

MILTON-FREEWATER

School district gets another \$1.9M from bond sale

Planning to build first new school since 1922

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

The Milton-Freewater Unified School District overcame several decades of history when voters passed its first bond measure since 1982.

Now the district is deep into the planning the construction of its first new school since 1922.

Milton-Freewater Superintendent Rob Clark said the district's top priority in the bond package is the construction of Gib Olinger Elementary School, a K-3 facility that will replace Grove and Freewater elementary schools.

Clark said the district will begin demolishing Grove as soon as it's sure Olinger is move-in ready. The district will build two soccer fields on the old Grove property. The Milton-Freewater Downtown Alliance has shown interest in starting a community center at Freewater, which will also be vacated.

Clark expects Olinger to be completed by summer 2018.

Coming much sooner is a new barn for Milton-Freewater's fleet of buses.

Clark said the buses' current storage area, between McLaughlin High School and Central Middle School, is too small and a safety hazard. Without many options for overflow parking, sometimes drivers are forced to park the buses at their homes.

"The square footage is better served with kids (than bus parking)," he said.

There aren't any definitive plans for what the current bus barn space could be used for, but Clark said it could be used for an agricultural program extension or tennis courts.

Although the acquisition of a new piece of land for the bus barn hasn't been finalized, Clark said it should be ready by next summer.

Also coming in 2017 are heating, ventilation and air conditioning improvements to Mac Hi, Central and Ferndale Elementary School.

The district hired the Wenaha Group of Pendleton as its project manager and Architects West of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho as its architect and is in the process of hiring a construction manager to oversee these projects.

Thanks to the district selling the bonds at a higher price than their value, the district was able to leverage an additional \$1.9 million for its capital improvement projects.

Combining that amount with the original \$12.5 million bond and \$19 million in state and private grants, the district has \$33.4 million to use for facility improvements.

Clark said the extra \$1.9 million could be used for additional improvements to Mac Hi, Central and Ferndale, but will otherwise be used as contingency in case the existing projects go over budget.

The next step for the district is recruiting members of the public for several focus groups that will meet from late August through October to provide input on the Olinger and Grove athletic complex designs.

Having also received a matching grant from the state for its \$4 million bond, the Athena-Wetson School District is hoping to wring out some extra dollars from the bond sale process, too.

With the district's low amount of debt, Athena-Wetson Superintendent Laure Quaresma is hopeful the school system can get a high bond rating.

Quaresma said the district is putting a request for proposal for a general contractor to handle the bond projects, which include air conditioning, roofing and security upgrades.

Echo School District rounded out the three districts that received matching grants from the state after passing bonds in May.

Echo's bond sale added \$225,146 to the \$8 million pot, which will be used to build new classrooms and a gym, among other improvements.

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

HERMISTON

Umatilla County looks to extend fairgrounds lease

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Umatilla County plans to extend its stay at the fairgrounds in Hermiston through June 2017 due to construction delays at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The Hermiston School District owns the fairgrounds at 425 N. Orchard Ave., Hermiston, and leases them to the county at no cost. The area includes the 5,000-seat Farm-City Pro Rodeo grounds.

County counsel Doug Olsen said a high school rodeo and similar events plan to use the grounds next year, and the school district and rodeo board want the extension to ensure the events do not have to find other venues. The *East Oregonian* earlier this month reported the new arena near the Hermiston Municipal Airport must be completed by July 21, 2017, at a cost of \$3.8 million.

"Due to delays in the construction of the new fairgrounds/convention center," the new contract notes, "... the parties agree that it is in the best interest of the public to extend the lease."

The county board of commissioners plans to vote on the lease extension during its public meeting Wednesday at 9 a.m. in room 130 at the Umatilla County Courthouse, 216 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton. Commissioners Larry Givens and Bill Elfering returned Tuesday from Long Beach, California, where they attended the annual conference of the National Association of Counties.

The board also will hold a public hearing to set the boundaries of a new taxing district. The East Umatilla County Health District filed a petition to expand the district to conform with the ambulance service area. The board then would set the matter for a final hearing.

And more than \$240,000 in special transportation fund grants also are on the board's agenda. The grants help local organizations and governments provide public transportation — including a grant of \$78,300 for the city of Pendleton for its dial-a-ride program and other transportation.

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

HERMISTON

Treasure hunt leads to National Night Out

Medallion finder wins ice cream party

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
East Oregonian

Move over Pokémon Go players, treasure hunters will soon be scouring public places in Hermiston in search of a golden medallion.

Erica Sandoval, Hermiston Police Department crime prevention/youth services officer, hid the medallion for a treasure hunt as part of the annual National Night Out festivities in Hermiston. Attached to a red, white and blue ribbon, it's about 3 inches in diameter.

"I go out in the cover of darkness to hide it," Sandoval said. "There have been a lot of Pokémon players so this should be interesting."

Sandoval has been in charge of hiding the medallion for eight years. She gets excited about the hunt because families, individuals and groups of friends look forward to the yearly event.

