

RADIO: Broadcast its first song in November 2013

Continued from 1A

on Main Street became an unofficial rallying place for supporters waiting to hear the results.

“We are a radio for the people,” Sanchez said.

Villanueva said the station was Sanchez’s brain-child.

“He’s our teacher, he’s the one who has been guiding us. He’s a pioneer,” Villanueva said.

The station broadcasts at 25,000 watts over two frequencies (99.5 FM in Hermiston and 100.1 FM in La Grande) but listeners can also tune in online at www.radiolaley995.com. Perhaps its most popular medium, however, is by phone. Listeners can call 401-347-0320 and use headphones or speakerphone to listen.

“We created it for low-income farm workers with no data plan but unlimited minutes,” Villanueva said. “Anything they do, in the fields or in the restaurants, they can have La Ley with them.”

In the mornings from 5-10 a.m. DJ Rafael Cardenas runs “a little comedy show” on air. Sanchez takes over from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and runs event information and public service announcements between songs. And Villanueva runs from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. with a thought of the day followed by song requests and the occasional on-air interview. On Sundays the station leaves slots open for preachers from local churches. And in the afternoon Eddie de la Cruz, a member of the city’s Hispanic Advisory Committee, conducts live interviews.

Soon the station will have a night show from midnight to 5 a.m. aimed at keeping truck drivers and other night shift workers awake. The station also entered into an

“We love our work. We love what we do. We are here and we can do it.”

— **Martin Villanueva**, La Ley radio DJ

agreement with the *East Oregonian* to broadcast more local, Spanish-language news.

Sanchez said the radio station broadcast its first song in November 2013, hoping to serve the roughly 45 percent of Hermiston’s population that speaks Spanish. He said at first it was mostly Latino-centric businesses running advertising with the station. But now large chains are buying airtime, too. The station also donates time for nonprofits and public service announcements.

The station is doing so well that Villanueva and Sanchez, who have been commuting every day from Pasco, are house-shopping in Hermiston.

“We’re going to become Oregonians,” Villanueva said.

He referenced the recent police shooting of a Hispanic man in Pasco that has made national headlines, and said having a Spanish-speaking radio station that works closely with the city’s Hispanic Advisory Committee helps foster good communication between Hermiston’s Spanish-speaking and English-speaking populations.

“We love our work. We love what we do,” he said. “We are here and we can do it. You want the Latino market, we can put it in your hands. Just let us know.”

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

DRONE: With more definitive rules investment would become easier

Continued from 1A

hour, fly directly over a person who isn’t involved in the flight or drop anything from the UAV.

FAA Administrator Michael Huerta said in a press release that the rules attempt to balance safety and economic interests, although they are far from set in stone.

Now that the FAA’s proposal has been released, the rules will be subject to public comment, a process that Pendleton’s range manager John Stevens said could take months.

Stevens said he’s already poring over the regulations document and will most likely funnel his suggestions and comments to SOAR Oregon, a nonprofit that advocates for the state’s three test ranges.

Regardless of what the final rules might be, both

Stevens and Economic Development Director Steve Chrisman see the proposal as a positive development.

With more definitive rules, they said, investment in Pendleton’s range would become easier.

Chrisman said three developers are showing interest in building at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport. They are also continuing to make progress on signing two companies to contracts to test at the range.

The airport is also continuing to garner interest from private developers to build new hangars, according to Chrisman, who said he could easily see six new hangars at the airport within a year and a half.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

KICKER: Excess corporate income tax collections go into school fund

Continued from 1A

a kicker is finally determined for 2013-15 — the May 14 forecast, on which lawmakers will base final decisions on the next two-year budget, and a Sept. 1 forecast that will be released in late August.

McMullen said there still could be a 50 percent chance that a kicker will occur, given that the projection is just \$59 million above the threshold to trigger a kicker.

If there is one, taxpayers will no longer get checks as a result of a 2011 change. Lawmakers reverted to the refund method used before 1995, and credits against the following year’s taxes will save an estimated \$1 million on printing and mailing checks.

The Senate Finance & Revenue Committee has begun hearings on a proposal to retain some excess personal income taxes for a state reserve. Sen. Mark Hass,

“It’s hard for legislators to explain how the current system works.”

