

PENDLETON

Families reconnect to river

Pendleton River Walk celebrates 30 years

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
East Oregonian

Fall colors decorated the Umatilla River Saturday as friends and families gathered for the 30th anniversary celebration of the Pendleton River Walk at Roy Raley Park.

The event, named "Reconnect to the River," featured a variety of activity stations along the parkway highlighting the river's many plants, animals and natural functions. Children huddled up to tables where they made pine cone bird feeders, colored pictures of salmon and even held a live cockroach.

Event planners included East Oregonian Publisher Kathryn Brown; Betty Klepper, a retired scientist and member of the former group Stewards of the Umatilla River Environment; Deb Whittaker and Donny Cook of Pendleton Parks & Recreation; and Jon Staldine and Colleen Sanders of the Umatilla Basin Watershed Council.

"We are so fortunate to have this beautiful river flowing through town," Brown said. "The wildlife here is telling us the river is a safe and healthy place to live."

It wasn't always that way. Urban development in the 20th century resulted in poor water practices that left the stream all but dry and wiped out salmon runs for nearly 70 years.

Salmon have since returned, thanks in large part to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, which has spearheaded restoration projects and run a successful hatchery program. Gary James, fisheries program manager with the tribes, spoke at the event Saturday and described the CTUIR's vision for a healthy river system.

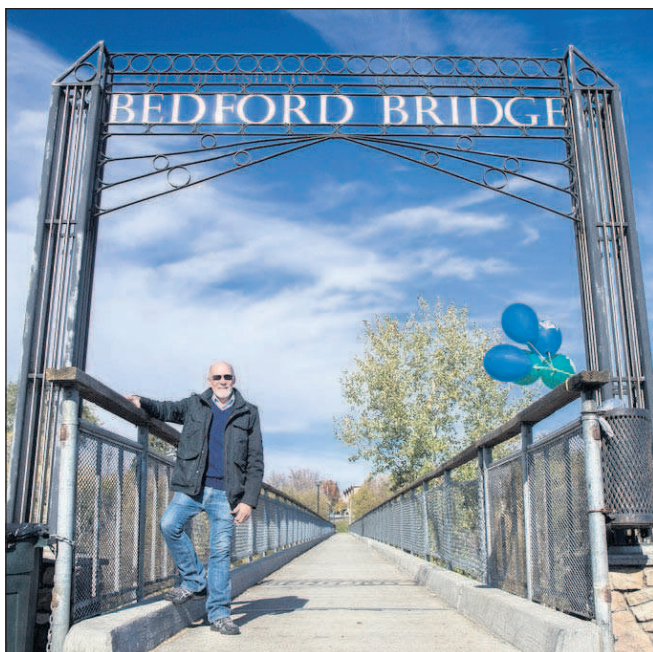
"Everybody benefits from a healthy river," James said. "So much development in the past century has been kind of tunnel vision."

Of course, farmers need water for irrigation, James said. But resources such as clean water and abundant wildlife also depend on a natural flowing river corridor. That's why the tribes are working to restore historic floodplains and improve habitat for fish and animals — part of their cultural and ceremonial First Foods, he said.

The first half-mile stretch



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Richard Bertram, of Blue Mountain Fly Casters, gives tips to a young, aspiring fly fisherman Saturday during the Reconnecting to the River event at Roy Raley Park.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Richard Gabriel, original designer of the Pendleton River Walk, poses on the Bedford Bridge during Saturday's Reconnecting to the River event.

of the Pendleton River Walk opened to the public in 1985, and the entire trail now runs from Highway 37 east to just past the Little League Park. It has become a popular spot for joggers, bikers, bird

watchers, fishermen and anyone who enjoys being in nature.

Richard Gabriel, a Salem architect, conducted the original parkway study and sketches that helped the

project to become reality. On Saturday, he returned to Pendleton for the first time to see how the River Walk has been embraced by the community.

"I think it's just wonderful," Gabriel said. "Nature heals, and being here has to be a healing event, whether we know it or not."

Different groups hosted activity booths along the parkway, teaching everything from the life cycle of salmon to the names of native plants that grow along the stream banks. Jon Staldine, director of the Umatilla Basin Watershed Council, said they wanted to give people a greater understanding of these resources and how they are all interconnected in the ecosystem.

"We hope they take away an understanding that these resources are all around them," Staldine said.

Contact George Plagen at gplagen@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

PENDLETON

Dinner with Friends, mini-auction raises money for arts center

East Oregonian

A 10-course tasting meal is featured during a fundraiser for Pendleton Center for the Arts.

Featuring the signature dishes of some of the staff and board members of the arts center, Dinner with Friends also includes a mini-auction. Roberta Lavadour, arts center director, is looking forward to some tasty entrees.

"Most of us cook for our friends and family and everyone has that one dish that's always a winner," she said. "It should be eclectic and delicious."

