

UMATILLA

TRCI inmates restore bicycles for charity

By JENNIFER COLTON
East Oregonian

In a small room off a concrete courtyard, two men break down bicycles to the last ball bearing.

Salvaged from dumpsters and garage sales, the bikes are cleaned and evaluated by the patient hands of Eric Jimenez and Hunter Nelms. If the duo can restore the bikes, they do. If they cannot, they turn them into parts, carefully cataloged and stored on shelves until needed.

A bicycle that had been hit by a car had a frame bent too badly to restore, but the seat, the handlebars, and the wheels were in perfect condition. Both bicycles completed in the session earlier this month used parts from five others.

"We will save everything we can," Nelms said. "We will save the individual ball bearings because we know eventually we will have to put one in."

With new paint and new life, the restored bikes are given to needy families or are raffled to raise money for nonprofit groups.

Launched in October, "Cycles of Hope" is a bicycle restoration program that provides both community service and inmate rehabilitation within the minimum



Eric Jimenez, left, and Hunter Nelms take apart a donated bicycle at Two Rivers Correctional Institution. The two inmates are the first employees of "Cycles of Hope."

security unit at Two Rivers Correctional Institute.

The Umatilla prison offers multiple rehabilitation programs that teach inmates career skills and responsibility. The programs, which inmates must apply for and be assigned to, give them avenues for focus and expression. Cycles of Hope is the most recent.

"We have one inmate who has had nothing but trouble inside, but he's a phenomenal bike mechanic. He hasn't had

problems since," TRCI Sgt. Kevin Hodges said. "It's a complete turnaround."

Currently, Jimenez and Nelms are the only two inmates assigned to Cycles of Hope, but 14 inmates graduated a training course from Scott's Cycle and Sports in Hermiston earlier this month.

Jimenez, 30, is serving time for robbery and burglary; Nelms, 36, is in for first-degree attempted robbery. Both have a release date of 2019; both have chil-

dren, and both say they have a desire to turn their lives around.

"The programs help us to be reintegrated, to be responsible. This gives us a job, something to look forward to so it's not just Groundhog Day all over again," Jimenez said. "This is our real job. It's accountability, and it feels good to have that responsibility."

Jimenez and Nelms work two three-hour shifts a day for Cycles of Hope. They

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evaluate new donations, clean and deconstruct the pieces. They remake seats and rerun cables.

"We do everything from a tune-up to a full reconstruction," Nelms said. "There's nothing we can't do."

Both Jimenez and Nelms had worked with bicycles before incarceration, but in the corrections setting, small things, like using a staple gun or a wrench, require extra authorization and paperwork. Despite the handicaps, the duo continue working, making do with what they have and salvaging whatever they can.

The biggest expense for the program is buying materials. Most of the bikes donated or purchased need new tires, tubes or brake cables.

"We take effort in doing a thorough job all the way down to the bearings and the spokes. It makes us feel good that we're doing something for the community. We

wouldn't feel right if we send out a bike that's garbage," Jimenez said.

Since it opened, Cycles for Hope has restored 87 bicycles, including 48 that went to underprivileged local families for Christmas.

Most of the bicycles come from donations, although some have been purchased. Anyone can donate bicycles or parts to the program by contacting Hodges at TRCI or participating in a donation drive, such as "Bikes for Beverages" on April 2 at Java Junkies in Umatilla.

Nelms, working on a crew at solid waste disposal, immediately noticed a bin of bicycles. He asked the supervisor, who talked to staff at the dump, and the bikes were delivered to the institution and became part of the program. Once restored, the bicycles go to schools or Agape House, orphanages or local public safety departments. Most bicycles are distributed with helmets from Good Shepherd Medical Center and the Healthy Communities Coalition.

"It's building momentum," Nelms said. "I love what I do."

Contact Jennifer Colton at jcolton@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534.

UMATILLA



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Don Gilbrech, Baylee Snow and Leonard Hamilton build a gazebo in Hash Park in Umatilla.

Hash Park gets new gazebo

East Oregonian

The family of former Umatilla mayor George Hash is honoring his contributions to the city with a new gazebo in his namesake Hash Park.

The large metal gazebo, which cost more than \$30,000, is being donated by Hash's son Dr. Daniel Hash, a dentist in Montana. A plaque embedded in the cement base reads "Dedicated to George and Alice Hash, 65 years of love and devotion."

Alice Hash died in 2010.

George Hash was Umatilla's mayor from 1991 to 2004 and was instrumental in bringing Two Rivers Correctional Institution to Umatilla. During World War II he parachuted into Normandy during the D-Day invasion

and later was captured by the Germans and was a prisoner of war. He moved to Umatilla in 1955 and taught industrial classes in Umatilla and Hermiston schools for 30 years.

The gazebo is scheduled to be done Monday. Leonard Hamilton of LRH, a fabrication shop in Spokane, was working on the project Thursday. He said after Daniel Hash hired him for another project, he handed Hamilton a painting of a gazebo and asked him to design and build it to last.

"It's here to stay," Hamilton said. "It will be here for quite a while."

He said the neighbors around the park have been very kind in bringing the contractors coffee and treats, and even invited them over for Easter dinner last week.

Myren retires as Morrow County undersheriff

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Steve Myren was Morrow County undersheriff for more than a decade. Friday at 5 p.m. marks the end of his last shift. He described the transition to retirement as "petrifying."

Myren graduated from high school in Silverton. And in his just shy of 36 years of working life, he has worn one kind of public safety uniform or another — from volunteer firefighter to dispatcher to deputy sheriff.

"Everything I have done has taught me something else, another skill," he said.

