

Depot land transfer inches along

Smith named director, warns of government’s slow pace

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Demolition at the former Umatilla Chemical Depot site is moving the land closer to being returned to local control, but it could be another year before the transfer is complete.

Greg Smith, the new executive director of the Columbia Development Authority, said it is hard to make timeline predictions when working with the federal government. But he believes it will be another 10 to 15 months before the Army is ready to transfer the land to the local reuse authority.

“The Army is just knee-deep in procedure and you have to work within that,” he said.

Smith replaced former Columbia Development Authority director Don Chance this summer, working with the development authority in his capacity as an economic development consultant



Smith

Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Now that the chemical depot has been dismantled the group is working with the Army on transferring part of the land to the Oregon National Guard and transferring the rest to the local reuse authority for use as industrial land and a wildlife preserve.

Smith said the Columbia Development Authority has made it clear that it is only willing to take the land off the Army’s hands if it doesn’t have to pay for it, if it is environmentally sound and if the necessary water rights are available to use the land for industrial purposes.

and not in his role as a state representative.

The authority’s board is made up of representatives from the Port of Umatilla, Port of Morrow, Umatilla County, Morrow County and Confederated

“It has to be clean, it has to have water and it has to be free,” Smith said.

As part of that set of conditions, the Army is currently demolishing more than 20 buildings on the site, several of which are visible from Interstate 84, that have asbestos in them.

It is also in the process of completing cultural and environmental studies for the site, ensuring that it is development-ready before the local reuse authority is ready to take it over. The Army can’t transfer the land until it has an official Finding of Suitability of Transfer, which depends on the results of the studies.

The next meeting of the Columbia Development Authority is Thursday at noon at the Port of Morrow’s Sand Hollow Conference Room. The meeting will include an overview of milestones and objectives for the coming year and approval of the budget summary for a grant.

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

PENDLETON

Disabilities Act remains vital at 25

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pendleton locals came out Saturday to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act. The federal law that made the United States more friendly to people with disabilities turns 25 this year.

Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living hosted the event at Roy Raley Park that included free hot dogs, soft drinks and Pendleton Mayor Phillip Houk delivering a proclamation.

Independent living specialist Bobbi Fine-Hayden said the small party was as much about raising awareness of the center’s work to help those with disabilities as it was keeping the law in the public’s mind.

The act provides civil rights protections to people with disabilities, prohibits state and local governments from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities and is the reason why businesses, sidewalks and transportation systems must accommodate wheelchairs and the like.

Ryan Green of Wilsonville came to the Pendleton event at Fine-Hayde’s request. Green works for a company that sells wheelchair accessible vehicles and equipment for people with limited mobility. He also is in a wheelchair.

He said he was in a car crash in 1996 and suffered a broken neck that left him without the use of his legs.



Staff photo by Phil Wright

Locals came Saturday to Roy Raley Park, Pendleton, for free food and entertainment to celebrate 25 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

He said he worked for a different employer at the time, and the company held his desk job until he returned, but it also demoted him.

“I didn’t get any dumber,” he said.

The difference was the wheelchair. He said he considered using the ADA to sue, but ultimately quit for a more important mission.

“There’s been a lot of improvements since then,” he said, but enforcement of the law remains a serious issue.

People without disabilities use parking spaces

meant for people in wheelchairs, he said, and small businesses might have a ramp to the door but have bathrooms he and others can’t use. Pendleton and cities all over need to make access a priority.

“I spent 22 years of my life walking,” Green said. “I never once considered what a curb ramp was for.”

Houk after delivering his statement said many years ago he got in a wheelchair to see how accessible Pendleton was.

“It was almost impossible,” he said.

The Americans with Disabilities Act changed much of that, he said, and its importance will continue to grow. Houk is a member of the boomer generation, which, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, makes up more than 20 percent of the nation’s population. And 15 years from now, projections show, more than 20 percent of U.S. residents will be 65 and older, compared with 13 percent in 2010.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

BRIEFLY

Meacham Day features communal yard sale

MEACHAM — For a chance to find some bargains, or to sell arts and crafts or other goods, head to the Meacham Day Community Yard Sale.

The event is Saturday, Aug. 1 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Oregon Trail Store & Deli parking lot, downtown

Meacham. Located in the Umatilla National Forest, Meacham is about 30 miles southeast of Pendleton off Interstate 84 at Exit 238.

The event also includes family activities, including a parade, obstacle course and poker challenge. Food will be available for purchase.

Free spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis for anyone wanting to sell items. Bring a sale table (or use your pickup tailgate),

items and a chair. For more information, call 541-571-4600.

