

# Hermiston Herald

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A VERY  
PENDLETON  
WEDDING  
ROBERT &  
NATALIE'S  
STORY  
PAGE 8

## INSIDE

## ON TO STATE

STANFIELD TIGERS WIN DISTRICT TITLE, START STATE TOURNEY PLAY ON FRIDAY.

PAGE A9

## AT THE BUZZER

UMATILLA DEFEATS IRRIGON TO START STATE RUN WITH A HOME GAME FRIDAY WHILE IRRIGON MUST GO ON THE ROAD.

PAGE A9

## RACING FOR CASH

HERMISTON'S CALLAHAN CROSSLEY PLACES 4TH IN BARREL RACING ROUND ON RFD-TV'S THE AMERICAN RODEO EVENT.

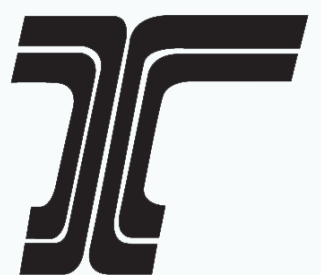
PAGE A10

## 40 YEARS OF SHOE LEATHER

DESERT COBBLER CELEBRATES FOUR DECADES IN BUSINESS.

PAGE A16

## BRIEFLY



## ODOT holds public meetings

The Oregon Department of Transportation, and the North East and South East Area Commissions on Transportation will host public meetings in eight Eastern Oregon communities on Feb. 27, where they will discuss proposed transportation.

All members of the public interested in learning more about the projects, or providing their own input, are encouraged to attend. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program will be discussed, and includes several proposed transportation projects to be completed between 2018 and 2021. More than 80 projects have been proposed for the Eastern Oregon area. The program is developed by ODOT, Area Commissions on Transportation, federal, local and tribal governments.

Those unable to attend the meeting can link to it through Eastern Oregon University's video conference system, Zoom.com.

Meetings will take place in Baker City, Boardman, Burns, Enterprise, John Day, La Grande, Ontario and Pendleton.

# DEFENDING STATE

By ERIC SINGER

Staff Writer

At 5:30 a.m. on school days, many Hermiston High students are fast asleep in their beds, enjoying the final minutes of rest before the dreaded alarm clock sounds to start their day.

At that hour, the Hermiston wrestling team is already awake and at school, getting in their grueling morning workout. Whether it's running sprints, laps around the gymnasium or even a fun game of basketball as a change-of-pace, the Bulldogs meet up to get their bodies going and their day started right.

The Bulldogs embrace the difficult schedule, while includes a morning run on top of a typical strenuous two-hour practice after school. It's all part of the team's winning tradition.

"Of course you're tempted (to sleep), but while you're asleep someone else is already up and getting better," Joe Gutierrez, a junior and state qualifier at 182 pounds, said after practice on Monday. "So it's just kind of that drive that leads you."

"You have to have that drive to be better and that want to improve," said Corey Mason, a senior and qualifier at 220 pounds. "And just know if you don't come to practice it's a match you might lose or a state title you didn't win."

It is habits such as those, plus hundreds upon hundreds of hours in the weight room and in offseason training, that have pushed the Hermiston Bulldogs to wrestling dominance in the state of Oregon over the past two decades. Since 2000, no school has won more wrestling team state championships than Hermiston, which has won 10. Only Burns at the 3A level has matched that total.

Hermiston has won four championships in a row and eight of the last nine at the Class 5A level with the exception of 2012, all while undergoing three different coaching changes.

"Once you kind of build a reputation in your city and people start to hear about it you want to keep the talk up and prove yourself going back every



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston Bulldog senior wrestler Valen Wyse is looking to defend his state title this weekend at the state wrestling championship in Portland.

year," said Valen Wyse, a senior and qualifier at 170 pounds. "So once we got a name for ourself, I think the coaching staff has done a good job of pushing us to keep up that tradition."

Hermiston will be gunning for its 11th state championship starting Friday at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland,

though the road won't be easy. Just seven of the 16 state qualifiers from the 2016 team returned this season.

Hermiston qualified 14 total wrestlers this year — third most in 5A behind Crater (21) and Sandy (16).

Those numbers mean that Hermiston already has its hands

full before the tournament even starts, and will need exceptional performances from all 14 wrestlers in the championship bracket and in the consolation rounds to earn those precious bonus points to boost their march towards the title.

See STATE, A16

## Volunteer works a way to blossom in Hermiston



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Charlie Clupny wipes a tear from his eye while accepting the Award for Merit at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Citizens Awards Banquet on Feb. 1 in Hermiston.

By JADE MCDOWELL

Staff Writer

When children are removed from their parents' home and placed in foster care, Court Appointed Special Advocates, like Charles Clupny, can become one of their biggest allies.

The CASA program gives children in that difficult situation an advocate whose sole focus is on what's best for them. Through interviews with the child, foster parents, caseworkers and others, CASA gathers information in order to testify in court on the child's behalf and work to make sure they get the services they need while in the foster system.

Clupny is currently volunteering as a court-appointed advocate for two very young siblings from Pendleton.

"It's hard," he said. "It's really hard

See CLUPNY, A16



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