

PENDLETON

Umatilla Co. OKs anti-tobacco job

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Umatilla County will hire an employee to help keep minors away from tobacco.

Umatilla County Public Health won a \$133,000 state grant to fund a tobacco prevention coordinator. The grant expires June 30, 2017. The county board of commissioners on Wednesday voted 3-0 to approve the job.

George Murdock, chairman of the board, said the coordinator would work with merchants to make tobacco less appealing to young people.

The statewide cigarette smoking rate for 11th graders is 9.8 percent, according to Oregon Public Health, but Umatilla County has a rate of 17.8 percent. Statewide data also shows 16.8 percent of those students get their

smokes from stores and gas stations.

More than 80 percent, however, use friends and family as their source.

The county board also tweaked the boundaries of the Athena-Weston and Milton-Freewater school districts. The change covers about 90 acres on the farm of Preston Winn of Weston.

Winn, who turned 60 a week ago, told the board his ancestors established the farm near Weston in 1875, and for the last 20 years his family lived in a house on the farm. But he also renovated the old house he grew up in about a quarter of a mile away, and a month ago moved there.

That house now is in the Milton-Freewater School District. Winn said he would like to keep living in the Athena-Weston School

District and continue his 20-plus years of service on the district's board of directors.

County tax assessor Paul Chalmers told commissioners the change likely is to have minimal affect on the tax revenue from either district because the state would back-fill any general fund money Milton-Freewater schools would lose. The county board approved the change 3-0.

The board also held a public hearing and first reading for the plans to move the human services division from the community justice department to public health. Human services handles addiction treatment, veteran affairs and developmental disabilities. Commissioner George Murdock said public health is the division's rightful home.

The board, though, held off on approving a deputy director position to oversee human services. Murdock and fellow commissioner Larry Givens said that should wait until the reorganization goes into effect July 1. The money is in the budget for the position, which would pay \$68,000 a year plus benefits.

And the board authorized the road department to buy a 2000 CPS belly dump trailer from Woodpecker Truck & Equipment for \$22,500. Belly dump — or semi bottom dump — trailers have a container that dumps material from the belly of the trailer. Road department director Tom Fellows said this would replace the county's much older trailer.

"I appreciate the explanation," Murdock quipped. "I thought we were starting an exercise program."

BRIEFLY

Three prosecuted for Medicaid fraud

PENDLETON — A trio of Milton-Freewater residents face multiple counts of theft and fraud.

Court records show the Umatilla County grand jury in February indicted Jesse Patrick Jackson, 29, Chelsey Sumerlin Breeding, 31, and Frederick L. Breeding, 71, for running a Medicaid scam for several thousand dollars.

Frederick Breeding is disabled, but the state alleges Jackson and Chelsey Breeding were committing home care worker fraud from April 2012 through 2015 so they all could receive greater benefits than needed. The Oregon Department of Justice plans to charge each as follows:

- Jackson with eight counts of making a false claim for health care payment, four counts of first-degree theft and four counts of first-degree aggravated theft by deception;
- Chelsey Sumerlin Breeding with 13 counts of making a false claim for health care payment, five counts of first-degree theft and six counts of first-degree aggravated theft by deception;
- And Frederick Breeding with four counts of making a false claim for health care payment and two each for first-degree theft and first-degree aggravated theft by deception.

Their arraignments are Tuesday morning in circuit court in Pendleton.

Grants increase public safety in Hermiston

HERMISTON — The Hermiston Police Department received almost \$29,000 in two grants to benefit public safety.

Hermiston Chief Jason Edmiston in a written statement reported a grant of \$26,985 from the Oregon Department of Transportation will cover overtime costs for officers

to enforce the rules of the road during upcoming construction along the Highway 395 corridor.

"We would encourage our citizenry to slow down and avoid distractions during the construction," he added.

And the department will buy three automated external defibrillators for patrol cars thanks to an \$1,800 grant from the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation.