Myren was born and raised in the hamlet of Scotts Mills. His first law enforcement job was in Mount Angel, he said, and that led to a stint as a Morrow County sheriff's deputy. He left that in 1998 to work for the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program, where he wrote the medical and decontamination plans for the former stockpile of weapons at the Umatilla Chemical Depot.

Myren, though, still wanted to be a cop.

"I missed law enforcement so bad I took a pay cut to go back to it," he said.

He joined the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office in 2004 as a deputy. The next year, Ken Matlack became the new sheriff of Morrow County and pegged Myren as his second-in-command.

Myren developed a reputation as undersheriff as the officer anyone could call, which he said earned him some ribbing from cops for being a "pet deputy." Myren, though, said he took it as a "badge of honor to a certain extent."

Helping people is the core of the job, he said. And while police cannot give legal advice, they can help people understand the role of law enforcement and pass on information about who to call in certain situations.



Photo courtesy Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack

Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack (left), outgoing undersheriff Steve Myren (center) and new undersheriff John Bowles celebrate Myren's retirement.

That has gotten more difficult over the years, he said, as some people have grown to be more personally responsible while others have tended toward more finger pointing. Public safety takes a village, he said, but plenty of the villagers now want to call a cop at the first hint of a disagreement with someone.

"Where they used to sit down around the table and maybe didn't agree, they talked things out," Myren said. "That doesn't happen anymore. That hasn't happened in a number of years."

John Bowles is the new undersheriff.

Myren said he and his wife, Mim Myren, are looking forward to some traveling in their RV, but Boardman is their home, where he also operates a business of equipping police and other emergency vehicles with lights, radios and more, or removing those items from old vehicles.

He won \$5.5 million in the Oregon

Megabucks lottery in June 2015 and took the 25-year annuity, saying at the time it would help make a more comfortable retirement.

Myren also said he will volunteer as a firefighter and emergency medical technician and stay on with the sheriff's office as a special deputy, as well as continue serving as one of Morrow County's medical examiners.

"I don't want to go stir crazy," he said.

And he said he will still answer the call from the federal government as an operations section chief during critical incidents or big emergencies.

Retirement also could mean Myren has more time for an old hobby — shooting. He used to take part in competitions, he said, but the demands of work put that on hold. Now he can plan to attend an event and not worry about getting that call from work.

BRIEFLY

IMESD gets \$198,000 state grant for CTE program

The InterMountain Education Service District announced it received a \$198,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Education's Career and Technical Education Summer Program grant fund.

"The 18-month grant (spring 2016 through fall 2017) allows the IMESD to offer a CTE Technology Education Program, including a high school event next month and two programs this summer for high school and middle school students," an IMESD press release states.

The grant is designed to support summer programs that recruit students into high demand and high wage occupations.

The grant-funded spring event is the STEP Tech Expo, April 27 at the Pendleton Convention Center. Students will get a chance to learn about careers in technology, get introduced to regional technology businesses and

participate in hands-on activities.

The summer events will be a pair of technology camps, one for high schoolers and the other for middle school students. The IMESD will announce camp details later.

Additionally, the grant will also cover paid internship opportunities in the technology center.

UCo Health to honor Public Health Heroes

HERMISTON — A dinner and fundraiser will highlight innovative community health initiatives and recognize this year's Public Health Heroes — local people and organizations who support and promote public health.

Organized by UCo Health, the Public Health Awareness Dinner & Fundraiser is Wednesday at 6 p.m. (doors open at 5:30 p.m.) at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. The cost is \$40 per person,

\$75 for a couple or \$350 for a table of 10.

Last year's inaugural event raised more than \$6,000 to support CARE and Nurse Family Partnership. This year, the goal is to raise \$10,000 to be used toward improving access to healthy food.

For more information, contact Meghan DeBolt at 541-215-3620 or meghan.debolt@umatillacounty.net.

Arbor Day event provides free seedlings

PENDLETON — Mountain alder, western larch, mountain ash, serviceberry and mock orange seedlings will be available during an Arbor Day celebration sponsored by the Umatilla National Forest and Pendleton Parks & Recreation.

About 700 free tree and shrub seedlings will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. The event is Saturday, April 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Roy Raley

Park, 1205 S.W. Court Ave., Pendleton.

The event also features a planting demonstration by the Tree Commission and a pruning demonstration by Clive Kaiser, an OSU Extension Service horticulture professor.

For more information, call 541-276-8100.

Classes hit the dance floor

HERMISTON — A pair of dance classes will provide instruction for people who want to get out on the dance floor with confidence.

Just Swing It (Single Step Swing, 4 Step Swing, and East Coast Swing) offers techniques for a variety of tempos and musical styles including pop, country and hip-hop. The Basic Social Dance class covers the foxtrot, cha cha and waltz.

Presented through Hermiston Parks & Recreation, instructor April Dytnera offers the classes on Thursdays from April 7 through May 12 at The Arc building, 215 W. Orchard

Ave., Hermiston.

Just Swing It runs from 6:15-7:15 p.m. and Basic Social Dance is from 7:30-8:30 p.m.

The sessions are open to those 14 and older (participants 14-17 must have an adult present). The cost for each six-week course is \$30 for Hermiston residents or \$38 for non-residents.

For more information, visit www.hermistonrecreation.com.

To register, call 541-667-5018 or stop by the recreation office, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

Quality Time.

Each Saturday at 9:30 you can bring the family to PCA for a FREE art project. No sign ups, just show up.

Full class schedule at pendletonarts.org

Pendleton Center for the Arts • 214 North Main St.