

**UMATILLA**



Photo contributed by Washington Department of Transportation  
**A one foot wide hole in the deck of the bridge from Washington to Umatilla, shown from the underside of the bridge, is being repaired.**

# One lane of bridge closed to repair hole

East Oregonian

Work crews have closed one lane of eastbound traffic on the Columbia River Bridge at Umatilla to repair a one-foot-wide hole in its deck.

Washington Department of Transportation spokesperson Summer Derrey said it isn't uncommon for bridges to develop a hole in the deck, which is the concrete part of the bridge that vehicles drive on, just like roads on land develop potholes.

"This project is considered routine," she said.

Construction began on Tuesday and Derrey said the bridge should be back to two lanes of travel on Wednesday afternoon.

The eastbound steel truss bridge, which carries travelers from Washington into Oregon, was built in 1955. The westbound bridge was added in 1988 to allow two lanes of travel in each direction.

Oregon and Washington are equal owners of the set of bridges at Umatilla, but Washington's transportation department performs the maintenance.

Derrey said the 60-year-old eastbound bridge currently being repaired is on the state's "structurally deficient" list. It is slated for a complete deck replacement but Derrey said the project won't make it to the top of the construction schedule for at least a couple of years.

# Pendleton school district floats general tax levy for May ballot

East Oregonian

The Pendleton School District is returning with a ballot issue for the first time since 2013, this time to pay for staff and programs instead of buildings.

The levy, which was first approved by voters in 2000, assesses 40 cents per \$1,000 assessed value over five years and will generate roughly \$300,000 per year for the district's general operations. The levy also would garner \$170,000 per year in equalization payments from the state.

The levy has been renewed by voters twice since it was first introduced.

If voters reject the levy and let it expire in June, it could exacerbate the district's tenuous budget situation.

Pendleton School Board Chairman Steve Umbarger recently said the district would already face a \$750,000 budget shortfall because of a decrease in fund-

ing if the proposed state budget is passed, and that number would dip into the millions without the levy.

State help could be on the way in the form of the Legislature's revenue forecast in May. Forty percent of any additional tax collections featured in the forecast will go toward education.

If the additional revenue still fails to cover some district's budget gaps, Rep. Peter Buckley, D-Ashland, co-chairman of the Joint Ways and Means Committee, said his committee will "wrestle" with the state budget to find alternative sources of revenue.

Voters approved a \$55 million bond two years ago to pay for the cost of a number of facility improvements, which include the conversion of Hawthorne Alternative High School to an early learning center and new buildings for Washington and Sherwood Heights elementary schools. Ballots are due May 19.

# Ballots to be sent April 29

East Oregonian

Ballots will be mailed to Umatilla County voters on Wednesday, April 29 for the May 19 election.

Elections Supervisor Kim Lindell said residents should make sure to return their ballots early to ensure their votes are counted in time.

"With changes in the way mail is processed, it's important that voters either drop off their ballots early or make sure they are sent in a week in advance," Lindell said.

Mail is now sent to Portland for processing before it is returned to the county, sometimes as many as five days later. Under current guidelines, Lindell said it doesn't matter when a ballot is postmarked, but rather when it actually arrives.

Ballots must be received

by the Elections Office no later than 8 p.m. May 19.

The best choice for dropping off ballots will be at one of four drive-up boxes set up around the county, Lindell said. Boxes will be located at the Umatilla County Courthouse in Pendleton, as well as Hermiston City Hall, Milton-Freewater City Hall and the Nixyaawii Governance Center in Mission.

Staff will be monitoring the need for additional boxes in order to increase voter participation, Lindell said.

"We want to do whatever we can to make it convenient for voters to cast their ballots and participate in the election process," she said. "This is a major interest on the part of our new governor, and we want to show that local officials are on board with her efforts in this area."

# Candidates: Port should play to its strengths

Franell, Imsland tout affordable electric rates to draw customers

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**  
*East Oregonian*

The Port of Umatilla should play to its strengths and leverage existing assets to attract future business, according to the candidates vying for one of three seats on the five-member port commission.

Jerry Imsland and Joseph Franell discussed their ideas and fielded questions during a lightly attended forum Monday at the Hermiston Conference Center, sponsored by the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Team and Eastern Oregon Women's Coalition.

Both men said either one of them would do a good job in the position, and both have at least some measure of familiarity with the port; Imsland has been hired to appraise some of the port's property through his Pendleton-based company, while Franell — the CEO of Eastern Oregon Telecom — acted as mediator during a zoning dispute between the port and city of Umatilla.

Franell was appointed to the port commission after Tim Mabry resigned in March. It is the only contested port commission seat in the May 19 election. Jerry Baker, of Athena, and Kurt Bendixsen, of Hermiston, are each running unopposed for other seats.

Tamra Mabbott, Umatilla County planning director, moderated the forum and asked questions ranging from the port's biggest challenge to the role the



**Franell**



**Imsland**

commissioners play in luring new development.

Franell said the Port of Umatilla suffers from an unfair comparison to its downriver neighbor, the Port of Morrow, which has grown into Oregon's second-largest port largely on the back of value-added agriculture. The two are not the same, he said, due to their locations and ability to build on certain lands.

What the Port of Umatilla does have, Franell said, is a steady supply of affordable electricity and fiber optics that make the McNary Industrial Park attractive to energy-hungry facilities like big data centers.

