

BOARDMAN

FSA administrator visits Eastern Oregon

Dolcini appointed to lead agency in 2014

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
East Oregonian

For the first time since he was appointed administrator of the Farm Service Agency in 2014, Val Dolcini made his way Tuesday to Eastern Oregon to visit with local FSA employees and farmers.

The morning started with a tour of Oregon Hay Products in Boardman, where brothers Vernon and Gary Frederickson showed Dolcini their processing facility and discussed how hay makes it from the farm to export markets in Japan, China and the Middle East.

"It's important for me to get out in the countryside and visit with my colleagues," said Dolcini, who spent Monday in Walla Walla before dropping into Oregon. "I'm certainly always open to new information when I take tours like this."

The Farm Service Agency operates under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is primarily in charge of implementing farm conservation and regulation laws. Dolcini was chosen to head up the FSA after serving as state executive director of California for more than a decade.

By visiting face-to-face with growers, Dolcini said he can learn how to make programs more responsive to local needs at the policy level.

"There are always program issues to shine a light on," he said.

Since Congress passed the 2014 Farm Bill, Dolcini said the FSA has renewed its commitment to farm credit programs, lending \$5.5 billion nationwide in fiscal year



Staff photo by George Plaven
Val Dolcini, administrator of the USDA Farm Service Agency, looks at hay samples with Gary Frederickson of Oregon Hay Products Tuesday in Boardman.

2015. The agency has also taken on new commodities initiatives, such as the Dairy Margin Protection Program, Microloans Program and expanding the Conservation Reserve Program to include working landscapes.

More than 800,000 acres were enrolled in CRP earlier this year, which helps farmers offset the cost of restoring their land and cutting down on soil erosion. Over the past 30 years, Dolcini said the program has prevented 600 million dump trucks of soil being lost to erosion and sequestered enough carbon to equal removing 9 million cars off the road. That has been particularly valuable to combating climate change, which has required an all-hands-on-deck approach,

he said. "I think we've been able to have a positive impact," Dolcini said.

Darcy Sexson, executive director of the Umatilla County FSA office, said it's the first time an agency administrator has visited the area since 1977. She said the number and amount of farm loans issued by her office have rocketed to all-time highs, and the more employees can learn about new policies from administration, the better.

"Our office really wants to be producer-friendly, and we want to make sure producers are aware and taking advantage of as many programs as possible," Sexson said.

During Tuesday's tour of Oregon Hay Products, Gary Frederickson said the

business has seen challenges from the loss of container shipping business at Portland's Terminal 6, which has given rise to new competition. Dolcini said the USDA is working to make sure agricultural exporters have efficient access to their usual markets.

"There's nowhere else that grows this kind of quality that we can (grow), all along the West Coast," Frederickson said. "It comes down to price and delivery."

Dolcini plans to make additional stops in Harney and Malheur counties before continuing his trip into Idaho on Wednesday.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

HERMISTON

Dozen report debit card fraud

By **JENNIFER COLTON**
East Oregonian

About a dozen local residents reported debit card fraud this week in Hermiston, according to Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston.

In many cases, a Hermiston resident's card number has been used to withdraw money from an ATM in Portland, Clackamas or Lake Oswego. Edmiston said HPD has not seen a case in which a physical card has been stolen.

The recent fraud cases are not limited to one financial institution. Fraud has been reported by users of at least four different banks or credit unions.

"We are seeing some fraud in the Hermiston area. It's not limited to Banner Bank," said Kelly McPhee, communications manager for Banner Bank. "Because it's so early, there's a lot of details we don't have. We know it did not originate from the bank, but we are working with local law enforcement. We are doing everything we can on our end, behind the scenes."

McPhee recommends

fraud victims — or any customers concerned they might have been a victim of fraud — contact the bank as soon as they find a fraudulent charge.

"Immediately pick up the phone and call us. Notify us. We can get into the account and take a look at it, we can go through the most recent transactions and start that conversation. We'll determine if we need to freeze that debit card number and issue you a new card," McPhee said.

Most banks provide provisional credit while the fraud is investigated.

Edmiston also recommends contacting his office if you notice suspicious activity on a card.