Annual National Night Out activities have been going on across the country for 33 years and this is Hermiston's 18th year of participating. The event, Sandoval said, helps introduce neighbors to each other and encourages the development of Neighborhood Watch areas. It also provides



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini

The person who finds this golden medallion, which is hidden somewhere in Hermiston, wins a National Night Out ice cream social block party Tuesday, Aug. 2 in Hermiston.

an opportunity for police and firefighters to visit with citizens in a relaxed setting.

"It's really important to get to know your neighbors to watch out for each other," Sandoval said.

By getting acquainted with neighbors, she said people take ownership of their neighborhoods. By recognizing people and becoming aware of their comings and goings, it reduces opportunities for crime.

There are about 50 Neighborhood Watch areas in Hermiston. To learn more about the program or to schedule a party, contact Sandoval at 541-667-5112 or esandoval@hermiston.or.us.

or.us.

The city of Hermiston, the *East Oregonian* and *Hermiston Herald* will treat the person who finds the medallion to an ice cream social block party Tuesday, Aug. 2 at 6:15 p.m. City councilors, city officials and emergency responders will serve ice cream at the winner's party.

The *EO* is publishing clues each day until someone finds the medallion. In addition, a bonus clue can be found on the front page of Wednesday's *Hermiston Herald*.

Sandoval encourages people to get in touch with their inner detective. The clues may refer to Hermiston

CLUE No. 1

North, south, east, west
Do you know
which way is best
is it here, is it there
With public property,
it could be anywhere

history, song lyrics, books, movies or people.

Treasure hunt rules:

- The medallion is located on public property. Although not in plain view, searchers won't have to dig to find it.

- Participants must live in Hermiston. Employees and immediate family members, or independent contractors, of the Hermiston Police Department, *East Oregonian* and *Hermiston Herald* are ineligible.

- The medallion is hidden inside the city. The finder will not have to leave property that is publicly owned or controlled by a public agency to find it.

- The person who finds the medallion must immediately take it to the Hermiston Police Department, 330 S. First St. If it's found after 6 p.m., the person needs to call 541-966-3651 or 541-567-5519 and ask dispatch to contact Sandoval.

- The winner acknowledges, by participating in the treasure hunt, the *EO* will publish his or her name and picture, and the winner will participate in the National Night Out activities.

Umatilla County welcomes four sheriff's deputies

East Oregonian

Two new Umatilla County sheriff's deputies graduated from the Oregon Public Safety Academy and two police veterans also joined the sheriff's ranks.

The sheriff's office in a written statement announced deputy Calvin Meade, 30, and deputy Trevor Limburg, 26, graduated July 15 from the state's basic police course in Salem. The county hired them in January, and they began the 16-week basic training in March. The new

deputies have another four to six weeks of in-house field training before they work solo.

Meade was the manager of Columbia Harvest Foods, Umatilla, and a football and tennis coach at Umatilla High School, according to the sheriff's office, and he was a reserve officer with the Umatilla Police Department for more than a year. He graduated from Hermiston High School and is a senior at Washington State University.

Limburg was a supervisor with G4S Secure Solutions,

Umatilla, and was a reserve deputy with the sheriff's office for more than a year-and-a-half. He is a graduate of Walla Walla High School, attended Walla Walla Community College and is a former Eagle Scout.

Jonathan Roberts and Nathan Rankin also are new to the sheriff's patrol staff but have years of police experience, the sheriff's office reported. Roberts for the past six years worked for the Pendleton Police Department, and before that was with Milton-Freewater

and a military police officer in the U.S. Army.

Rankin, 27, comes from Junction City, where he won a \$45,000 settlement this summer after he sued the city and former Police Chief Mark Chase in 2015 for wrongful termination. Rankin is working on a master's degree, the sheriff's office reported, and has experience as a corrections officer.

The sheriff's office also is looking to fill one vacancy and two new openings in its patrol division.

Named Top 10 Must See Rodeo! —Western Horse & Gun

71st ANNUAL

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TUESDAY	1:30pm	Bucking Horse Stampede — Main Street
WEDNESDAY	9:00am	Little Buckaroo Rodeo for special needs children — Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	Family Fun at the Thunder Room
THURSDAY	9:00am	Tough Enough to Wear Pink Walk
	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
		Tough Enough to Wear Pink
		Barrel Racing Slack — After the Rodeo
	9:00pm	Music and Dancing at Thunder Room
FRIDAY	10:00am	Chief Joseph Junior Parade — Main Street
	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
	9:00pm	Music and Dancing at Thunder Room
SATURDAY	6:00am	Shrine Breakfast begins
	10:00am	Grand Parade — Main Street
	12:00pm	Nez Perce Friendship Feast — Encampment Pavilion
	2:30pm	Slack — Arena
	3:00pm	Traditional Indian Dance Contest — Encampment Pavilion
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
	9:00pm	Music and Dancing at Thunder Room
	11:00pm	Cowboy Breakfast — Rodeo Grounds — Until 3am
SUNDAY	6:00am	Cowboy Breakfast Continues
	9:00am	Cowboy Church Service — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena

To purchase tickets and for more info, visit www.chiefjosephdays.com