

HERMISTON

EOTEC entry road to be named for Prior

Board sets rates for event center rental

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center board will honor former board chair Chet Prior by naming the project's entry road after him.

Board member Dan Dorran said during Friday's meeting that after the years of hard work and leadership Prior put into the project before his death, he wanted Prior's name to be the first thing people saw while heading into EOTEC. Other board members agreed.

"I think it will be a great honor for him," board chair Byron Smith said.

After some disagreement over whether to use the name Chet — which most people knew Prior by — or his given name Chester, the board approved a motion that would name the road after Prior but leave it to his family to choose between Chester and Chet.

On Friday the board welcomed Angela Young as the new project manager for EOTEC. Frew Development Group hired Young, of Hermiston, to manage construction of EOTEC and the Blue Mountain Community College bond project in coordination with Frew's vice president and senior project manager Rob Dreier.

Dreier reported construction of the event center was on schedule and contractors were "putting on the finishes and starting to clean up places." G2 Construction plans to turn over the keys in March.

EOTEC business manager Heather Cannell said people have begun calling to inquire about reserving the center. She presented a proposed rate schedule, which the board approved.

The rate schedule would charge \$1,200 for rental of the 12,000-square-foot center, plus \$400 for set-up and tear-down, \$300 for janitorial and \$150 for kitchen use for a total of \$2,050. That compares to a total of \$1,850 for the 8,000-square-foot Hermiston Conference Center and \$1,100 for the 13,216-square-foot Pendleton Convention Center.

Renting a meeting room would cost \$150 for one room or \$250 for two, and \$100 for the smaller board room.

Cannell said she planned to cut rates in half for nonprofits.

On Friday the board also approved a \$2,000 grant to the Hermiston Horse Sale Extravaganza out of its marketing fund. Owner Randy Cole requested the

money to pay for building pens on the fairgrounds so that he could afford to continue having the sale in Hermiston. He said the event brings between 2,000 and 3,000 people to town three times a year.

"It's the biggest sale in the Northwest and people associate it with Hermiston," he said.

The board got an update from fundraising committee chair Dennis Barnett, who said they had raised \$509,000 as of Wednesday.

"We have a \$2 million goal and we still think that's reachable," he said. "Nothing's changed our mind about that."

The largest donation was from an individual who donated \$100,000 in stock, he said.

Barnett said the committee had been busy traveling to cities outside of Hermiston that were less aware of the project's details and its potential to benefit the region. He said many people said the information had been "eye-opening" for them and donations were coming in from around Umatilla County and even outside the county.

To help with future fundraising for the Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo, which will be held at EOTEC upon its completion, the board passed a resolution supporting a bill sponsored by Rep. Greg Smith (R-Heppner) that would allow Friends of the Fair and Rodeo, Inc. to enter into an agreement with the Oregon State Lottery Commission to administer a raffle for its behalf.

Dorran said if the bill passed in its proposed form people would be able to go into any lottery location in the state and fill out a form guessing the day and time the temperature would next hit 100 degrees in Hermiston. The money raised would go to the Friends of the Fair and Rodeo.

The bill specifically names the nonprofit instead of leaving it open to any nonprofit in the state to enter into an agreement with the state lottery, which made it "somewhat of a long shot," Dorran said.

"It's a very unique approach and if it does get implemented there will be a lot of eyes on it," he said.

The EOTEC board will hold a special meeting next Friday, Feb. 5, at 7 a.m. at the Stafford Hansell Government Center in Hermiston to discuss approval of bid packages, including lighting and paving, and discuss ongoing design work for the barns and rodeo arena.

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

PENDLETON

Plute recall would cost city \$6-7K

By **GEORGE PAVEN**
East Oregonian

An election to recall Pendleton City Councilor Al Plute would cost the city between \$6,000-\$7,000, according to Umatilla County Elections Manager Kim Lindell.

Lindell based her estimate on the city's gas tax election last November, which cost \$6,491, or 90 cents per voter. Since then, voter registration has increased by 188 people and will continue to rise with the new Oregon Motor Voter Act that went into effect Jan. 1, Lindell said.

The information was requested by Umatilla County Commissioner George

Murdock, Lindell said.

A petition to recall Plute was filed Jan. 26 by Pendleton resident Roesch Kishpaugh. In his petition, Kishpaugh accused Plute of failing to pay Pendleton Plumbing in a longstanding lawsuit. Plute says he has, in fact, settled the lawsuit after mediation.

