

# BROW

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saying I am addicted to going to the gym," she said.

She lifts weights three times a week and also does five to six hours of cardio a week. She said everyone at Mountain Valley is exceptionally supportive, from fellow gym-goers to trainers and management too, and that isn't the only perk.

"I love how I feel," she said, adding she is motivated by the women who are much older than she is and are still going to the gym. "I want to be that person. I don't want to be in a walker. I want to be able to play with my grandkids and have fun."

Brow attended her first powerlifting competition in 2017, accompanied by Harmon. "I was extremely nervous and I don't think I would have gone if he hadn't gone with me," Brow said.

She said that Harmon helped her get past her nervousness, but Harmon said he was feeling nervous as well. He described walking into the dark "old-school" gym filled with lots of very muscular people. The majority were men and younger than Brow as well.

"I remember asking one of the other women lifters, 'When do you start breathing?'" Brow said. "You're on such an adrenaline rush the whole time. I don't



Cherise Kaechele/The Observer

The squat is the lift in which Debbie Brow holds a national record.

think I really took a breath until the end." It didn't take long, however, for Harmon and Brow to relax.

"I think we were expecting this very edgy, competitive, everyone focusing on themselves, no one talking to each other kind of thing but it really was the complete opposite of that. Everyone was really welcoming and supporting and encouraging," Harmon said.

Brow said the other women lifters were extremely friendly to her and the others who were there at a competition for the first time.

"They just embraced all of us and cheered us on, and they were out there rooting for us to do our best," she said.

She described going up on the platform in front of the audience and the other competitors to do her lifts.

There are three judges that will turn on a white or red light to indicate whether they have determined that a competitor was successful in his or her lift. She recalled the feeling of doing her lift and seeing three white lights. The feeling is especially exciting when a competitor knows they have broken a record, either a personal best or a state or national record.

"You're very excited, and you come off the platform and everybody is high-fiving you or hugging you," she said.

Brow has gone to seven competitions now and has another one coming up on May 18 in Clackamas. Even though Harmon has since moved to Hermiston with his family and isn't Brow's personal trainer anymore, Brow has her family, her gym family and her lifting community to cheer her on. She said that her husband, her son and her brother are his wife and are all extremely supportive of her lifting, from cheering on her training efforts to coming to her competitions to support her.

Harmon continues to give Brow training advice and encouragement. He said he finds her powerlifting journey inspiring.

"You can push the boundaries in anything in life if you want it bad enough," he said. "Debbie's story shows that anything is possible and there really are no limits other than the ones you set upon yourself." ■

# URA

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Zone, and additional points are given to businesses that would occupy a building that had been vacant for at least six months.

Another section of the updated policy focused on comparing how much private investment was being used versus investment from public dollars.

At Wednesday night's meeting, Nicole Howard, who has been openly critical of the program and has questioned whether the agency should continue to have CFP, said the new policy is now more binary and removes the need for the agency altogether.

She said checking boxes has turned what was a sliding scale point system into a yes or no system.

"It's profoundly troubling," she told Strobe. "I don't have to even attend the meeting (to choose the businesses) now. I think we've utterly neutered the project."

Agency member Jim Whitbeck agreed by saying he believes the new policy is too rigid.

Member Corrine Dutto said she likes the structure of the new policy.

She likes numbers and thinks this is much more clear than before.

Howard suggested, since it's about time to begin taking the next round of applications, they put the CFP program on hold.

"Why can't we view (the program) as an opportunity instead of an obligation and pause this for a year?" she asked.

Agency members Justin Rock and Mary Ann Miesner both disagreed.

Rock expressed his support of the new policy and said the funding process had to have some structure. The new system is a bit different than before and the agency should see if it works better before dismissing it altogether.

Strobe was able to interject the new policy allows more than just checking yes or no. He explained the application process will continue to include community comment and an evaluation of the potential business' viability, plus the members can add discretionary points, which will give the agency members more say.

Other changes include not giving a public comment period during the meeting, but requiring the applicants to submit let-

ters of support for their projects.

### La Grande City Council

Prior to the URA meeting, the La Grande City Council met and heard from a group of Eastern Oregon University students regarding the city's communication of its snow removal schedule.

Four students from EOU's public policy class — Brandon Cedarholm, Dale Nabu, Kylie Kemp and Yuiko Mark — presented to the council what they perceive to be a flaw in the way the city notifies the community of when snow removal will take place.

"The current communication protocol in the policy dictates the community will be informed of planned plowing via a radio broadcast by 6 a.m.," Cedarholm said to the council. "Frankly, I, and the other community members I have spoken to, don't want to wake up at 6 a.m. just to listen to the radio to determine whether the roads will be plowed."

The students said Union County Emergency Services utilizes a free program called Konexus, which sends out mass text messages to those who sign up for the service, in order to let people know of an emergency or other

important messages. Cedarholm said the city can use this program, partnering with the county, to send out information on snow plowing and removal.

