

PENDLETON

BMCC welcomes new pups to wolfpack

By JONATHAN BACH
East Oregonian

Friday’s Welcome to the Pack event at Blue Mountain Community College started with a look back, and then a push forward.

Welcome to the Pack — an introductory session for new BMCC students that includes speeches, scavenger hunts and lecture previews — is in its second year, said BMCC President Camille Preus.

The event was kicked off in the Bob Clapp Theater with a tribute to those who died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania. The commemoration was attended by BMCC faculty, new students and emergency responders from Pendleton and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. According to Vice President of Public Relations Casey White-Zollman, some 40 emergency responders attended.

“We didn’t know how many would come,” said White-Zollman, but she said they were happily surprised. The names of victims of the attacks were displayed during the tribute.

Preus said afterward that faculty were worried about how to segue from the tribute to the more energized remarks from emcees Ty Morris and Jeff Hill. But Hill gave his account of living in New York. He said later he had friends who were there during the attacks, and he remembers looking at One World Trade Center, that gazing up at it gave him vertigo.

After the somber opening, Hill and Morris were a regular Abbot and Costello, spitting jokes as they informed the audience about student services and the day’s agenda, like six preview lectures given Friday with titles ranging from “Can Your Cell Phone Kill You?” to “Rock and Rock and Oh Yeah Sex.” They brought Preus to the stage, who



Staff photo by Jonathan Bach

Director of Student Support Services Ty Morris (left) and Recruitment Coordinator Jeff Hill (Right) emceed the opening remarks of the Welcome to the Pack event Friday.

affirmed the importance of the student body.

“Without you, Blue Mountain does not exist,” she said.

After the speeches in Bob Clapp Theater, Preus told the *East Oregonian* that the school tracked students who attended the last Welcome to the Pack, and that the event had seemed to help with retention throughout the year. “What that says is we’re doing something right,” she said.

She said the eyes of the state are on BMCC for its Jump Start program, an option that allows students a short math refresher course and the ability to “jump” up to a higher class if they pass it.

For first-year student Darin Hauner, 18, the Welcome to the Pack event was a way to meet people.

“It’s definitely beneficial,” he said.

Hauner wants to study biotechnology with an emphasis in bionics, to produce artificial limbs or a system

where Alzheimer’s patients could store there memories in a computer.

“I’m really looking forward to getting my prerequisites for a doctorate,” he said.

He said he’d even like to make artificial trees that produce oxygen, like in the hit British science fiction drama “Doctor Who.” Across a table, BMCC student government member Christian Quinlin, 18, lets him in on a tip: the college IT department offers opportunities for students to do hands-on work.

Quinlin said students need events like Welcome to the Pack to get familiar with campus. He recalls that friends of his who weren’t acquainted with facilities got lost on their first days of class.

Then Quinlin led Hauner to one of the preview lectures in the science department.

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Chaplain joins Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office

East Oregonian

A former chaplain with the Hermiston Police Department is the newest member of the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office.

The sheriff’s office Thursday announced bringing on chaplain John Jefferies of Hermiston. County counsel Doug Olsen said it is a volunteer position.

Jefferies has more than 32 years of pastoral and chaplaincy experience, according to the written statement, and is a member of the International Conference of Police Chaplains. He also was one of the first chaplains Hermiston police hired when it started its program in late 2011.

Jefferies is a former sheriff’s deputy in Ravalli County, Montana, and former instructor of the Montana Law Enforcement Academy. He has worked with local police, fire and emergency service agencies the past few years and is a Umatilla County Crisis Intervention Team.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said Jefferies recently left his agency, but he was pleased to see the sheriff’s office is on board with having a chaplaincy program. Edmiston said aside from counseling first responders, chaplains also help with death investigations and talking with family members who lose loved ones.

Edmiston said it is encouraging to see the program grow throughout the county.

According to the sheriff’s statement, the “objectives of Jefferies’ chaplaincy program is to offer support and encouragement to law enforcement, corrections, dispatch, fire and emergency medical services personnel and their families, and to the communities they serve.”

