**

