



EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016

140th Year, No. 67

WINNER OF THE 2015 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Umatilla County to back EOTEC on loan

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center could get a big boost to its funding shortfall. The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners will vote Tuesday morning to authorize the county to back EOTEC on a loan up to \$750,000.

The EOTEC fundraising committee wants to borrow a big chunk of money and is seeking donation commitments for multiple years that would go to paying off the debt. If a donor promised \$5,000 a year for five years, for example, EOTEC would borrow \$25,000 up front from the fund, then each year use the donor's annual contribution to pay off the bank.

EOTEC is about \$2 million short of the \$16 million it needs by March 1 to finish the first phase of construction. The U.S. Department of Agriculture might be able to provide \$325,000, according to county counsel Doug Olsen, and Banner Bank is willing to make a sizable loan to EOTEC. But the bank wants the land of the EOTEC site for collateral.

To obtain the loan, the two entities that formed EOTEC — Umatilla County and the city of Hermiston — needed to give approval. Hermiston City Council in December voted to allow EOTEC to take on \$1.5 million in debt.

But the Oregon Constitution prohibits counties from taking on more than \$5,000 of debt. So the county board plans to vote to pledge the county's full faith and credit as the guarantee on a loan EOTEC obtains for up to \$750,000, or half of that \$1.5 million.

Olsen previously said the county made the same guarantee on the construction of the Stafford Hansell Government Center, Hermiston.

The board of commissioners will meet Tuesday at 9 a.m. in room 130 at the Umatilla County Courthouse, 416 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton. The board at

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MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

'This is the dream'

Communities commemorate civil rights leader with march and music



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

More than 100 people gathered to take part in a march down Main Street in Hermiston on Monday to commemorate Martin Luther King Jr. Day.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Georgina Johnson sings the song "We Shall Not Be Moved" accompanied by Dan Haug and Margaret Mayer, not photographed, on Monday at the Great Pacific Wine and Coffee Co. in Pendleton.

Pendleton celebrates Dr. King's birthday with freedom songs

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Those who entered Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Company on Monday evening stepped smack into a soundtrack of the civil rights movement.

Strains of "We Shall Overcome," "We Shall Not Be Moved" and other protest songs bounced off the popular Pendleton eatery's brick walls for two hours as about 150 people celebrated

the birthday of civil rights activist Martin Luther King, Jr.

A portrait of the Baptist minister and Nobel Peace Prize winner sat on an easel. He appeared to look out at the crowd as audience members sang and clapped and raised a toast.

Bill Young, of Pendleton, kicked off the evening with some of King's own words.

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Hermiston peace walk honors legacy of MLK

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Hermiston residents honored Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy Monday with a peace walk through downtown and a ceremony at First United Methodist Church.

Keynote speaker Dawn Rome, one of the Hermiston Black International Awareness Club's founding members, quoted from King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

"Take a look at this room," she said, gesturing to the church full of black, Hispanic and white community members sitting side by side. "This is literally the dream right here."

Though the world might be a different, less segregated one than it was during King's lifetime, Rome said his ideals of tolerance, equality and nonviolence are still relevant today.

She asked how many people in the room had bought a lottery ticket recently with dreams of winning the biggest Power-

"As Americans we have already won the lottery. Don't wait to be great to do something, do something now and be great at that."

— Dawn Rome, keynote speaker

ball jackpot in history. Rome said for a week she listened to friends and family talk about the ways they could use the money for good, from buying a home for a family member to adopting children from Africa. What she wanted to know is why so many people seemed to think they needed to wait to win the lottery in order to make a difference in the world.

"As Americans we have already won the lottery," she said. "Don't wait to be great to do something, do something now and be great

See HERMISTON/8A

HARNEY COUNTY STANDOFF: DAY 16

Mandatory minimum sentences play a role in ranching standoff

By JEFF MANNING
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — The seeds of this month's insurrection at a Harney County wildlife refuge were planted in an unusual midnight deal struck in 2012 between prosecutors and Harney County ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond.

The long blood feud between the Hammonds and the government reached a surprise moment of consensus that night. After eight days

of trial in a Pendleton courthouse on charges they had set illegal fires near their remote Eastern Oregon ranch, the parties agreed to abide by the jury's partial verdict.

The jury informed the judge it had concluded that the Hammonds were guilty of two counts of arson. On seven other counts, the jury had voted to acquit or was deadlocked.

The Hammonds agreed to accept the partial verdict, accept Hogan's sentence and to waive their rights to appeal. The two ranchers and their

lawyers believed the U.S. Attorney's office had done the same.

The deal blew up four months later after U.S. District Court Judge Michael Hogan refused to issue the five-year mandatory minimum sentence. Prosecutors immediately appealed, calling Hogan's lighter prison sentences "illegal."

The Department of Justice prevailed. The ranchers were ordered to return to prison to serve out their five-year terms.

The case made the Hammonds

martyrs to an angry cadre of protesters, and the perceived government overreach inspired the armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge south of Burns that has attracted worldwide attention.

Even as the occupation reaches day 16, several questions remain unanswered: Why did the government decide to charge the Hammonds under a terrorism statute? Why was it so fixated on a five-year sentence?

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