Dinner with Friends is Monday, Nov. 16 beginning with no-host cocktails and the mini-auction at 5:30 p.m. at Virgil's at Cimmiyotti's, 137 S. Main St., Pendleton. The meal will be served at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$40 per person or \$75 for a couple. With seating limited to 80 guests, people are encouraged to reserve tickets in advance by contacting 541-278-9201, director@pendletonarts.org or stopping by the arts center at 214 N. Main St., Pendleton.

The idea for the event came about during a conversation at a recent work party at the arts center.

"While we were putting labels on postcards for the last exhibit, we noticed that between us we knew every



EO file photo
Marquelle Barfuss works on a paper mache bird during a past Arts Have Class program at Pendleton Center for the Arts. The upcoming Dinner With Friends event will help raise money for free art classes at the center.

one of our 500 members," Lavadour said.

That sparked a discussion

to have the staff and board host a get-together for a nice meal — while at the same

time raising some money to support the center's free art classes. The event, Lavadour said, is an off-year alternative to the big, gala auction event that the organization hosts during even-numbered years.

Items up for bid include artwork by a couple of regional artists, SeaPort Airlines flights and a private tour of Harriet Isom's art collection and dinner at her home at her family ranch in Echo.

Lavadour was pleased at the support of Virgil's at Cimmiyotti's. Owner Jennifer Keeton donated use of the facility for the event.

For more information about activities and classes at Pendleton Center for the Arts, visit www.pendletonarts.org.

Umatilla County OKs \$150k for Pendleton radar

Commissioners also seek more oversight, input over EOTEC finances

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Umatilla County Board of Commissioners voted 3-0 to provide \$150,000 to help the city of Pendleton get a radar system at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport. And the board is moving to have more input and control over the finances of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The money is a third of a \$450,000 local match the city needs to qualify for a \$1.5 million Oregon Department of Transportation grant to install the radar system and boost the appeal of the remotely manned aerial vehicle range at the airport. The city, Port of Umatilla and now Umatilla County plan to split the match evenly.

County commissioners approved giving the funds in \$30,000 chunks over five years, the same deal the Port Commission made. The vote came Monday morning after commissioners took a few days to review the request that came last week from Mike Short, president of the Round-Up City Development Corp., which solicited money for the grant on behalf of Pendleton.

Commissioner Bill Elfering, who participated via phone, said the county's economic development budget did not have the \$150,000 up front, but it could give \$30,000 a year. The action came in the wake of commissioners voting last week to have the county give \$600,000 to the ongoing creation of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in Hermiston.

After the meeting, Short said the funding date arrives August 2016, and by then the city will have one or maybe two of the payments in hand.

The grant also allows for "some" leeway on when the city needs to have the money, he said, and it will not all be due until after the radar is in place and working.

"It would have been better to have it up front," he said, "but not everyone has the capacity to do that."

Funding gaps for these types of grants are not uncommon, Short said, and expressed optimism the money would work out.

County commissioners also discussed having the county budget officer Robert Pahl serve as a non-voting member on the EOTEC board and as its treasurer.

Pahl said he used to handle the EOTEC books for about a year. Givens said the county would gain some "internal policy standing."

Givens and Port of Umatilla general manager Kim Puzey would remain as the county's voting members on the board. Murdock said he would like to see the county budget officer serve as a voting member if there was an opening, and he wanted a county policy specifying a sitting commissioner must serve on the board.

Givens also said the county wants EOTEC to provide a comprehensive business plan, and Murdock added that should include a rainy day fund.

Elfering said the EOTEC would be self-sustaining and a rainy day fund would be good business. Murdock said the issue is EOTEC has nothing in writing to establish such a fund.

County counsel Doug Olsen said he would draft proposals for commissioners to consider.

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

BRIEFLY

Family Care Health sets open house

PENDLETON — An open house is planned at Family Care Health, a Medicare Advantage Plan, which recently moved to its new office location.

Family Care members and anyone curious about what a Medicare advantage plan is, and how it differs from standard Medicare or a Medicare supplement, is encouraged to stop by. This is especially timely with the current Medicare open enrollment period, which ends Dec. 7.

The open house is Thursday from 3-7 p.m. at 433 S. Main St., Pendleton. The office is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 541-278-3484.

Fitness studio hosts Woman's Day

HERMISTON — Fashion, food and fun are planned during Woman's Day at Higher Power Fitness.

The free event is Saturday beginning at 9 a.m. with kickboxing. The rest of the fun, which includes several vendors, runs from noon to 4 p.m. at 1055 S. Highway 395, Suite 202, Hermiston.

Donations of gently used clothing, coats and shoes will be accepted on behalf of the local women's shelter.

For more information, contact 541-289-5483 or info@higherpowerfitnessllc.com.

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