

Science, math and technology come to life at Greenwood

By Dick Mason
The Observer

Students at Greenwood Elementary School may have seen a glimpse of their future careers recently at the field on the southeast edge of their school's campus.

The field became a magical and empowering place for children as the showcase of Oregon Department of Transportation day at the La Grande school. Children visiting the field were greeted by ODOT staff members at stations where they could observe:

- the operation of a 50-foot crane;
- a truck with state-of-the-art road sanding and snow removal equipment;
- a remote-controlled robotic camera that shows images inside dark culverts;
- a large traffic signal used at ODOT construction sites;
- a drone used to provide images of difficult to reach places;
- a vehicle equipped with high-tech equipment used by ODOT crews to secure sites where there have been hazardous materials spills.

Presentations by ODOT employees were given at each station and students got an inside look at how the equipment is operated. "This is a great opportunity for kids to see, touch and really get a feel for science and technology," said

Greenwood Principal Ryan Westenskow at the event.

Students did not operate the ODOT equipment but they had chances to influence how it was run. For example, they could signal the crane operator which direction to move the machine, which Westenskow said was a big thrill for them.

The intent of the event was for Greenwood students to see how what they are learning in school about science, technology and math is applied in the real world, Westenskow said. It was also meant to give students the opportunity to see that what they are learning can lead to careers.

Some of the ODOT staff who participated were familiar faces for they had taught in classes at Greenwood earlier this year about elements of their jobs.

Donna Rainboth, a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program coach for the La Grande School District, prepared the ODOT staff members how to address students in the classroom. One of the key things she told them is not to spend a lot of time talking at first but rather start off with something exciting. Rainboth said this gets students quickly engaged in the presentation.

"Do an activity that will get their attention," advised Rainboth, who is also an education professor at Eastern Oregon University.



Greenwood Elementary School students from left, Ryleigh Guggenmes, James Huner, Jerzey Petersen and Ellyse Martinez, examine a drone used by the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Students learned during many of these classroom presentations about how so much of the world is interconnected. For example, they were shown that ODOT needs to contact wildlife biologists before building bridges and roads. This is because roads and bridges can have negative impacts on nature, like the migration patterns of birds.

ODOT staff who have been assisting at Greenwood in the classroom

include Chris Barker of ODOT. He said this is one of the favorite things he has done while with ODOT.

"I love working with kids," Barker said.

Billie-Jo Deal, safety coordinator for ODOT's Region 5, which covers much of Eastern Oregon, helped put on the field exhibition. She said one of the favorite stations was the snowplow truck, which features dual wings that are mechanically extended and folded

up. She said students were struck by how sophisticated the truck was inside its cab.

"Inside it was like a big video game," Deal said.

Tom Strandberg, a public information officer for ODOT, elicited excitement among the Greenwood students by flying one of the agency's drones. He said they are used by ODOT for many purposes, including providing images of places staff can not reach quickly because of

hazardous materials spills, bad weather, mudslides and accidents involving multiple vehicles.

Westenskow said ODOT's staff could not have done a better job.

"ODOT exceeded our expectations in participating," Westenskow said.

He praised ODOT for the time its staff invested and the energy they displayed.

"It (the work) was done with so much enthusiasm," Westenskow said. ■



Dick Mason/The Observer

Grande Ronde Academy students participate in their school's recent spring program, "The Art of Music: The Melody Within." The students above, are from left, Anneliese Leavitt, Tam Kenny, Reese McGonagle and Kenneth Humber. Kindergarten through eighth grade students participated and performed about 10 songs.

Local students named to EOU's winter dean's list

Observer staff

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University named 570 students to the dean's list for the 2019 winter term. Qualifying students achieve and maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale while completing a minimum of 12 hours of graded EOU coursework. Students hailing from Union and Willowa counties who earned this distinction are:

Cove: Lacey Baird, Tayton Gerlach-Duby, Jonathan Heierle, Morgan Reddington, Kindra Wright.

Elgin: Jacob Burgess, Jaydon McKay, Miah Slater, Zeke Wright.

Enterprise: Darby Gasset, Robin Hopkins.

Imbler: Clayton Cunningham, Bonny Daggett, Marcus Denis.

Island City: Challen

Butcher, Jessica Carter, Alexander Nordstrom.