Kishpaugh also criticized Plute for voting to institute a \$5 street utility fee after voters turned down the gas tax last November. Plute responded that five other councilors also voted to approve the utility fee, and Kishpaugh didn't voice opposition when it passed last December.

Pendleton City Recorder Andrea Denton said she approved the petition for circulation on Jan. 27. Kishpaugh now has until April 25 to gather 705 signatures — 15 percent of local voters from the last gubernatorial election.

A group calling themselves Pendleton Citizens United has filed with the Oregon Secretary of State in support of recalling Plute. The group's Facebook page so far has 10 members.

Plute described the petition as a "cheap shot" in a previous interview with the *East Oregonian*. On Friday, Plute said it would make more sense for his opponents

to run for one of five council seats up for election, as opposed to an additional election that would cost the city.

"I'm just hoping the people who are bringing this recall forward will use a little more common sense," Plute said.

If the petition gets enough signatures verified by the county, Plute will have five days to either resign or write a letter justifying why he should keep his seat.

Kishpaugh could not be reached for comment Friday.

Contact George Paven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

PENDLETON

Airport considered as disaster response center

East Oregonian

When the "big one" hits, Steve Chrisman wants the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport prepared to help.

On Tuesday, the Pendleton City Council will consider a recommendation by the airport director to pursue the designation of the airport as an official Disaster Emergency Response and Support Center.

In recent years, scientists have predicted that a massive earthquake along the Cascadia fault could happen at any time. The earthquake and ensuing tsunami would have a disastrous effect on dozens of communities west of the Cascade Mountains.

The state has already designated the Redmond Municipal Airport as its support center in such event, but Chrisman thinks the move would still behoove Pendleton.

"Redmond has a very robust airport, but in many ways it is an odd choice, not the least of which because it is difficult to reach by car or truck," he wrote in a report



EO file photo

The Eastern Oregon Regional Airport in Pendleton.

to the city council. "Staff sees a need for the state to at least have a secondary option, in case Redmond is damaged or overwhelmed."

Chrisman goes on to list almost two dozen reasons Pendleton would make a good place for a support center, including plenty of venues and wheat fields where organizers can set up

staging areas, the presence of the Life Flight Network at the airport, its central location to major metro areas and its "incredibly stable geology."

Chrisman also sees a potential economic development opportunity.

"(B)y making our interest known, we may put ourselves in line for state and

federal funds for conducting trainings, mock exercises and possibly storage of equipment and supplies," he wrote. "All of those would have direct benefits to dining and lodging and support services."

The meeting will be at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Avenue, Tuesday at 7 p.m.

PENDLETON

Two file for soon-to-be vacant council seat

East Oregonian

With the Pendleton City Council on the verge of accepting applications to fill former councilor Jane Hill's seat for the remainder of the year, two people have already filed to run for the at-large seat for the next four years.

Rick Rohde and Jim Swearingen submitted their applications for the nonpartisan position this week, which will go to voters on the May 17 ballot.

Rohde is a frequent attendee of council meetings and has been publicly critical

of city spending numerous times.

A former reserve in the U.S. Air Force and a retired employee of the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Rohde was convicted of drunk driving in 2011, an event he has said helped change his outlook on life and eventually led to him being named the 2015 Round-Up Volunteer of the Year.

Swearingen is the co-owner of J & B Automotive, an auto repair shop in Pendleton, and a former member of the Pendleton Round-Up Board of Directors.

While each man is running for a term that will start in 2017, they'll need to apply for the seat if they want to fill the rest of Hill's term, which is being declared vacant at a city council meeting Tuesday.

City Recorder Andrea Denton said the council has typically approached vacancies by having candidates send letters of interest to Mayor Phillip Houk.

The candidates will be interviewed by the council either before or during a meeting before one is selected.

Before the council declares Hill's former seat vacant, Houk will present Hill with a plaque for her service.

The meeting will be at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Avenue, Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Two arrested for killing, butchering cow in Stanfield

STANFIELD — Two Umatilla County men were arrested Friday for killing and butchering a cow, according to Oregon State Police.

Anthony Haigh, 21, of Stanfield, and TJ Kestler, 20, of Hermiston, were both charged with theft, criminal mischief, criminal trespass with a firearm, animal abuse and interfering with agricultural operations. In addition, Haigh, who was already in the Umatilla County Jail on unrelated charges, was charged as a felon in possession of a firearm.

A third adult male, not yet named, was not taken into custody but may be charged with theft and criminal trespassing, depending on the district attorney's office.

The crime took place sometime during the night of Jan. 14 off Feedville Road in Stanfield, where a cow was found killed and partially butchered the next morning.

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