

# HOUSE: Facebook campaign drew interest from all over

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retired. But even with the government stipend, he said he and Dorothy did not have money to put into the house.

Enter Saturday's volunteer initiative.

Josh Cyganik, 35, volunteered to paint the home after he heard two kids comment that someone should burn it down because of its state of ill-repair. Cyganik posted about the exchange on Facebook last week and asked for helpers to meet him.

Just after 8 a.m. on Saturday, 20 people had arrived to lend a hand. By around 11 a.m., an *East Oregonian* headcount showed that number was around 60, with Cyganik saying that at one point the crowd grew to as many as 95.

While the makeshift crew buzzed around their house, Leonard and Dorothy leaned against their silver Pontiac parked along the sidewalk until chairs were brought for them, watching the space transform. Leonard said he did not hear the kids' remarks but was "shocked" when Cyganik relayed them. He said he loved the effort to spruce up his home. About the turnout, he said, "I thank God for that."

Dorothy also expressed appreciation.

"It means a lot," she said while sitting under a sun umbrella someone had put up above her.

Jesselee Leachman, 32, said he got off a 12-hour shift at Columbia Care Services before coming to Goodwin Avenue. He brushed primer onto a back wall, wearing a tie-dye shirt he made just for the day. Leachman said he had wondered about the state of the house when he had passed by before.

"(Leonard's) a very nice man," he said. "I'm glad we can put a new life on his house."

Two volunteers came from Camas, Washington, after reading the Facebook post. Benjamin Olson, 47, said he prayed about whether to come. He said he felt God wanted him to help. So he came with his friend, John Floyd, who had earlier traveled to Camas from South-east Texas to see Olson.

"You can see miracles at work," you just have to look, said Olson.

Monique Sweet, 31, from Pendleton, said she was a Facebook friend of Josh and



The home of Dorothy and Leonard Bullock has a fresh new coat of paint on Monday after volunteers came together and gave the house a fresh coat.



Dorothy and Leonard Bullock sit on the porch of their home at 214 S.W. Goodwin Ave. on Monday in Pendleton. Volunteers came from all over the area this last weekend and painted the Bullock's house after a call went out on Facebook.

saw his post.

"It called to my need to serve," she said. She said everyone has such a need, but people rarely get opportunities to follow through on it. A stay-at-home mom, Sweet said her husband, a National Guardsman, took his one weekend off to look after their three children while she volunteered. "The power of Facebook is amazing, especially when you use it like this," she said. Sweet said she hoped the event would "spark" people to help out more.

A former BMCC student, Mar' Shay Moore, 20, said she attended because of the Facebook post, too. She said she wanted to break the stereotype that young people don't volunteer. She noted everyone was there to help Leonard.

"It's kind of like family, in a way," she said.

Companies from around the area — including

Tum-A-Lum Lumber, Pendleton Bottling, Doug's Septic and Sherwin-Williams — donated supplies, said Cyganik. Starbucks on Southgate donated roughly six gallons of water and iced tea, said shift manager Chelsie Post, 26.

Cyganik, a Union Pacific employee, said he passed Leonard on his porch for four years before he approached him about painting the house last week. And Cyganik has a history of going out of the way for others. In 2010 the *East Oregonian* reported the man, then a Les Schwab Tire Center employee and CPR certified, saved the life of a 17-month-old who was not breathing. The boy's mother came into Les Schwab panicking about her son. Cyganik went with the mother and "tapped" the child on the back three times until an item was dislodged in the boy's throat and he started to cough. Paramedics

told Cyganik the child likely would not have lived if he had not intervened.

About more initiatives like Saturday's for the future, Cyganik said: "I'd love to help out again."

But the project may not be done yet. Two volunteers, Ryan Bork and Dean Curry, said they would return the following weekend to repair the house's rear deck with help from Tum-A-Lum Lumber. Then there's the building's covering. "We're still looking for a roofer to donate his time," said Leonard.

