

Baker City church donates \$15,000 to Ukraine aid efforts

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A fundraising effort by Baker City's First Presbyterian Church to aid humanitarian work in Ukraine resulted in a \$15,000 donation to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

The local campaign started in late March, a little more than a month after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Jean Simpson-Geddes, a member of the local church Session, the Presbyterian governing body, said donations from members of the Baker City and La Grande congregations, along with donations from other Baker County residents, totaled \$7,500.

Baker City's First Presbyterian Session matched that amount, for a total donation of \$15,000, Simpson-Geddes said.

The Baker City church will be sending thank you notes to people from outside the church congregation who contributed to the campaign, she said.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has been working in Ukraine and bordering countries to provide shelter, meals, medicines and hygiene products to residents affected by the war.

"We're happy to match whatever we can," said Simpson-Geddes.

According to its website, <https://pda.pcusa.org>, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance focuses on these areas:

- The long-term recovery of disaster impacted communities.
- Provides training and disaster preparedness for presbyteries and synods.
- Works collaboratively with church partners and members of the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) internationally, and nationally with other faith based responders.
- Connects partners locally and internationally with key organizations active in the response — United Nations, NVOAD (National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster), World Food Program, Red Cross, FEMA and others.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance work in Ukraine, visit <https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/ukraine/>.

PENDLETON

Hotel gets \$500,000 remodel grant

By JOHN TILLMAN

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The troubled Marigold Hotel in downtown Pendleton is getting big help from urban renewal funds.

The Pendleton Development Commission during its public meeting Friday, May 20, approved a \$500,000 grant to remake The Marigold Hotel, 105 SE Court Ave., into the new Pendleton Hotel.

The successful applicant, True Holdings LLC, of Clackamas, plans to develop the premises into extended stay lodgings. The project cost to True Holdings is approximately \$3.7 million to \$4 million, with purchase price of \$1.5 million, remodeling expense of \$2.2 million and the costs of furnishings, according to a report to the commission from Charles Denight, Pendleton urban renewal associate director.

Denight recommended the commissioners approve the rejuvenation grant. Given the history of police calls to The Marigold, he said, "We should all be rejoicing (over True Holdings' application)."

Resident Neal Berlin and City Councilor Carole Innes both expressed concern during the meeting about security for the underground parking garage, a scene of criminal activity. Sydney True, owner of True Holdings, promised to secure access to the garage for vehicles and foot traffic.

As with all PDC grants, the project owner receives reimbursement in three payments, when each third of the project cost is reached. That could take until the third quarter of 2023, according to Denight's report.

Denight also reported the development commission does not have sufficient remaining funding for this grant, given its commitment to 15 ongoing building projects, plus several street reconstructions for summer and fall of



The Pendleton Development Commission during its public meeting Friday, May 20, approved a \$500,000 grant to remake The Marigold Hotel, 105 SE Court Ave., into the new Pendleton Hotel. East Oregonian, File

2022. However, Banner Bank is working to amend PDC's existing line of credit for \$10 million, with a proposal to add \$500,000 to allow this grant, bringing the line of credit to \$10.5 million.

According to Denight, True wanted to buy The Marigold Hotel, rebrand it with a new name and look and sell lodging to a market interested in extended stays. Longer term occupancy has been a successful business model in the otherwise depressed lodging industry during the pandemic, according to an article from Hotel Management magazine attached to the staff report.

The commission also received conceptual designs for the remodel of the former hotel. Final designs are to be submitted as part of the grant application process, with other components required for the PDC's grants. These are a scope of work description, a business plan, a budget with two bids or estimates from two contractors, proof of insurance on the building and a signed contract for the grant funding.

The hotel plans call for a modern property in design and function, a restaurant and even a small corner market for hotel guests and city residents.

According to Denight's report, True intends to operate The Marigold through the 2022 visitor season while beginning some work on the facade, including signage with the new name. Then in the fall

through the winter, his contractor can make room renovations. In the spring, the rooms may receive new furnishings to make them ready for the 2023 visitor season.

"Given the cost of purchasing the property and restoring and furnishing it, he does not feel he could complete the project without the urban renewal grant," Denight reported to the commission.

Due to the timing of his arrangement with the current owner, True sought a commitment on the grant by May 23. He has an option contract, but must make an offer for a purchase agreement by that deadline.

True has developed other properties, including Klamath Cascade, the Canyonville Inn and other projects, according to Denight's report. The redeveloped Klamath Cascade Apartments, previously a historic Klamath Falls hotel, has become a desirable place to live, with 48 low-income housing units. Another development was a 100-unit blighted apartment complex in Klamath Falls with a 22% vacancy rate. True redeveloped the apartments, adding new amenities and filling the units.

Denight also reported True has retained a manager for the new hotel, a woman with a master's degree in hospitality and 27 years of hospitality experience. She is to live on-site with her husband. They intend to move to Pendleton as soon as True takes possession.