— **Sen. Mark Hass**, D-Beaverton, Senate Finance & Revenue Committee chairman

D-Beaverton, the committee chairman, says voters would have to be involved at some point, because voters approved a ballot measure in 2000 to put the kicker into the Oregon Constitution.

“It’s hard for legislators to explain how the current system works,” he said.

The economists also project excess corporate income tax collections, but under a 2012 ballot measure, that money will go into the state school fund and will not be rebated.

— *The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.*

LIBRARY: Has until April to avoid defaulting on a \$300K loan

Continued from 1A

process of restoring the library’s occupancy permit.

City Manager Aaron Palmquist said he anticipates the ordeal could be resolved soon.

“It’s very important this gets done,” Palmquist said.

The process of building and opening Irrigon’s new library hasn’t been pretty. In 2009, patrons began fundraising for a new library building that would replace their old digs — a retrofitted school bus parked behind the city’s lone gas station.

Blueprints for the library were drawn up in 2012. The building was finished and briefly opened in May 2014 before its occupancy permit was pulled less than a month later.

At issue is a firewall separating the two properties. Though they are adjoined, the library and city hall are technically located on sep-

arately owned lots. In that case, state law requires a four-hour firewall.

Instead, it was built as a one-hour wall that, according to the letter of the law, creates a fire hazard. Sides can obtain a waiver for the firewall requirement, but first need to ink a new agreement laying out joint management of the building’s common space.

That agreement has been slow to come. The city made its first pitch in October, reserving the right to review any amendments before forwarding a final deal along to the State Building Department. Since then, sides have hired attorneys, formed subcommittees and traded a few proposals back and forth trying to find common ground.

The agreement focuses on things like cleaning, maintenance, decor, insurance and use of the building’s common areas. Once it is

signed, sides have agreed to a building code modification that allows a waiver of the firewall.

The district drafted its agreement to the city on Jan. 22, which was returned just in time for the board meeting Wednesday in Heppner. Director Marsha Richmond said she feels positive about getting a deal done.

Time is of the essence. The district has until April 15 to avoid defaulting on a \$300,000 loan from the Bank of Eastern Oregon, which had extended a line of credit to get the library built. Richmond said securing the occupancy permit is key.

“We’re very hopeful we can move quickly,” she said.

Even with a potential agreement in place, the district couldn’t entirely dodge criticism. Sue Oliver, of Irrigon, provided testimony Wednesday accusing

the board of not providing proper notice for its meetings and not keeping adequate track of the minutes.

“There is no paper trail. There is no record being kept of the documents going back and forth,” Oliver said. “A huge part of the way you got to where you are today is the way you’ve conducted your meetings.” Oliver also said the board has gone into executive session without enough clear explanation to the public about what they are discussing, and paying outside attorneys when there is free legal help available to them.

Richmond did not comment on the testimony, though Anderson said the board will take her comments under consideration and strive to be more transparent.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4547.



Get Unlimited Everything. Plus \$50 back.

Switch to a Simple Connect Prepaid Plan for just \$45/mo. with Unlimited Data, Talk and Text, including 1GB of high-speed data. Plus, for a limited time, get a \$50 U.S. Cellular® Promotional Card to use toward the latest accessories or your next month of service.



Samsung GALAXY S5

Things we want you to know: Add. fees, taxes and terms apply and vary by svc. and eqmt. Use of svc. constitutes acceptance of agmt. terms. In order to receive plan minutes, the monthly charge must be paid before due date. You may be charged at any time of day on your due date and should refill before that date to avoid svc. interruption. Roaming, directory assistance and international calls require additional account funds to complete calls. Data speeds: Full applicable data speeds apply for the first 1GB of usage. Data speeds shall be slowed to 1x thereafter for the remainder of the billing cycle. \$50 U.S. Cellular® Promotional Card: New line activation on Simple Connect Prepaid Plan is required. Issued by MetaBank. Member FDIC; additional offers are not sponsored or endorsed by MetaBank. Valid only for purchases at U.S. Cellular stores and uscellular.com. Offers valid at participating locations only and cannot be combined. See store or uscellular.com for details. Limited-time offer. Trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners. ©2015 U.S. Cellular

AIR QUALITY

Air quality and burn day information: www.pendleton.or.us/public-works/environmental. Air Quality Index: www.deq.state.or.us/aqi. Burn Line: 541-966-0327.