

# Fun for the whole family

Photo by E.J. Harris



Lily Madden, 7, and Gisele Short, 8, dress up a dog in an eye patch and necklaces during a pirate themed Children's Night at the Museum recently at the Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon in Pendleton.

Everywhere a kid turns inside the Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon, a new adventure awaits.

From Lewis & Clark's riverboat to the full-size Tommy the Train, the pizza kitchen to the firehouse, children can explore a hands-on version of worlds both real and fantastical.

The museum opened in Pendleton in 1996, and for the past 20 years its mission has been for kids and families to learn through play.

Executive Director Heidi Anderson says each exhibit is designed to let kids use their imaginations, which helps them improve their social skills and critical thinking.

Anderson pointed to studies that show children develop a better command of language and abstract thinking by pretending. She said the museum is a place for kids and families to learn together.

"We encourage you to play with your kiddo, explore with your kiddo and learn as a family," Anderson said. "Children need to not only learn at school and at home, but also out in the community."

At a time when children's museums across the region are struggling — centers in Pasco and Ellensburg, Washington, have both closed within the last five years — Anderson said it's the Pendleton community that has kept the Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon going strong for nearly two decades.

Between 50 and 100 volunteers help the nonprofit museum put on events and fundraisers throughout the year.

The museum draws around 14,000 visitors per year. Most come from Umatilla County, but Anderson said she's been surprised by how many families drop by from places like La Grande, the Tri-Cities and even travelers who stop in on their way to Portland and Boise.

Daily admission to the museum is \$4 per person, or \$30 for a three-month seasonal membership and \$90 for a 12-month membership. The Children's Museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and is located at 400 S. Main St. in Pendleton.

## Also in Pendleton

Pioneer Park on the North Hill is a family favorite. The playground was rebuilt after a 2012 fire and it includes a new picnic shelter. It's one of 21 parks in the city that cover 190 acres.

The Pendleton Aquatic Center also is a popular hangout when the mercury rises, complete with water slides, a toddler area and a snack shack.

## Hermiston

The Hermiston Butte is not only the city's most recognizable natural landmark, it's a hub of family-friendly entertainment options.

FunLand Park, a wooden castle and play structure built by the community, is an excellent place for a picnic or just a couple hours of romping. There are tables inside the park and grass surrounding it, including several soccer fields.

When the weather gets hot, the spray park is right next to FunLand and the Hermiston Aquatic Center is a short walk away. Both are operated by the city. The Snow King snow cone stand is also open for business when the temperatures rise.

And of course there's the Butte itself, with a walking trail that circles to the top. A good spot for a family selfie.

## Wallowa Lake

Looking for a weekend getaway with kids in tow? Look no further than Wallowa

### Aug. 3-6 / Union County Fair

La Grande

[www.union-county.org/fair](http://www.union-county.org/fair)

541-963-1011

### Aug. 6-13 / Wallowa County Fair

Enterprise

[www.co.wallowa.or.us](http://www.co.wallowa.or.us)

541-426-4097

### Aug. 8-13 / Baker County Fair

Baker City

[www.bakercounty.org/fair](http://www.bakercounty.org/fair)

541-523-7881

### Aug. 9-13 / Umatilla County Fair

Hermiston

[www.umatillacounty.net/fair](http://www.umatillacounty.net/fair)

541-567-6121

### Aug. 17-20 / Morrow County Fair

Heppner

[www.morrowcountyoregon.com/county-fair](http://www.morrowcountyoregon.com/county-fair)

541-676-9474

### Sept. 1-4 / Gilliam County Fair

Condon

[www.co.gilliam.or.us/fairgrounds](http://www.co.gilliam.or.us/fairgrounds)

541-384-4139

Lake, a gem tucked away in northeastern Oregon.

Rentals from single rooms to large family dwellings are available on the south side of the lake, and in the summer months the variety of activities include miniature golf, go-karts and paddle boats on the lake.

The fun continues in the nearby town of Joseph with a sweet mix of candy stores, gift shops and art galleries.