

Foundation awards more than \$260K to Morrow Co. schools

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

The Morrow Education Foundation has awarded more than \$260,000 to all Morrow County schools, which the districts say will be used to invest in classroom technology.

Ione Community Charter School received \$22,604, which Principal Henry Ramirez said will go toward replacing three touchscreen panels and adding 20 Chromebooks for incoming freshman. Anything left over will be used for the school's new science club field trip and early learning.

"We're very fortunate and grateful for this funding," Ramirez said.

Morrow County School District received the bulk of funding with \$242,395. Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said the goal is to have technology available for students at a one-on-one level. A little more than half the money will be made available as technology grants that individual teachers can apply for.

"We also want to get the teachers trained on using the technology, and when teachers put in for a grant there is a professional development requirement that goes with it. It's a win-win situation," Dirksen said.

Ed Rollins, board member with the education foundation, said the amount awarded to each district was determined on a per-student basis. In addition to technology, the Morrow County School District also received \$50,000 for Eastern Promise credits, covering 1,613



ABOVE: Rick Stokoe, left, Port of Morrow commissioner and Morrow Education Foundation board member, presents Morrow County School Board President Becky Kindle and Morrow County School District Superintendent Dirk Dirksen with a check for \$242,395.



LEFT: Morrow Education Foundation board members Marv Padberg, left and Ed Rollins, right, present Ione Community Charter School Principal Henry Ramirez, center, with a check for \$22,604.

Photos contributed by Lisa Mittelsdorf

credit hours. The remainder of the grant will be used for field trips, school resource officers, three community counselors, one nurse and other support specialists.

The Morrow Education Foundation was formed in 2012, and is a nonprofit

group independent from the school districts. Its board is made up of nine members from Boardman, Irrigon, Heppner and Ione, and includes the five Port of Morrow commissioners.

Gary Neal, the port's general manager, said

funds are mostly from the Columbia River Enterprise Zone payments specifically for improving education in Morrow County.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4547.

Pendleton Plute recall dies on the vine

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

of the recall campaign, calling out its backers.

Pendleton City Councilor Al Plute will leave the council, but by his own accord and not because of a recall election.

City Recorder Andrea Denton said the signature sheets needed to recall Plute were not submitted by the Monday deadline, meaning the recall campaign is officially over.

Larry Anderson, the treasurer of Pendleton Citizens United, the group that organized to recall Plute, said the group suspended its campaign when Plute announced he would resign in May.

"There's wasn't any sense to it (anymore)," Anderson said. "It would just make people mad."

The recall's failure to advance to the next stage of the process wasn't for lack of effort, according to Anderson. He said Pendleton Citizens United had collected around 800 signatures before suspending the campaign, more than the 705 needed to trigger a recall election.

Plute said the recall failed because it was without merit and thanked everyone who supported him and refused to sign the petition.

Plute said he wasn't departing for Eugene because of the recall campaign but because of his impending retirement and his wife's desire to live in a new city and escape the criticism that's been mounted against her husband in recent years. He has been unsparing in his assessment

The two-term city councilor said the recall campaign's silver lining is that it helped inspire people to run for city council seats. Twelve candidates are currently vying for five seats on the council.

"(Pendleton Citizens United) advertised the need for people to step up," he said.

Although the committee was organized to recall Plute, Anderson said Pendleton Citizens United plans to continue to monitor the council and city politics.

Anderson said if Plute reverses his decision to step down, his group will file another petition and use the information they gathered from the original petition to quickly collect the signatures they need to initiate a recall election.

The Facebook page for Pendleton Citizens United, which Anderson said has a core membership of 15 people and another 30 to 40 people sympathetic to its cause, recently featured endorsements for Ward 2 city council candidate Rex Morehouse and Ward 3 candidate Dale Primmer.

Ironically, Plute also supported Primmer, calling him an "excellent" candidate.

Plute plans to submit his resignation letter this week and will stay on through the budget process.

His last council meeting is scheduled for May 17.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

BRIEFLY

Crash on Highland Extension kills Hermiston man

HERMISTON — A Hermiston man was killed early Saturday morning after his vehicle struck a utility pole on East Highland Extension Road.

Cesar Alvarado, 20, was found deceased inside a 2010 Nissan Sentra at 2:08 a.m. on April 23 by Umatilla County Sheriff's Office Deputy Jason Post, who was responding to a report of a single-vehicle crash.

According to a news release by the sheriff's office, it appears Alvarado was traveling east on East Highland Extension near Canal Road when his vehicle crossed into the other lane for an unknown reason and began sliding sideways before hitting a power pole, fence and eventually a tree.

There was no indication at the scene that alcohol was involved.

Farmers reminded to follow burning regulations

PENDLETON — With fire season on the horizon, farmers are reminded to check in every day with the Umatilla County Smoke Management Committee before doing any agricultural burns.

A burn permit is required for all unincorporated parts of the county, except for lands under state, federal or tribal jurisdiction or those covered by a rural fire protection district. This includes burn barrels, yard debris and fence lines.

