

# EASTERN

Continued from Page A1

“It’ll expedite their college completion because they would be able to come in as, essentially, a sophomore if they do it all,” he said. “And that can fast track them into career pathways within the workforce.”

Kathleen Brown, Eastern’s associate director of early college initiatives, told Oregon Public Broadcasting that the funding will help the university hire two college engagement specialists to support the ACROSS program as it gets off the ground. Brown said she and the new hires will be able to travel to schools throughout the region to meet students in person and talk to them about EOU.

“We have some obvious places where we get students. We get people from Pendleton. We get people from La Grande High. We get people from Baker,” Brown said. “But there are some small schools where they’ve reached out to us, so, let’s go out there.”

EOU will begin implementing the program in October, when it can officially access the grant money. But Brown told OPB that the university is starting to do some work in the meantime.

Part of preparing the ACROSS program will be beefing up what Brown called “pre-college success courses.” She said that means increasing both

online and in-person dual-credit offerings for rural high school students.

Brown said the idea is to provide offerings to help students “not just take random dual credits but be able to really focus and see what they can do so they can be successful here.” But Brown said EOU is still in the process of mapping out what exactly those offerings will be.

“Different things such as econ or music or whatever the major is — grab one or two of their really dynamic classes and be able to allow students to take those here or online,” Brown said. “You always have classes that have a few extra spots in them, so why don’t we allow our high school students to go in those?”

High school students who pass classes through those dual credit pathways would be able to apply the credits to a degree at EOU, Brown said. And for students who enroll at EOU, a big focus will still be making sure that students are acclimated to college and have the support they’re used to coming from smaller communities.

“One of the things that we have is a bunch of students will take these dual credits, but then they come to a university and it’s like, ‘Whoa, I don’t have the exact same supports that I had before because I had my mom, and I had my dad, and I had my counselor and all my teachers,’” Brown said.

At EOU, Brown says, there’s a recognition that

rural students are coming from tight-knit, small communities and might have different experiences than students from larger cities.

“We want to just basically have this smooth transition from all these loving people that have put an inordinate amount of time into you, and this is going to be the next group of people that do the same thing,” she said. “So, we want to be able to have that same feel, and I think that Eastern is primed for that because we are a small institution and we have small classrooms.”

EOU President Tom Insko said the grant funding will help the school fulfill its mission.

“EOU’s work as Oregon’s Rural University will be greatly enhanced through this grant,” he said. “Our strategic goal is to intensify rural student recruitment and outreach, and providing access and support for educational and career pathways will help build and sustain our communities. We are grateful for the support of Oregon’s U.S. senators.”

■ Oregon Public Broadcasting reporter Meerah Powell contributed to this report.

# VETERANS

Continued from Page A1

former commander of American Legion Post 43 Lonnie Myers, who served in the U.S. Marines for 27 years. Upon returning to La Grande, Myers worked as a middle school social studies teacher.

He began the ceremony by defining what it means to be a veteran.

“They join whatever service they choose and serve their country. The good ones become Marines,” he joked, getting a laugh from the crowd. “The rest chose those four letter organizations.”

While Myers read through the names of veterans, Matott presented certificates to those present.

The commemoration began with the veterans of World War II. Robert “Bob” Goss, Wayne Jones, James Leitch and John Turner, who all served in the Navy, received certificates. Goss is 97 years old and has been a Legionnaire for 75 years.

“He loves events like this,” said Lisa Goss, daughter of Bob Goss.

Following a video showcasing the homefront during World War II, the ceremony turned to the Korean War vets. Only



Isabella Crowley/The Observer

James Leitch receives his certificate from Dave Matott — commander of La Grande Post 43 — at a ceremony held to honor World War II and Korean War veterans at the La Grande American Legion annex building on Saturday, June 25, 2022. During WWII, Leitch served in the Navy.

two Korean War veterans were in attendance, but four were presented certificates. Beverly Moody and Alden Thornton were able to attend the ceremony and received their certificates from Matott. Shorty Hutchinson received his commemoration earlier that morning, and Lester Warner’s certificate was being brought to his house later.

After the ceremony came to a close, La Grande local George Barrow asked to say a few words on the importance of the Union Pacific Railroad during World War II. Barrow’s

father worked for Union Pacific, and the railroad supported the war effort at home. During the war, railroads moved 90% of military freight and 97% of all military passengers, according to Union Pacific. From 1941 to 1945, almost 44 million troops rode the nation’s railroads.

Veterans and family mingled after the event. John Craig, finance officer of American Legion Post 43, said it is important for these veterans to come out and spend time together, especially after the isolation due to the pandemic.

# BENTZ

Continued from Page A1

an Ontario attorney specializing in water law, had been in office just a few days when Congress took the formal step of counting electoral votes in the presidential election. The counting was disrupted by rioters, and more than 700 people have been charged with federal crimes since then.

Republicans joined in Trump’s effort to overturn the election results showing Joe Biden won.

Pennsylvania was a key to the strategy to deliver the election to Trump by disputing results in several states.

In a statement after his vote opposing the Pennsylvania numbers, Bentz explained he didn’t think the election process in that state passed constitutional muster. He said he concluded that after he and his staff researched the matter. He was troubled that state officials, including the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, were allowing mail-in ballots to be counted.

He said that process “contributed to a widespread loss of faith by many Americans in the integrity of the 2020 election — including many in my dis-

trict. Such a violation of our Constitution must be discouraged in the strongest terms possible.”

According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, 10,000 ballots postmarked by Election Day but received afterward were set aside and not included in Pennsylvania’s vote count.

In a later interview with the Malheur Enterprise, Bentz said he didn’t realize that those 10,000 votes had not in fact been included in the Pennsylvania results. Litigation contesting the Pennsylvania results ended when the U.S. Supreme Court declined to consider an appeal.

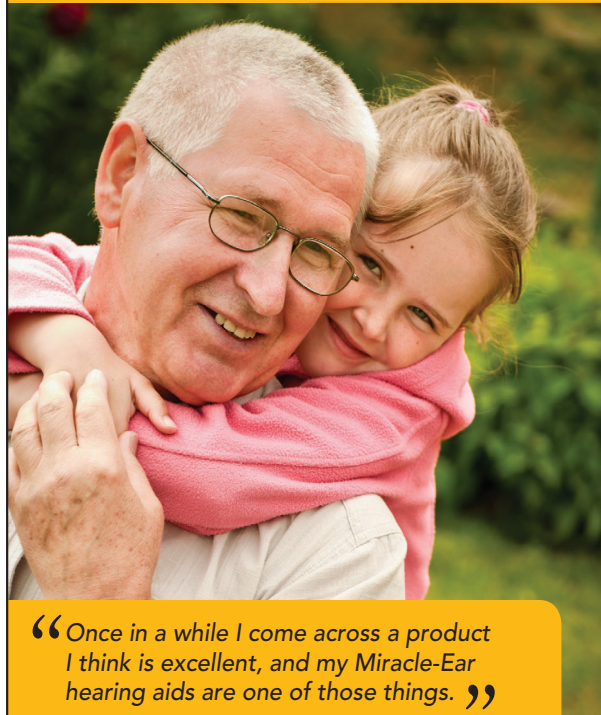
Bentz said on June 24 he stands by his statement given after his Pennsylvania vote.

He had said then that he shared the frustrations of his constituents over the 2020 election, and “I will do my best to address their concerns.”

He didn’t share what steps he had taken in the past 18 months. Instead, he said, “We are awaiting proposals from the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.”

Bentz represents Oregon’s 2nd Congressional District, which covers all or part of 20 counties including Baker, Union and Wallowa counties.

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