HERMISTON

Prayers, worship in memory of 9/11

East Oregonian

Fourteen years after the deadly Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on American soil, people gathered to remember those who lost their lives.

At McKenzie Park in Hermiston, Erin Lovett from New Beginnings Christian Fellowship organized a worship event featuring prayer and music. Jay Barnett, pastor of the church, recounted the events that resulted in thousands of deaths and offered a prayer.

“It’s our responsibility to remember those events and to never let the memory of those who died be forgotten,” he said.

Jacob Looper from Hermiston Assembly of God led the Pendleton Assembly of God band in a series of worship songs.

The group of about 50 people in attendance



Staff photo by Sean Hart

Attendees sing along at an event Friday in Hermiston commemorating the anniversary Sept. 11, 2001.

later joined hands to create a circle, and several prayed for various causes, including Lovett, Barnett and Hector Ramirez, pastor at Templo Fe, Esperanza Y Amor Iglesia de Dios.

“I think it was a wonderful thing that we could come together, all churches and people, in agreement and honor our veterans and remember

9/11,” Lovett said. “It was an attack on our country, and I think it really shocked a lot of people that we could be attacked by an enemy. The repercussions of it are still affecting people.”

BRIEFLY

City to consider updated landscape ordinance

HERMISTON — The first reading of an amended landscaping ordinance is on Monday’s Hermiston City Council agenda.

The council opened a public hearing on the proposed ordinance Aug. 24 and made changes to address public concerns. If the ordinance moves forward Monday, it could be fully adopted at the Sept. 28 meeting.

The council will also consider an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Department of Transportation to install a traffic signal at the intersection of West Orchard Avenue and Southwest 11th Street. According to a staff report from Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan, ODOT will cover the entire estimated project cost of \$750,000.

To determine the future of the Hermiston Conference Center, the council will consider forming a project oversight board. The members recommended for the board in a staff report by City Manager Byron Smith are Steve Eldridge, Bryan Medelez, Dave Drotzmann, Doug Barak, Fred Ziari, Kim Puzey, Maria Duron, Byron Smith, Jackie Myers, Debbie Pedro, Phil Hamm, Dennis Burke, Don Daggett, Fred Maiocco, Jason Edmiston, Margaret Saylor, Mark Morgan, Doug Smith, Tamara Mabbott and Joe Basille.

Pendleton to update transportation system plan

PENDLETON — The city of Pendleton will start working on a significant project the Monday after Round-Up week — updating the city’s transportation system plan.

According to a press release, an advisory committee will meet Sept. 21 to discuss the update.

The plan was last updated in 2007 and was focused on cars’ transportation needs, whereas the upcoming update will target bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit issues.

“The project will result in amendments to the 2007 update including designing for active

transportation modes and exploring opportunities for improving and expanding the existing multi-use trail system, expanding transit stops, siting a new transit center, and identifying park-and-ride and/or park-and-pool facilities,” the release states.

The committee will meet four times, the first being a brown bag lunch at the Pendleton City Hall council chambers Sept. 21 at noon.

Later that evening at 7 p.m., the city council chambers will host a second meeting about making it easier for children to walk or bike to school and formally establishing a Safe Routes to School program.

For additional information, contact city planner Evan MacKenzie at 541-966-0204

County approves early burning for canola growers

PENDLETON — Canola growers in Umatilla County were granted an early day to burn fields to meet their planting deadline. Other farmers will have to wait until after Round-Up to burn.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners met Friday morning in an emergency meeting at the Pendleton courthouse to address the burn ban. Commissioner Larry Givens said two canola growers were concerned they could not burn fields due to the county-wide ban on burning and would miss Tuesday’s deadline to plant.

Givens and fellow Commissioner Bill Elfering approved lifting the burn ban for agriculture (Commissioner George Murdock was absent). The county law still prohibits ag burning until after the Pendleton Round-Up ends.

Commissioners then granted the canola growers permission to burn Friday and Friday only to meet their deadline and comply with the Round-Up burn rule.

County counsel Doug Olsen also said staff would let the two canola growers know they can burn.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

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TUESDAY: PBR After-Party, Pendleton Whisky® Night

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