"Where the majority of the criminal activity (actual transaction of money) is outside our service area, our department is taking information reports," Edmiston said, adding people can minimize their risks by keeping personal information secure and reporting suspicious activity as soon as possible. "People just need to be vigilant of their account information and report immediately to their bank if something is amiss."

PENDLETON



Contributed photo
People enjoy a past Adult Prom, a fundraiser for the Friends of the Pendleton Public Library. This year's event is Saturday at the Pendleton Recreation Center.

The prom strikes back with library fundraiser

East Oregonian

Continuing the "Star Wars" theme, the Pendleton Friends of the Library is hosting an adult prom.

The Prom Strikes Back is Saturday from 7-10 p.m. at the Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave. The tickets are \$20 per person.

People can hit the dance floor and listen to DJ music presented by Desert Sounds. In addition, there will be a costume contest, a silent auction and an intergalactic photo booth with an official photographer.

Wine and beer will be

available from The Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub. Also, the snacks and treats will feature a "Star Wars" theme.

In its third year, the adult prom fundraiser is organized by Jennifer Costley, youth services librarian/interim assistant director, and Maura O'Daniel, the library's circulation supervisor.

To buy tickets in advance, visit www.pendletonlibrary.weebly.com or stop by the library at 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. For more information, contact pendletonfriendsofthelibrary@gmail.com or 541-966-0380.

BRIEFLY

District agrees to raise pay for classified employees

HERMISTON —

Classified employees in the Hermiston School District will receive raises in each of the next two years.

The classified employees approved the agreement May 6, and the school board accepted it May 9 after meeting in a closed-door, executive session.

The agreement covers the 2016-8 biennium and includes a modified salary increase for the 2016-7 school year and a 4 percent cost-of-living increase in the 2017-8 school year. The insurance cap will be increased by \$25 each year.

The Hermiston School Board of Education unanimously approved the agreement with the Oregon School Employees Association Chapter 10, the local union for the district's classified employees. Classified employees are not certified teachers or administrators and include classroom assistants, custodians and maintenance workers.

In other business, the board:

- Received pins in recognition for years of service. Board members Karen Sherman (35 years), Dave Smith (5 years) and Josh Goller (1 year) each received pins. The pins are awarded for every five years of service as well as for the first full year of service to the Hermiston School District as an employee or board member.
- Accepted the resignation

of five district employees, including Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith. His last day with the district will be June 30, before leaving to take over as superintendent in Walla Walla.

- Approved contracts naming Elise Flemming head volleyball coach and Krystofer Lopez head lacrosse coach at Hermiston High School.
- Heard a presentation on Oregon Rising.

Hermiston garbage rates going up

HERMISTON — Hermiston residents will see their garbage rates go up in July after the Hermiston City Council approved a rate increase Monday.

The 7.81 percent rate hike is a \$1.25 per month increase for the typical 90-gallon cart service for residents.

Sanitary Disposal, Inc. is a private company that handles garbage service for the city. Because it has an exclusive franchise with the city, the company comes to the city council for approval of rate increases.

Mike Jewett, owner of Sanitary Disposal, told the

council that the company's last rate increase was in 2013 and had been meant to last for two years. Now Department of Environmental Quality fees are increasing 58 cents per ton, minimum wage is set to jump significantly and inflation continues to push up costs.

Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said the rate increase received a thorough vetting from the city's solid waste subcommittee and Sanitary Disposal agreed to a slightly lower increase plus an independent third party review of rates in the future. He also said the increase included a .5 percent increase in the company's franchise fee it pays to the city. The approximately \$10,000 generated by the increase will be put toward nuisance abatement and city cleanup events.

Stanfield band trip features 'The Lion King'

STANFIELD — The Stanfield band department has made arrangements for a trip to Portland to see the Broadway musical "The



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Worried About Falling?

Presented by Adrian Cagigas, MA, ATC/L

More than half of people over the age of 80 will fall every year, and 87% of all fractures in this age group, are due to falls. The good news is that falls can be prevented. Join us for an educational session on what causes people to fall, and what can be done to reduce the risk of falling.

Space is limited for this FUN educational series. For more information and to reserve your seat please call (541) 276-1987.

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