Baker High students help start a forest

Science students plant ponderosa seedlings in area burned by 2015 fire

By LISA BRITTON

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Cierra Lafferty pats the soil around the newly planted ponderosa pine seedling, then gives the needles a gentle tug to make sure it's secure in the ground.

"Welcome to your new home," she says, her words nearly whisked away by the wind whipping across Dooley Mountain, about 15 miles south of Baker City.

Then she stands, pulls her phone from a pocket and holds it close to the tree.

"Blog moment," she says, snapping a picture of the seedling, then photos of her buddies.

On Wednesday, May 18, science students from Baker High School helped plant ponderosa seedlings along the Skyline Road in an area burned by the Cornet-Windy Ridge Fire in August 2015.

The lightning-sparked blazes, which burned together during hot, windy weather, spread over 104,000 acres, the largest wildfire in Baker County history.

Bill Mitchell and Noah Erickson, who both work in the silviculture department for the U.S. Forest Service, gave the students a quick lesson on the proper way to plant a tree.

But first came the vocabulary lesson as Mitchell quizzed the kids for the words that describe a fire that destroys everything.

After a hint, one student called it out: "Stand replacement."

"Is there a seed source left to rebuild this forest?" Mitchell asked, sweeping an arm across the landscape littered with fallen logs and



Brianna Stadler, left, and Sydney Lamb work as a team to plant ponderosa pine seedlings on May 18, 2022, in the Dooley Mountain area burned in 2015 by the Cornet-Windy Ridge Fire.

"This is the toughest place we plant. It's dry, it's windy, it's cold."

— Bill Mitchell, U.S. Forest Service

skeletons of standing trees. "There is not."

The source on this day is the students, who planted 750 ponderosa pine seedlings.

"Your goal is 20 trees each today," Mitchell said.

He and Erickson demonstrated how to dig a hole, either with a shovel or a hoedad — a tool with a long, flat blade, rather like a large-scale tongue depressor — that was big enough for the tree's roots.

Location matters too — the students were instructed to plant by the "microsite" technique, which means finding a place, such as beside a fallen log, where the seedling would be protected from the elements.

"This is the toughest place we plant," Mitchell said. "It's dry, it's windy, it's cold."

Then it was time to load up the bags with seedlings, each first dipped in a bucket of water to give it a good start on growing.

In pairs or trios, the students hiked uphill, picking their way through charred logs and the lush green of grass, lupine and arnica.

This summer will mark seven years since the wildfire burned this portion of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

"We've planted about 2.5 million trees since the burn," Erickson said.

The survival rate, he said, can vary from 15% to 50% depending on weather conditions.

"It depends on the year,"

he said. "Ponderosa has the highest success."

Crews contracted with the Forest Service have planted western larch, ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and western white pine.

This is Erickson's fifth year with the Wallowa-Whitman. He never saw this area covered in tall, green trees — but he has seen it coming back to life.

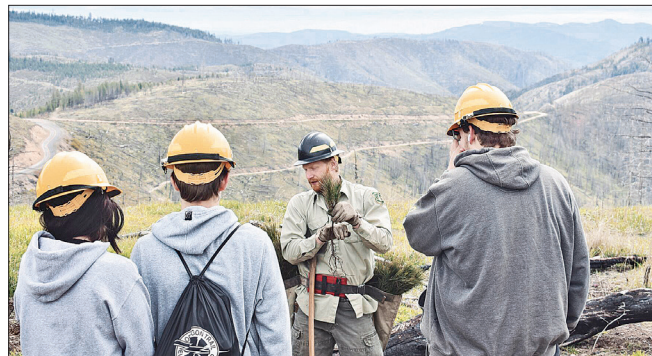
"I've only seen Dooley like this," he said. "I've seen the growth."

Picking as well as planting

This tree-planting excursion brought out students from several different classes: general science 2,



Jordynn Scholl shows off her bounty of morel mushrooms collected during a field trip for Baker High School science students on Wednesday, May 18, 2022.



Noah Erickson, a silviculture technician for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, explains how to plant a ponderosa pine seedling to Baker High students on a field trip on Wednesday, May 18, 2022.

advanced biology, advanced ecology, natural resources and wilderness readiness survival.

Nicole Sullivan, who teaches science at Baker High School, planned the field trip to wrap up a unit on the plant kingdom.

"And we've been doing botany with all the classes," she said.

In addition to planting trees, the students hunted for morel mushrooms — in fact, the planting took a bit longer because the prized fungi kept

distracting their attention.

And even though they finished the day tired with scratched skin and dirty clothes, each dirt-smudged face had a smile.

"I enjoy this," said Jaylyn Baird.

"It feels more rewarding," added Joy Murphy.

And the Forest Service, Mitchell told the group, appreciates the help.

"You guys did a solid job," he said. "That's a tough place to plant trees — the toughest we have."

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