"We have some of the most reasonable electric rates in the U.S.," Franell said.

The Columbia River is the port's greatest asset, Imsland said, with its hydroelectric dams churning out ample renewable energy and providing inland shippers access to the Port of Portland for overseas exports.

But ongoing labor disputes in Portland have affected Eastern Oregon's ability to move those products affordably for customers, with both Hanjin Shipping and Hapag-Lloyd ending its calls at Portland's Terminal 6.

Getting that situation resolved could lead to a boost in barge traffic, especially for goods in containers, Imsland said.

"The port is one of the largest hubs we have for international exposure," he said.

Other questions focused on how the candidates would prioritize projects and assess risk. Franell said it's all about getting the biggest bang for the buck, and pointed specifically to developing the port's valuable water rights.

On March 10, the port agreed to lease an unused portion of its Columbia River water rights to a group of agricultural producers seeking greater irrigation across the basin. That's brought in roughly an additional \$500,000 per year.

Imsland said the port should err on the side of caution but that, by doing their homework, they can minimize risk on any business proposal.

The port can, and should, work closely with other economic development groups in the community, Franell and Imsland agreed. Both candidates said that, with the port's knowledge of how to move and market the region's agriculture and manufactured goods, the commissioners can provide a logical unifying voice for promoting local business.

"The Port of Umatilla seems to be the natural mechanism to host all of those diverse interests," Franell said.

Ballots for the May election will be mailed April 29. For more information, contact the Umatilla County Elections Office at 541-278-6254.

Contact George Plagen at [gplagen@eastoregonian.com](mailto:gplagen@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4547.

**BRIEFLY**

## Classes offered for Alzheimer's caregivers

PENDLETON — People caring for persons with Alzheimer's often experience isolation, frustration and depression. Oregon Care Partners is offering classes geared to help caregivers cope with their role. The training is free to anyone working or living in Oregon, whether they're a family member, personal caregiver or first responder.

Classes coming to Pendleton include:

- Positive Approach to Care Workshop, April 22, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Red Lion Hotel.

- Challenging Behaviors: Effective Approaches to Common Behaviors in the Non-Dementia Adult Population, April 23, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living.

- Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers: Middle Stage, May 8, 12:30-5 p.m., at the Pendleton Senior Center.

- Person Centered Dementia Care: Leading Your Team to Success, June 8 and 9, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Red Lion Hotel.

- Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers: Early Stage, June 26, 1-5 p.m., at the Pendleton Senior Center.

Oregon Care Partners also offers free online classes. To register for classes, go to [oregoncarepartners.com](http://oregoncarepartners.com) and go to classes or call 1-800-930-6851.

## Class features making a leather wrap

PENDLETON — A leather wrap that can be used for things like storing needles, fishing flies and sample embroidery stitches is featured in an upcoming class at Pendleton Center for the Arts.

Tough enough to put in a pocket or toss in a backpack as you travel to your next adventure, participants will leave class with a cool book and the skills to make another one on your own using either fabric or paper pages. No prior binding experience is necessary.

The class is Saturday, May 2 from noon to 4 p.m. at the arts center, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. The cost is \$50 for members of \$55 for non-members.

For more information or to register, call 541-278-9201.

## It's time to dance

HERMISTON — Learn the basic moves of two styles of dances as Hermiston Parks & Recreation offers swing and basic social dance classes.

The sessions begin Thursday, April 30 and run for six weekly lessons through June 4. Swing dances include the 1-step swing, 4-step swing and East Coast swing. It runs from 6:15-7:15 p.m. The foxtrot, waltz and cha cha is from 7:30-8:30 p.m. The sessions are held in the Lanham Room

at the Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave.

The cost is \$30 for residents or \$38 for non-residents. No partner is required to register.

For more information, visit [www.hermistonrecreation.com](http://www.hermistonrecreation.com). To register, call 541-667-5018 or stop by the recreation office, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

## KOA discount helps kids with cancer

PENDLETON — Campers at the Pendleton KOA will receive a discount for a night of camping, while at the same time helping children with cancer.

As part of Kampgrounds of America's annual KOA Care Camps Big Weekend, paying guests on Friday, May 8 will receive a night of camping for \$10 on Saturday, May 9. The entire fee will go to KOA Care Camps, which provides family camping experience for children battling cancer.

KOA Care Camps are a network of 95 specialized, medically equipped summer camps throughout north America. They provide a true summer camp experience at no charge to their families.

To reserve a site or cabin today for this special weekend, go to [www.KOA.com](http://www.KOA.com) and click on the Big Weekend event box.

EAST OREGONIAN HermistonHerald

# BUTTE CHALLENGE

## SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2015

### 5K RUN, 5K WALK, 10K RUN, KID'S BUTTE SCOOT

All races begin & end at Hermiston's Butte Park  
**DRAWINGS • FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY**

Online registration & race information at  
**WWW.BUTTECHALLENGE.COM**

**REGISTER ONLINE BY APRIL 23RD TO ORDER A CUSTOM TECHNICAL RACE T-SHIRT**

All proceeds benefit THE HERMISTON CROSS COUNTRY PROGRAM  
*Thank you for your support!*

**Take Home Bleach Kits just \$40 in April!**

**Dr. Hibbert Dental**

1100 Southgate, Suite 3 Pendleton, OR 97801  
[www.drhibbertdental.com](http://www.drhibbertdental.com) • 541-612-3707