

PENDLETON

Dog park idea gets new leash on life

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The dog days of the Pendleton dog park are over.

Long mired in negotiations between the city and the Round-Up Association, the city has moved on to other riverside properties for its planned dog park.

Parks and Recreation Director Donnie Cook has pursued a dog park along the Umatilla River for well over a year, the idea being that dog owners didn't have a public space where they could let their dogs play unleashed.

The park would be established on the cheap — some picnic tables, receptacles for dog waste and some signs with the park rules. The area wouldn't be gated or lit and volunteers would be responsible for keeping the park tidy.

The proposed park hinged on an agreement with the Round-Up, which owns land on the southern bank of the river surrounding the Bedford Bridge where Cook wanted to locate the park.

Cook proposed the Round-Up allow free use of the property as long as the city closed it during Round-Up week and vacated it within 90 days if the association decides to use it for a different purpose.

Randy Thomas, the Round-Up's director of communication, said the board of directors was receptive to the idea.

"The Pendleton Round-Up was very excited about the use of our property for the community," he said.

The Round-Up came back with a counterproposal — the city could use the riverbank if they addressed security



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The City of Pendleton is proposing two new sites for dog parks including this area on the northwest side of 10th Street along the Umatilla River.

and clean-up concerns and paid property taxes on the park.

Cook said he consulted City Attorney Nancy Kerns, who said the city couldn't legally pay property taxes.

City officials started looking elsewhere for other sites for the dog park and found two other areas that fit the bill.

While the Round-Up owns land on the south bank, the city owns a strip of land along the river on the north side from the Bedford Bridge to the 10th Street Bridge.

The 200,000-square-foot property is actually bigger than the Round-Up's land and is eligible for Cook's low budget concept.

Officials also found another city-owned property on the southern bank of

the river toward the eastern end of the Pendleton River Parkway near the Little League fields.

Cook said the land would need more work to be park-ready as opposed to the northern riverbank site. His rough estimate of the its size was 150,000 square feet.

Cook said that if the council gives his thumbs up to the dog parks, he'll order the park signs, the only equipment he doesn't already have in stock.

Once the signs are delivered, Cook estimated he could have the park on the northern riverbank opened in a month.

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MISSION

Wildhorse allows alcohol on gaming floor

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

Drinking while gambling was once forbidden on the Wildhorse Casino gaming floor.

As of Feb. 2, however, gamblers can purchase alcoholic beverages from one of the casino's bars and transport their drinks to the gaming floor. In coming months, wait staff will roam taking drink orders.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, which owns the casino, has warmed slowly to the idea of alcohol on the gaming floor, or elsewhere in the casino for that matter. Wildhorse was the lone holdout in Oregon.

"We were the last tribal casino not to allow alcohol — the second-to-last in the Northwest," said Casino Manager Al Tovey, "but it's the norm now as far as staying competitive."

Back in 2005, when the tribes again considered bringing alcohol to Wildhorse restaurants, opinion was severely split. On one hand,

alcohol and drug issues had generated heartache and health issues for decades. On the other, the sale of alcohol would boost revenues and some of that money would help fund the tribe's drug-and-alcohol program.

In 2006, the CTUIR Board of Trustees formally changed the liquor code to allow sale of alcohol at Wildhorse restaurants. Last year, the BOT expanded the code to encompass most of the rest of the Wildhorse Resort & Casino, including the gaming floor. On the eve of implementation, the notion of serving alcohol continued to rattle some and cause debate. At the Jan. 11 BOT meeting, Vice Chair Jeremy Wolf and Treasurer Rosenda Shippentower voted against carrying out the plan, while five other members (Alan Crawford, Armand Minthorn, Justin Quaempts, Aaron Ashley and Woodrow Star) approved.

Tovey said he understands the misgivings of Wolf and Shippentower.

"What they were saying was from their hearts," he

said. "I have no problem with it."

He simply sees this as a necessary next step that will allow Wildhorse to increase revenue and compete with other casinos for customers. The move is expected to increase net profit by \$307,000. The tribes would get a percentage of the gross, which could total more than \$90,000, estimated Wildhorse CEO Gary George at the BOT meeting.

Tovey expects the change will cut down on covert drinking in the resort's restrooms and parking lot.

