



Pelican reflection
A pod of white pelicans huddle together on the shore of a pond on Friday east of Pendleton. White pelicans are now frequently seen in the area during the spring and summer.
Staff photo by E.J. Harris

City council to consider bond refinance

HERMISTON — The Hermiston city council will consider refinancing the bond that funds Hermiston Energy Services on Monday.

The refinance, which has been discussed at previous meetings, would save the city approximately \$2.66 million. It would also build an additional \$4.5 million in construction costs into the bond, which will pay for projects including a new substation and smart meters.

On Monday the council also will meet as the Hermiston Urban Renewal Agency to consider a request for a facade grant to Simmons Insurance. The company is currently renovating the former RoeMarks building on the corner of Second Street and Main Street. The committee is being asked to provide \$10,000 of a \$21,000 project that will add windows to the second floor of the eastern portion of the building.

Morgan said the city is happy that Simmons Insurance decided to take on the project, because Hermiston has very little second-story real estate downtown.

“We’re excited they’re investing some funds into turning a second story into a usable, leaseable space,” Morgan said.

The city council will meet Monday at 7 p.m. at city hall, 180 NE Second Street.

Contest calls for ugly canines

HERMISTON — Ugly dogs will have a chance to win free dog food for a year, a full veterinary checkup or a new doggy bed.

The Ugly, Uglier and Ugliest Dog Contest is Saturday, July 16 beginning at 10 a.m. in the parking lot at Fiesta Foods, 1875 N. First St., Hermiston. The winners will be announced at 11:15 a.m.

Dogs of all breeds and ages are welcome to participate. Treats will be given to all canine contestants.

For more information, call Leo Leal at 541-567-4600.

BRIEFLY

Pilot Rock looks to deed Bike Pit

PILOT ROCK — Pilot Rock city government is on the verge of handing off its motocross and ATV park to the group overseeing activities there.

The city has been looking to deed the property to the Pilot Rock OHV Inc. board for several years. City recorder Teri Porter explained before that could happen, the city had to resolve a couple of situations.

International Paper donated the Bike Pit, as it’s known locally, to the city several years ago. Porter said different survey methods produced conflicting boundaries on slivers of property and it took time to work that out and come up with a proper legal description.

The city’s new sewer lagoons also could have affected the Bike Pit. But the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality approved a plan that locates the lagoons away from the park.



Some Pilot Rock residents have been concerned the pit could be a liability for the city. Porter said the city wants to help the ATV park grow and develop, but does not want to be subject to the risk. Deeding the property to the OHV board was on the agenda for the Tuesday night council meeting, but Porter said there was a lack of a quorum so the council could not take action.

Porter said she put the vote on the agenda for the council’s July 19 meeting.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

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BOARDMAN

Farmworker housing proposal heads to commissioners

Hearing scheduled for July 27

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

The Morrow County Court will consider a recommendation by the local Planning Commission to rezone property west of Boardman for a proposed farmworker housing development.

Threemile Canyon Farms wants to build housing for 200 to 800 seasonal workers along Tower Road, across from the Boardman Airport. The farm claims it needs the labor to grow more organic crops such as peas, corn, onions and carrots.

Before that can happen, the county needs to approve

a zoning change from Space Age Industrial to Exclusive Farm Use. The Planning Commission voted 5-1 at its June 28 meeting to forward the request to the County Court with a do-adopt recommendation. Melissa Lindsay was the only commissioner to vote against the measure, while members Ken Bailey, David Sykes and Kathy Neal were absent.

Some neighbors have expressed concern about the project, which falls outside of the city of Boardman’s urban growth boundary. Kelly Doherty, who owns property nearby, said there is no regulation on how many units the farm could build if the zoning is changed. She worries the area could

become “Boardman West” and overwhelm Tower Road.

The farm, however, has indicated seasonal workers wouldn’t arrive in their own vehicles and would be bused into town once a week for groceries. Planning Director Carla McLane has said the location is preferable, since workers would live closer to the farm itself and avoid straining sewer and water services within Boardman city limits.

The County Court will hold a hearing at 9 a.m. Wednesday, July 27 at the Bartholomew Building in Heppner.

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

UMATILLA

School district on list for \$4M grant

East Oregonian

The Umatilla School District was selected by the Oregon Department of Education for a \$4 million grant, the district announced Friday, but voters will have to pass a bond to receive the funds.

The grant comes from the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program, created by Senate Bill 447 to address maintenance problems in Oregon schools.

In order to receive the grant, the community must come up with at least the funds to match. The Umatilla School District will place a \$10.25 million capital improvement bond on the November 2016 ballot for a total project sum of \$14.25 million.

If approved, the three district schools — McNary Heights Elementary, Clara Brownell Middle School and Umatilla High School

“This is a great opportunity for the Umatilla School District to realize some much needed funds for important projects.”

— **Heidi Sipe**, Umatilla School District superintendent

— will receive security and safety improvements, which would include replacing the roof of each building.

“This is a great opportunity for the Umatilla School District to realize some much needed funds for important projects, and we are encouraged about the potential for the matching grant,” Umatilla School District superintendent Heidi Sipe said in a press release.

According to Sipe, Clara Brownell Middle School needs major system upgrades. The school needs upgrades in plumbing, electrical and flooring, and replacement windows and boiler that has been in use since 1947.

A study concluded that the district is not growing fast enough to warrant building a new school.

If nearby schools are an indication, Umatilla School District has a good chance to receive the matching grant.

Three school districts in May voted in favor of a capital improvement bond, which the state rewarded with a matching grant. Echo School District and Athena Weston School District both voted in favor of a \$4 million bond and Milton-Freewater School District voted in favor of a \$12.5 million bond in addition to a \$15 million donation it received from the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation.



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