He said he thinks that after the roof is redone, insurance companies will be willing to cover the home, which he said they have refused to do in the past because of its condition.

"To me, it'd be a lot safer because I'm just taking chances now," he said. "We'd lose everything we got if something happened now."

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# SCHOOL: Allocated \$125M to program for 2015-17 biennium

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increase in students and a lack of space, the program could be a "huge benefit."

"It's great to see the Legislature has heard the resounding cry for help from school districts across the state," he said. "It could mean millions of dollars for the Hermiston community, if indeed the community did support a bond measure (in the next biennium)."

For the 2015-17 biennium, legislators allocated \$125 million to the program to be administered by the Oregon Department of Education. Districts that pass bonds up to \$4 million could receive one-to-one matching funds, and the match for larger bonds will be determined by a formula based on local property values, poverty rates and student numbers. The formula will also be used to establish a priority list of poorer districts that would be eligible for a 60-percent portion of the total grant funds, with the other 40 percent awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe said the formula would be especially beneficial to districts with small tax bases, such as Umatilla.

"The last time that we went out for our bond, we were going out the same time as Hermiston, (and) our cost per thousand was significantly higher than Hermiston simply because of the tax base difference," she said. "The nice thing is this law takes all of that into account and really helps out communities that had great difficulty passing bonds. As we're looking into updating our facilities, that's a huge issue for us."

Assistance with facilities planning costs is another benefit of the bill,

Sipe said. It provides up to \$20,000 for a facilities assessment, \$25,000 for a long-range facilities plan and \$25,000 for a seismic assessment.

In a separate bill, the Legislature approved \$175 million in grant funding for seismic improvements at schools.

Smith said Hermiston schools are already "in a pretty good place" in terms of earthquake preparedness. Sipe said some Umatilla schools have poor seismic ratings, but she was unsure if the district had enough risk to be awarded any funding.

State Sen. Bill Hansell, Athena, said the criteria for awarding the seismic funding was still being developed. He said priority would be given to schools with the greatest earthquake vulnerability.

"Most of the threat has been more on the coast," he said. "Whether or not anybody east of the mountains will be competitive on the grant application remains to be seen."

Hansell said the \$300 million in the two grant programs was only "a drop in the bucket" considering the total needs that have been mentioned. He said, however, he was pleased the amount was spent on schools, rather than seismic upgrades at the state capitol building that would have cost about the same amount. He said, in terms of building safety, schools are his first priority.

"Once this allotment is used up, I think if the program has shown it is meeting the need it will go for future rounds in future legislative sessions, but this is a good start," he said.

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# WHEAT: Began harvesting about three weeks early

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"We've had dry years in the past, but if anything is different this year, it's been warmer and warmer for longer," Rowe said. "Growers feel like this is a little out of the norm for a hot, dry year."

Scattered rains helped keep winter wheat from the same fate in six Midwestern states that cultivate half of the nation's winter wheat.

Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota typically raise winter wheat of slightly lesser quality than the Northwestern states, according to data from the United States Department of Agriculture's statistics arm. But the Midwest is producing more "good" bushels this year than its five-year average, while the Northwest's "good" ratings have dropped nearly 20 percent.

The USDA said in a July 10 national crop report that spring and early summer weather conditions were favorable for winter wheat everywhere but Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The latter three states saw their highest June temperatures on record.

"I think earlier on some of the growers were more optimistic, but as the summer's progressed it's gotten drier and drier as the harvest comes up," NASS Northwest Regional Director Chris Mertz said. "They're still waiting to hear what happens when they run the combines out there to see how it's going to be."

Due to the heat and early wheat maturation, farmers in the Northwest began

harvesting about three weeks early this year. The true value of the crop will be determined in the coming weeks as growers finish the harvest and receive estimates from grain elevators.

Montana farmer Gary Dobler said he wouldn't be surprised if the region's wheat is less dense, nutritionally off balance or otherwise adversely affected by the drought, but he's

waiting for a professional assessment to make a final determination.

"We'll know here in another week what the damage was."

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