Farmers can check for burn days by calling 541-278-6397, or by visiting the county website at www.umatillacounty.net. The smoke management committee also has a Facebook page posting up-to-the-minute updates on things like red flag warnings or fire hazard weather that would restrict burning. Permit holders must log their permit number, location and acreage or amount burned when calling the burn line.

In addition, burning is not allowed on haze reduction days to protect air quality during community events. Haze reduction days for 2016 include: Umatilla County Fair, Aug. 9-13; Milton-Freewater Rocks, Aug. 19-21; Walla Walla County Fair, Aug. 31-Sept. 4; Caledonian Days, July 8-10; Memorial Day Weekend, May 28-30; Fourth of July; Labor Day Weekend, Sept. 3-5; and the Pendleton Round-Up, Sept. 10-17.

The county smoke management program was established to lessen the impacts of burning on air quality. For more information, call the Umatilla County Planning Department at 541-278-6252.

Umatilla Forest firewood permits available May 1

PENDLETON — Firewood permits for the Umatilla National Forest will go on sale Sunday, May 1 at participating local vendors and Monday, May 2 at Forest Service offices.

Vendors will sell permits in four-cord packs for \$20, with an additional \$2 vendor fee. The \$2 fee is not charged when buying permits directly from the Forest Service.

Firewood cutters must carry an ax, shovel, fire extinguisher with at least 8-ounce capacity, and have their chainsaw equipped with an approved spark arrester when cutting wood. As the weather becomes hotter and drier, they should also check to make sure firewood cutting is allowed on certain days. Public use restrictions are updated on the Forest Service website or by calling 1-877-958-9663.

Mountain travel can be treacherous, so woodcutters should take care to avoid getting stuck or causing damage to the land. Many roads are still inaccessible due to snow. Avoid driving off roads onto unstable ground, and be prepared — pack additional food, water, clothing and other emergency supplies.

Firewood season ends Nov. 30. Permits are available at Southgate Mini-Mart in Pendleton and Smitty's Ace Hardware in Hermiston. For a complete list, check www.eastoregonian.com.

Library friends seek books

IRRIGON — The Friends of Irrigon Library are planning a book sale fundraiser May 13-14 and are seeking donations of good used books for the sale. Donations may be dropped off at the Irrigon Public Library, 490 N.E. Main Ave., or the Boardman Public Library, 200 S. Main St., by May 11.

Friends of Irrigon Library also are welcoming new members. The group will meet Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Irrigon Library for its regular monthly meeting.

For more information, call 541-922-0138.

Planning meeting set for Boardman 4th of July

BOARDMAN — Planning has begun for Boardman's July 4th celebration. Anyone interested in helping plan the event is invited to a meeting Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. at Macario's Restaurant, 302 Olson Road, Boardman.

If you want to help, but can't attend the meeting, call the Boardman Chamber of Commerce at 541-481-3014 and your name will be added to the planning committee roster for updates on upcoming meetings.

More questions than answers when it comes to modern privacy

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Your government is watching you and what you do, and so is your internet service provider and any number of businesses with security cameras and tracking software.

Writer and attorney Wendy Willis said the notion of Big Brother and corporate surveillance often prompts people to say they do not care because they have nothing to hide, when what they really mean is they feel helpless to do anything about it.

Willis is leading the Oregon Humanities Conversation Project "A World without Secrets: Privacy and Expectations in the United States." She brought the discussion last week to Pendleton as part of the annual Arts and Culture Festival at Blue Mountain Community College. Students from Blue Mountain and local schools filled plenty of seats in the Bob Clapp Theatre to dig into conflicting views of privacy in the digital age.

Willis told the audience she thinks we are all learning together what privacy looks like now.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg in 2010 asserted privacy was no longer a social norm, she

said, but the U.S. Supreme Court in 2015 delivered a unanimous decision that police need a warrant to search your cellphone because of how much of our private lives we keep in those devices. That case was striking, Willis said, because liberals and conservatives on the court agreed, and it was a new way of looking at digital privacy.

Yet the U.S. Constitution does not express a right to privacy. Rather, Willis explained, the 1965 Supreme Court in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, a case about the legality of birth control, determined portions of several the Amendments combine to form a "penumbra of privacy."

But that did not stop the government from gathering information about U.S. citizens, as former CIA computer network security expert Edward Snowden revealed in 2013.

Willis pointed out Americans have a low tolerance for risk, which makes us more likely to sacrifice our privacy for safety. She asked participants if they are OK with surveillance because they have nothing to hide, or if they believe privacy is an important part of being autonomous, even if they do nothing wrong.

Hands went up for both

groups. Willis said she is firmly in the second.

She also asked the audience to consider what type of information should be protected as private and what are the limits of privacy. And she dismissed the notion security cameras keep us safe. Those cameras, she said, are to help prosecute offenders.

One woman said video footage helped Pendleton police catch Lukah Chang, who killed one woman in Pendleton and severely injured another. While true, they did nothing to stop either crime, Willis contended.

Another audience member argued your privacy ends when you do something illegal or unethical, which Willis said is the action that becomes a basis for a warrant. But police in the U.S., she said, have used cameras to watch protesters without a warrant.

One young man said if the government demands this level of transparency from its people, the government should be equally transparent.

Willis said that key point comes up at every one of these presentations she gives.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

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.

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