Edmiston stated the foundation has provided opportunities to numerous organizations and groups in the Hermiston area, and the three defibrillators will be a boon to patrol officers.

Chamber to hold forum for council candidates

PENDLETON — Candidates for Pendleton City Council will make their case to the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce and the public at a forum April 20.

All 14 candidates have been invited to the Pendleton Masonic Lodge at 1350 N.W. Carden Ave. to participate in the forum from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"The Chamber believes it is important to offer our members and the community at large a chance to meet the candidates. It is wonderful to see such a large number of people willing to step into a leadership role," chamber Executive Director Gail Nelson said in a statement.

The forum will take place during the chamber's regularly scheduled luncheon, tickets for which cost members and employees of member businesses \$13. Non-members and members who pay after April 15 will be charged \$16.

Seating will be available for those who do not want lunch, but all attendees must RSVP.

To make a reservation, call the chamber at 541-276-7411.

HEPPNER

Bartholomew Building dedicated

Project completed in November

By GEORGE PAVLEN
East Oregonian

When a major flash flood ripped through the heart of downtown Heppner in 1903, killing 247 people, the devastation pushed Alba G. Bartholomew to his breaking point.

As county judge, it was Bartholomew's job to settle the estates of victims whose loved ones were swept away in the raging waters. Historical records indicate Bartholomew worked himself to death at the age of 58, with his obituary reading that he "collapsed under the strain of his labors attending to public and private affairs."

On Friday, Morrow County officials dedicated the new government administration building that bears Bartholomew's name. The ceremony included several members of the judge's extended family, such as great-great-grandson Gus Wahner, who was invited to



Staff photo by George Plaven

Gus Wahner, the great-great-grandson of Alba Bartholomew, speaks during the dedication ceremony for the Bartholomew Building on Friday as Morrow County Judge Terry Tallman looks on.

speak. "It's a privilege to have such a beautiful building dedicated to my great-great-grandfather," said Wahner, who lives in Stanfield.

The Bartholomew Building opened in November, located next to the Morrow County Courthouse. It is now home to the county administrative offices, public health, juvenile services, special transportation and accounting.

The \$4.2 million project

broke ground in 2014, and was paid for by revenue collected by the county from investment partnerships signed with wind farm developers.

Commissioners had decided to use its share of wind energy dollars to improve infrastructure across the county, including facilities and roads.

Judge Terry Tallman led a commemoration of Bartholomew, praising his resolve in the aftermath

of Oregon's worst natural disaster. Bartholomew was responsible for 94 estate proceedings before he died. His final act was to appoint a new guardian for five children in lone.

"He was a guy who was always thinking about others, which is the kind of public servant you'd want," Tallman said.

With the Bartholomew Building now complete, county administrator Jerry Sorte said they are turning their attention to potential building upgrades — or a brand new facility — on the north side of the county. Those conversations are still ongoing.

"We are now getting to the point where we are starting to crunch some numbers," Sorte said. "We'll be continuing that, presumably, for the next several months."

Training focuses on nonprofit board officers

PENDLETON — A special training workshop for nonprofit board members is planned in Pendleton.

The session will present information that will be helpful to new members as well as veteran officers who would like to brush up on their skills and network with others.

Offered by Center for

Nonprofit Stewardship, the training is Saturday, April 9 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate. An early registration discount is offered to those who sign up by Friday. The cost is \$75, or \$60 for graduates of the Ford Institute Leadership. The fee increases by \$15 after March 25.

Presentations are made by the Oregon Department of Justice along with a leading nonprofit certified public accountant, nonprofit consultant and board leadership specialist.

For more information or to register, contact thecenter@nonprofitsteward.org, 541-929-9320 or visit www.nonprofitsteward.org.

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I feel so blessed and honored that I had the opportunity to work with you this week. What helped me the most at the retreat: the ability to define my purpose in life, learning to stay centered and drop my attachments.

Mark van 't Loo, Market Director, YUM! Brands, KFC

with Jim Murphy

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