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Frustrations rise as locals wait for portion of former Umatilla Chemical Depot
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SAFETY FIRST

Fire safety educator teaches students to use their voice
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TEACHERS ARRESTED

Two Morrow County teachers charged with sex abuse
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BY THE WAY

Breakin' bricks for cancer patient

Brick by brick, board by board, students at Eastern Oregon Family Taekwondo raised \$4,451 on Saturday to benefit Maddy Thomas, an 11-year-old Echo girl with a brain tumor.

The studio was packed all afternoon as more than 200 bricks were shattered in the marathon fundraiser.

Erwin Watson, owner of the martial arts studio and business, said they also went through far more boards than bricks.

Watson's taekwondo students solicited donations of \$5 per board and \$10 per brick to help cover the medical costs for Thomas, who has pilocytic astrocytoma, a brain tumor. She had surgery in October to remove part of the tumor and is undergoing chemotherapy to shrink the rest.

Home Depot donated the boards and bricks, and Watson said the bricks provided quite the workout.

Watson said the hard work — and soreness — were worth it, and he plans to soon present Maddy with the check. More donations also could come in, he said, so the final tally could be even larger.

Umatilla County and Good Shepherd Medical Center are offering a series of suicide prevention courses on Thursday, February 22.

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Kyle Ketchersid, who plays the part of the Cat in the Hat, sings during a rehearsal of "Seussical" at Hermiston High School.

STAFF PHOTOS BY KATHY ANEY



Horton (William Kern) studies a flower during a rehearsal of "Seussical" at Hermiston High School.

By TAMMY MALGESINI
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Jordan Bemrose-Rust's face was animated as she stood swaying to the music during a Friday night dress rehearsal of "Seussical the Musical."

The Hermiston High School choir director, who's also in charge of choreography, worked on a small-scale version of the popular Dr. Seuss-themed musical several years ago while teaching in Ione. She convinced drama director Beth Anderson — although it didn't take much convincing — to take on the production.

"This has big dance numbers. I wanted to go big," Bemrose-Rust said. "When you do choreography with 30 people, it's a lot more grand."

It's been a team effort to produce "Seussical" — HHS band teacher Sean McClanahan is directing the orchestra pit and Kathy Vore is the technical director. And, the excitement is contagious — from student performers to parents and community members who have stepped up in lending a hand.

"Seussical the Musical"

- Feb. 9-10 and Feb. 16-17; 7 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 18; 2 p.m.
- Hermiston High School
- \$10/adults, \$8/senior citizens, \$5/students

See WHO, A16

Military investing millions in Camp Umatilla

Former chemical depot will be National Guard training facility

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

The former Umatilla Chemical Depot may not look like much now, but the site manager for Camp Umatilla thinks it can become the Oregon Military Department's premier training facility.

"We will stand this up to any facility in the state," said retired Lt. Col. Fritz McReynolds.

The Oregon Military Department has spent \$2 million on infrastructure upgrades since the U.S. Army signed over 7,500 acres of the former depot for an Oregon National Guard Training Center known as Camp Umatilla

in November (the local Columbia Development Authority is still waiting for the Army to transfer their portion, which will be used for private economic development and a wildlife preserve). The department plans to spend another \$25 million in the next three years for remodels, demolitions and new construction. After that, they will build a \$39 million infantry training schoolhouse.

They have their work cut out for them. The chemical depot may be gone but asbestos, mold, broken pipes and hantavirus-carrying mice plague some of the 1940s-era build-



PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

The original Umatilla Depot post headquarters building at Camp Umatilla is currently abandoned but plans are in the works to retrofit the old building and reopen it. The Oregon Military Department plans to create a representative "historical district" inside Camp Umatilla with about 12 buildings preserved with as much historical authenticity as possible.

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