The councilors said this sounded like a good idea and will look into it.

Ashley O'Toole, a member of the Stop B2H Coalition, also spoke to the council about the importance of the city getting more involved in stopping the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line project.

"It really can still be stopped," he told them, stating 12 similar projects across the country have been halted because municipalities like La Grande and organizations like Stop B2H have been able to stand up against the power companies.

Councilor Gary Lillard said he couldn't be more opposed to the power line project.

"I don't want to see it," he said.

O'Toole said the project doesn't make sense and it could cost customers more money.

"I think it's time to ramp it up," he said of the opposition to the line. "We're approaching one of the final opportunities for public comments. We need to believe we can (stop them)."

He asked the council to have a

work session to let the Stop B2H Coalition present to them the updated information on what's happening with the process. However, the council already has work sessions planned and were unable to schedule what would be a longer session with the coalition. They did say they would like to write up a proclamation announcing they are opposed to seeing the line go anywhere near La Grande.

Finally, the council's info packet included a letter to the Oregon State Legislatures on behalf of the City of La Grande requesting investment in the restoration of EOU's Grand Staircase.

"The City of La Grande rarely issues a formal request of support to the legislature," according to the letter. "But in the case of the Grand Staircase, this infrastructure is not just an EOU asset. The Staircase is the visible connector between Eastern and the City of La Grande, and was an icon for decades before it was officially closed to pedestrian use because of safety concerns."

The letter said the staircase is on the historical registries at the state and national levels.

"It is not only a part of Eastern Oregon's history, but part of our future," the letter stated. ■

# BEVERAGE

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that ranchers and farmers care about the environment as much as other people, because we depend on it for our livelihood."

Beverage flew home yesterday from Washington, D.C., where she and four other commissioners from the Eastern Oregon Counties Association spoke with the head of the U.S. Forest Service to petition an exemption for the Malheur and Wallowa-Whitman national forests from the 2005 Travel Management Rule for motorized vehicle use in the Blue Moun-

tains Forest Plan. The forest plan is an outline that "describe(s) the social, economic, and ecological goals of National Forests and provide(s) frameworks for future management decisions," according to the U.S. Forest Service's website. There will be more to come in The Observer on the details of this meeting in the near future.

The commissioner said she feels most empowered by the chance to give back to her community and work with the "passionate" people of Union County.

"The respect that I've received from others has been very rewarding," she said. ■

### SORRELS

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running two restaurants at the same time in the first place. She decided to keep Ten Depot Street instead of Mamacita's because of the wide range of food options she had at the restaurant, and the ease of serving only an evening meal.

The restaurateur said the most empowering aspect of being a female business owner is making her own decisions and having control of something she

### WALTER

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dainty chandeliers and lace tablecloths, opened last year in the La Grande Business Park on U.S. 30.

"It almost doesn't feel real — the past 10 years have been a whirlwind," she said. "This is my literal dream. God has given me huge opportunities, and I feel like I take it for granted sometimes."

Walter said her family, her employees and her faith make up her support net-

work, which she needs in order to keep thriving.

"As a woman, having a great support team has been empowering, and my faith has kept me grounded and given me a purpose to keep going," said Walter, who also teaches choir and music at Lighthouse Pentecostal Church in Island City. "It's also empowering to connect with the other women entrepreneurs in Union County who you can throw ideas at, get feedback from and be there for each other." ■

# DOLGE

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which gives exposure to new styles and ideas."

ACE's executive director lived in La Grande for three years while she was in high school, then attended a liberal arts college in upstate New York where she earned a degree in music performance and photography. She lived in Seattle for a year and a half after graduation, but eventually decided to return.

"La Grande has a way of pulling you back," Dolge said. "I love interacting with the community, artists and students here

— it's all about the human condition, and I love how the arts can impact so many lives in all of its forms."

For Dolge, being a female leader means encouraging and empowering other women to follow their dreams with their art, and offering support and guidance when needed.

"I deal with a lot of women of all ages who don't think they're artists or don't think they can succeed (as artists) because they're a woman," she said. "They just need someone to say, 'You can do this thing.'" ■

### WEISSENFLOH

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celebrated a win in the first round of the NAIA national tournament Wednesday, and played a second round game this morning. On Feb. 26, Weissenfluh was named Cascade Collegiate Conference coach of the year for the third year in a row, and the seventh

time total during her time coaching women's basketball at Eastern.

The all-star coach said her passion for sports stems from her time as the quarterback of the football team during elementary and junior high school, and later her time playing volleyball, softball, basketball and running track at Long Creek High School in Grant County.

"I'm extremely competitive, and I love all the intangibles that go along with sports like the values, working through adversity and teamwork," she said. "Basketball specifically is a very tenacious, high-intensity sport with lots of action. It fits my personality and my temperament. You have to have a 'get up and get after it' kind of approach and that's who I am." ■

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