Joseph: Kazzie Dawson, Heidi Niezen, Amanda Veiga Esteves, Vieira de Melo

La Grande: Lora Alix, Emily Andrews, Audrey Anolfo, Sierra Ashley, Christina Bailey, Elizabeth Basa, Madyson Bell, Megan Boals, Brenda Boles, Haley Breen, Jocelyn Brown, Erin Campbell, Sarah Carpenter, Curtis Carson, Victor Juan Castro, Brandon Cederholm, Jonah Coats, Elizabeth Collins, Kelsey Collins, Kayla Corbin, Julie Daggett, Marie Dalton, Tony Danilovich, Robinita Davis, Megan Demirjian, An Dinh, Dusty Downing, Quentin Durfee, Joshua Ebel, Michael Ebel, Camie Edgington, Peter Eke, Aimee Ekstrom, Abigail Emerson Smith, McKenzie Evans, Adina Fast, Tay-

ler Finch, Olivia Fleming, Hannah Flower, Pamela Fredrick, Torivio Gallegos, Marcus Gastanaga, Jordan Gentner, Coral Goldstein, Antonio Gracia, Devin Griggs, Micajah Guentert, Brittney Hamilton, Ciara Haruo, Micah Hill, Kyle Hogg, Matthew Hoppe, Suzanne Housden, Jordan Howard, Lena Johnson, Mara Johnson, Mara Kalat, Brycen Kelly, Erin Kelly, Hannah Kilpatrick, Katie Kitchell, David Larman, Tiffanee Lewis, Emma Logan, Sara Lomas, ShaLane Marshall, Michael Maszk, Meredith Matthews, Connor Miles, Phoenix Millhollen, Savanna Mullarkey, Pepper Murphey, Andrew Nantz, Alexander Navarro, Iouri Nicolau, Lance Nielsen, Jessica Norton, Jill Pedro, Jessica Peterson, Majja Ralpho, Taira Renguul, Jack

Rose, Jeremy Sather, Lydia Schaefer, Heath Sell, Alex Senters, Cooper Shaw, Josie Shea, Samuel Showen, Mattie Spencer, James Standley, Sara Sword, Caleb Tatum, Leslie Thompson, Taylor Tibbetts, Justice Tovar, Bryce Towai, Jesus Trejo, Priscilla Vazquez, Nicolas Veloz Espinola, Jamie Waltenburg, Jessy Watson, Mykal Weissenfluh, Haley White, Steven Wilkins, Derek Williams, Diane Wilson, Lauren Wolf, Lewis Wright, Garrett Yunker.

North Powder: Kate Jesenko, Betsy Nedrow.

Summerville: Keith Bittner

Union: Chelsie Houck, Sierra Howard, Britney Hoyt, Dawson Kennon, Rylee Montgomery, Nur Sofe, Zane Wright.

Wallowa: Annie Duncan.

OTEC announces scholarship winners

Observer staff

BAKER CITY — The Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative recently announced the names of students who have been selected to receive scholarships to be used to attend trade school, lineman school and college.

To be eligible for these scholarships, the students must reside in OTEC's service area, which covers Union, Baker, Grant, and Harney counties. Applicants must be an active member in good standing with the cooperative or a dependent of such a member to be eligible for the scholarship. Scholarships are funded from interest earned on unclaimed capital credits and do not affect electric rates.

"Cooperatives are, by their very nature, community partners," OTEC stated in a press release. "We have always been proud to support the educational goals of students within our service territory."

Caden Spencer, who attends Baker High School, was granted a \$2,500 trade school scholarship. He plans to attend the Volta Trade School in Astoria. Trade scholarships are open to high school seniors whose families are served by OTEC. Winners are selected by the cooperative's board of directors from a pool of candidates. Applications are still being accepted for trade school scholarships and are available online at www.otec.coop.

The two students who were awarded scholarships for lineman school are Jace Hays of Baker City and Danner Davis of Prairie City. Each was chosen by the OTEC Board to receive \$5,000 to pursue a career as a lineman. OTEC offers two schol-

arships each year for high school seniors, adults or returning college students interested in a career as a lineman.

The cooperative also chose 26 local students to receive college scholarships. Each scholarship is \$5,000, and 10 of the 26 academic scholarships are earmarked for returning college students. Applications for college scholarships are sorted and evaluated by four independent scholarship selection committees made up of voluntary OTEC members residing in each of the four counties served by the cooperative. Successful applicants must demonstrate academic success and dedication to their community.

Union County students who were awarded OTEC scholarships are listed below.

Graduating high school seniors: Blake Frost, Imbler High School; Carson McClelland, La Grande High School; Elizabeth Babcock, La Grande High School; Braden Bell, La Grande High School; Alexandra Gomes, La Grande High School; Alaina Carson, La Grande High School; Sophia Pettit, Cove High School; Kyler Malone, La Grande High School.

Returning college students: Alexandra Colton, Oregon State University, Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine; Aspen Birkmaier, Eastern Oregon University.

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative that serves over 31,000 homes and businesses in four counties in Eastern Oregon. Headquartered in Baker City, OTEC has district offices in Burns, John Day and La Grande. ■



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