

## DOCTOR: Loan forgiveness available to rural doctors

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commitment from them to work at least five years in an underserved rural area in Oregon after graduation. It covers doctors, dentists, physicians' assistants and a master's in nursing.

Buck was not a Scholar for a Healthy Oregon participant, but the program hopes to foster more stories like his of students who left their rural Oregon hometown for medical school and returned later to practice medicine there.

Winding Waters Clinic in Enterprise and OHSU are celebrating the 25-year anniversary this weekend of a "rural training" program where doctors completing their residency program spend three months in Enterprise or John Day to gain experience in a rural setting.

Other programs available to potential rural doctors are the loan forgiveness programs administered by the Oregon Office of Rural Health. The Oregon Medicaid Primary Care Loan Repayment Program, for example, provides up to \$105,000 in loan forgiveness for providers that work at least three years serving Medicaid patients in underserved rural areas.

Robert Duehmig, deputy director of the Oregon Office of Rural Health, said those types of programs have "absolutely" helped rural hospitals and clinics

hire more medical practitioners.

"Providers come out (of school) with a lot of debt," he said. "That kind of loan repayment really helps them start a practice without having to worry about that."

Duehmig said it tends to be harder to make money as a doctor, dentist, or other provider away from the big cities because there tends to be fewer patients available and more of those are on Medicaid. Doctors have to practice a wider range of medicine when there aren't specialists down the hall, and less backup means more hours at work and on call.

He said sometimes doctors also don't want to move to a rural area because their spouse working in a different field might have limited professional opportunities in a small town.

"It's important for practice sites to remember they're not just recruiting doctors, they're recruiting their families," he said.

Programs like loan forgiveness or scholarships can at least guarantee a hospital or clinic a provider for three to five years that they might not otherwise have had, Duehmig said. And some providers end up spending most of their career in the same town. He said as a result, OHSU looks for applicants who are from rural Oregon to begin with.

"They're the most likely to come back and stay," he said.

## BUTTE: City may build fence, lease some of the land

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path that stretches from there along the Hermiston Irrigation District canal and a large section of the grassy field next to the spray park. The end of the chainlink fence behind the spray park marks the end of the city's property and the beginning of Davis's. Anyone heading to the left of the fence along the canal is trespassing.

Davis said he has "tolerated a lot" through the years. But an incident on the Fourth of July, in which people refused to move off of his land as a fireworks-caused fire burned nearby, caused him to decide to "buckle down" and place signs at each point a trail crosses into his property.

The fact that several trails on the butte lead directly to Davis's property has created an understandable public impression that his land is owned by the city. Now that he is making it clear it is not, Davis said he understands it's frustrating for people who have gotten used to using the area in the past. However, he said an easy fix would be for the city to put in a

gate or two in the fence along Butte Park, giving people a legal access point directly onto the publicly-owned part of the butte.

"People are coming to jog or hike anyway," he said. "So they've got to go a couple of extra blocks."

Hermiston Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter said the city is aware of the tensions that have cropped up. He said the city and Davis have been communicating about a range of possible fixes, from building a fence to leasing some of the land.

Fetter said the goal is to preserve as much public access as possible while still being respectful of property owners who border the butte.

He said it is hard to measure how much traffic the area gets, but he would guess that between 50 and 100 people use it on any given summer day. They access a "patchwork" of trails that include some city-made paths, the utility access road and a number of trails that "just kind of formed" through the unofficial efforts of some users. The Hermiston Irrigation

District has an easement where the canal borders the eastern side, and at the top of the butte is a water reservoir, a metal cross maintained by Oasis of Hope Church and telecommunications equipment.

Much of the land is actually owned by the Bureau of Land Management, with the city acting as an official steward. Other sections are owned by the city outright. In 2011 a 1.5 acre section of land on the southeast side of the butte went up for sale and the city bought it from a private citizen in order to prevent houses from being built alongside the distinctive landmark.

Overall the public property is considered part of Butte Park. That means city park rules — including no fires, no camping, no alcohol and no off-leash pets — apply. Even though several trails lead to Davis's property, and people have used the Standard Avenue access point for years, Fetter asked people to be good neighbors and heed the signs that inform them when they're about to cross into private land.

## DAIRY: Currently produces 70,000 gallons of milk every day for Tillamook

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location within the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area, which was designated by the agency in 1990 due to high levels of nitrates that exceeded federal safe drinking water standards.

Animal waste has the potential to load even more nitrates in groundwater, if it isn't dealt with properly. However, Butcher said the dairy's plan might just prove to be a template for permitting future facilities.

"We were pretty satisfied with how the permit finally came out for public comment," Butcher said.

Details in the application were ironed out over a period of months, according to te Velde. They include designs for a wastewater lagoon, land application and extensive groundwater and soil

monitoring. Overall, te Velde said he is relatively confident they have everything covered.

"We're abiding by the CAFO rules provided by the state," he said.

Lost Valley Ranch would be located about a mile and a half east of where Homestead Lane meets Poleline Road. About 5,900 acres of the property would be used to grow feed for the cows, such as corn silage, alfalfa and triticale.

Currently, the dairy produces roughly 70,000 gallons of milk every day for Tillamook Cheese, which operates a plant just down Interstate 84 at the Port of Morrow.

Others, including Morrow County, have their concerns. Planning Director Carla McLane said that while she did sign the project's land use compatibility, she did so with trepidation. That is based in part on the location within the Ground-

water Management Area.

"The fact that there are already two dairies and a beef CAFO within a three- or four-mile radius, with some significantly closer, only increases the concerns about the development of another much larger dairy," McLane wrote in comments submitted to ODA.

The dairy would also span three other critical groundwater areas, McLane wrote, which in some cases have completely restricted the use of groundwater for agriculture. McLane requested the hearing Thursday so their issues can be fully discussed.

The Riverfront Center is located at 2 Marine Drive in Boardman. Written comments can be submitted to Matthews at the ODA's CAFO program, 635 Capitol Street NE, Salem, OR 97301, or emailed to [wmatthews@oda.state.or.us](mailto:wmatthews@oda.state.or.us).

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