Echo to show antique tractors

ECHO — A display of antique tractors and farm equipment will line the streets of downtown Echo Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. as Sno Road Winery brings the Old Time Tractor Show to town. Cost to

appreciate these workhorses of yesteryear is free.

For a donation of \$5 your favorite piece of farm history can join the display, and all proceeds will benefit Kick’n Cancer. Setup for participants begins at 10 a.m.

For more information, contact Sno Road Winery at 541-376-0421 or email info@snoroadwinery.com.

PENDLETON

Thousands flock to inaugural Bike Week

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Having just wrapped up their inaugural event, Pendleton Bike Week’s organizers have already unveiled the dates for next year’s celebration of all things motorcycle.

The 2016 Pendleton Bike Week will take place from July 22 to July 26, where organizers will try to build off of the previous year’s success.

Although organizers are still counting receipts, co-founder Eric Folkestad said the event met attendance and revenue goals and was able to break even.

Pendleton Bike Week brought in a total of 5,740 people over the five day event.

The bike week peaked on Saturday, when 2,150 motorcycle enthusiasts flooded into the Pendleton Convention Center and the surrounding parking lot to take in attractions like a motorcycle stunt show, a tattoo contest and an evening concert.

While initially unsure if the event would garner attention, over 250 attendees weren’t shy about displaying their ink for the tattoo contest.

Due to the especially popular concerts, Folkestad said organizers will look into hiring bigger musical acts next year if they can fit

them into the budget.

The unguided motorcycle rides also proved popular — 150 bikers rode in the Sheriff Til Taylor Ride and 281 riders participated in the .45 Caliber Poker Run.

Despite a collective 45,803 traveled on the poker run, Folkestad said organizers may shorten next year’s ride to increase participation. This year’s 163 mile route was too long for some riders.

The run took bikers to prominent spots in Pendleton, Walla Walla and Kennewick, where riders would punch cards they could later enter into a contest for an engraved .45 caliber pistol.

Folkestad also saw a need to improve the number of vendors selling their wares in the convention center parking lot.

While motorcycle dealers were well represented, Folkestad said he wants to see more crafts-based vendors, like leather, silver and jewelry.

He added that it might be easier to achieve that goal next year since the bike week won’t run concurrently with other regional attractions like Chief Joseph Days and the Tri-City Water Follies.

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

Dispatch oversight committee on commissioners’ agenda

PENDLETON — Police and fire dispatch services are again front and center when the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners meets Tuesday.

The board will discuss the new dispatch center advisory committee, which Commissioner Bill Elfering recruited local police and emergency personnel to serve on in the wake of concerns about dispatch operations.

Elfering said the Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services Chief Scott Stanton is the latest member, joining

10 others, including Elfering, Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts and Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith.

They board meets at 10 a.m. in room 130 at the Umatilla County Courthouse, 216 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton, and will consider other issues, including approving the next payment to Sun Ridge Systems, the company that provided the software for dispatch computers. That software also has been a point of contention after glitches caused dispatch problems.

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.



First Foods Festival and Race

– Formerly known as Salmon Walk

Saturday, August 1, 2015 • July Grounds
(73310 July Grounds Lane, Pendleton, OR 97801)

Race Events & Times

(Jackets and medals for 1st – 3rd place for hike, 10 K & 5 K race events)

7:10 am Kanine Ridge Hike Departs July Grounds

9:00 am 10 K Spawn Run

9:30 am 5 K Smolt Run

10:30 am Family Fun Walk & Cycle (noncompetitive)

1st Annual Chumash Lacrosse Tournament

Team Categories Grades

1st - 3rd, 4th - 6th, 7th - 8th, 9th - 12th & Adult (Medals for Winning Team in Each Category)

8:00 am - 10:15 am Chumach Tournament Begins

10:15 am - 12:00 pm Break for Family Fun Walk/ Race

12:00 pm - 2:30 pm Chumash Tournament Continues

1-888-809-8027 ext. 7219 or firstfoodsfestival@ctuir.org

Event Agenda

6:45 am Race Registration Opens

7:10 am Hikers Depart for Kanine Ridge Hike

8:00 am LaCrosse Tournament Begins (Game Times 8 - 10 am & 12:00 - 2:30 pm)

8:15 - 9:40 am Yoga Stretch & Breath

9:00 am 10 K Spawn Run

9:30 am 5 K Smolt Run

10:00 am First Foods Info Booths Open

10:30 am Family Fun Walk & Cycle (Noncompetitive)

11:30 am BBQ Fundraiser Lunch

12:00 pm Awards Ceremonies for Race Events

1:00 pm First Foods Contest

2:30 pm Festival and LaCrosse Tournament Ends

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