"We want people to have a good time, but not too good a time," Tovey said. "We don't want them enjoying themselves to the point where it's dangerous to themselves or others. If we see signs of visible intoxication, we won't serve them."

To that end, 466 casino employees recently attended a several-hour Oregon Liquor Control Commission training about how to identify people who have had too much to drink and learn how to cut them off with the least

friction possible. Tovey said employees who identify intoxicated gamblers will strive to make sure they stay safe by convincing them to take a taxi or shuttle, eat some food or stay at the hotel.

"We're not going to let them drive," Tovey said. "We'll find every avenue to help them find their way home."

People may purchase alcoholic beverages and bring them to the gaming floor between the hours of 10 p.m. and 1 a.m. on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. On Friday and Saturday, gamblers will have until 2 a.m. The alcohol will be served in special cups that indicates the beverage contains alcohol. Patrons may purchase up to two drinks at a time.

The age limit on the gaming floor will remain 21 years old. Those 18 and older may use some poker and bingo machines located outside in other areas of the resort. Alcohol will be prohibited at the Cineplex, the hotel lobby and other areas deemed to be "family friendly."

PENDLETON

Bartender files for Ward 3 council seat

East Oregonian

Cody Cimmiyotti filed for the Ward 3 seat on the Pendleton City Council on Friday, setting up another competitive race in the municipal elections.

Cimmiyotti's candidate filing lists his occupation as a "server/bartender as well as a customer service agent."

Retiree Don Bennett has also filed for the Ward 3 seat, which represents McKay Creek, Southgate and Tutuilla Road.

Councilor Tom Young, who has held the seat for one term, declined to run for re-election.

The four-way race for the at-large seat is currently the only other competitive race in the election.

The candidates for the mayor and Ward 1 seats were running unopposed

City council races

- MAYOR**
John Turner
- WARD 1** (Downtown, South Hill, Riverside)
Becky Marks (Incumbent)
- WARD 2** (North Hill, Westgate, Airport)
None
- WARD 3** (McKay Creek, Southgate, Tutuilla Rd.)
Don Bennett
Cody Cimmiyotti
- AT-LARGE**
Paul Chalmers
Paul Rabitaille
Rick Rohde
Jim Swearingen

as of Friday, and no one has filed for the Ward 2 race.

Candidates have until March 8 to file for the May 17 election.

BRIEFLY

Hermiston police, FBI warn of scams

HERMISTON — A pair of phone scams were reported by law enforcement agencies this week, and both are asking Oregonians to be alert.

In the first, the Hermiston Police Department reports that Umatilla Electric Cooperative customers are being contacted and asked for payment to prevent services from being disconnected. The automated caller leaves a number to call back where a "professional and courteous" attendant asks for personal payment information.

The FBI warns of a con artists calling a person claiming he or she faces arrest unless they hand over money for a parking ticket. The scammer also "spoofed" the originating telephone number that appears on caller ID, meaning it appears as if the call is from one of the FBI's Oregon offices.

Both agencies listed ways to avoid falling for such scams and threats:

- Never give out personal information to someone you did not initiate contact with, or send money;
- Before signing up for a contest or e-mail distribution list, make sure the business has a policy not to share your information or sell it to a third party;
- And be leery of anyone you did not initiate contact with who asks for payment using a third party, such as MoneyGram or GreenDot prepaid cards.

Warm Springs reservation to hold first UAS test flight

The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon announced Thursday that its unmanned aerial systems range would hold its first test flight Feb. 19.

The tribally owned Eagle Tech Systems will fly the Aeromapper drone at the Metolius Bench UAS Operational Site at 1:30 p.m. Warm Springs was one of three test sites approved by the Federal Aviation Administration in late 2013, the others being Pendleton and Tillamook.

The Pendleton UAS Range launched its first test flight September 2014 and recently signed its first customer, the U.S. Department of Energy-backed

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory

In a press release, Aurolyn Stwyer, Warm Springs' business development and marketing manager, explained why the Central Oregon reservation makes for an ideal test range.

"As a sovereign nation,

we offer ease of services at our test ranges," she wrote. "For example, we have the ability to have controlled burns without having to get certifications or approvals with any outside entity. We are focused on becoming a Center of Excellence for wildland fire management."

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