

EOTEC: Has brought in \$46,618 in general fund revenue; operational costs at \$84,759

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temporary labor provided by Express Staffing to help out for some large events, but for the most part she and Driscoll have been trying to do as much set-up, take-down and cleaning as they can to save money.

Board member Vijay Patel said a maintenance employee needed to be hired soon, because he wanted to see Cannell's sole focus stay on marketing and booking events.

"Setting up tables and cleaning bathrooms is not what we hired her for," he said.

The rest of the board seemed to agree that a maintenance employee was needed at EOTEC, but who should run the entire project was a less clear matter.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners laid off fair manager Don Slone earlier this month as a money-saving move as the fair shifts to EOTEC, but no decision has been made about what type of position would run the fair instead.

Don Miller said that when looking at the finances of the county and EOTEC, "a shared position would be beneficial."

Byron Smith said the board needed to decide what an EOTEC general manager's position would include, and whether to have a separate marketing person. If a general manager had someone working on marketing, he said, there could be an opportunity for the county to contract with EOTEC to run the fair on their behalf.

Smith, Patel and Dorran were in favor of hiring a consultant to help craft a plan for marketing and management.

Commissioner Larry

Givens said there was "some urgency" to make a hiring decision soon because the county is putting together a budget now and the next couple of months will be critical in beginning to line up sponsorships for the 2017 fair.

"There's nothing that says the fair couldn't hire someone on a temporary basis," Smith responded.

Kim Puzey said if the board wanted someone to be both the general manager of EOTEC and the fair, "we're essentially looking for a superhuman who doesn't know what they're getting themselves into."

Dorran, Smith and Patel said they would look at some options for a consultant to help with a marketing and operations plan and bring the information back to the board.

Budget

The board also looked at the event center's operational budget so far, noting that it will take at minimum a full year's worth of information before the board has a good sense of the facility's costs and revenue capabilities.

Since the beginning of the fiscal year in July, Cannell said, the center has brought in \$48,618 in general fund revenue from events, the tourism promotion assessment and investment interest. Operational costs, meanwhile, have been \$84,759 including \$14,935 in marketing costs.

So far, events that have been held since July 1 and ones that have already been booked as far out as June 2017 will bring in a total of \$59,135 for the 2016-2017 fiscal year, with more bookings expected as the year goes on.

Cannell has run up against some complaints about

certain groups being charged to use the facility, and asked for more guidance and the event center's fee policy.

Patel said he was open to charging a reduced rate for nonprofits, but did not believe from a business standpoint that any groups should be using the facility at no cost, even those like 4-H that have been using Thompson Hall for free.

Dorran also said there needed to be "some flexibility," but the rest of the board disagreed.

Puzey said he didn't think the facility should be giving discounts to anyone, because word gets around and soon everyone has a reason why they should get a special deal. Citizens are worried the county and city will have to subsidize the center's operations, he said, so it was important to give them assurance that EOTEC was working to be as financially self-sustaining as possible.

Ed Brookshier also said he had seen the "slippery slope" that giving discounts or free room use becomes. Smith pointed out that even the city, which has put hundreds of thousands of dollars into the construction of EOTEC, is paying the standard fee to use it for an upcoming event.

Facilities

As Knerr Construction gets ready to begin on the barns and Hendon Construction works on the rodeo arena, board members discussed smaller-scale needs at the facility, including signs, landscaping and fencing.

Dorran also told the board he would recommend purchasing food trucks, which EOTEC could get for less than \$30,000 apiece, for the nonprofits instead of spending the \$100,000

budgeted to build a permanent food court. He said the nonprofits that have traditionally had food booths at the fairgrounds seemed amenable to the idea, which would offer flexibility on the layout of the fair and offer an opportunity to rent them out during the year for some extra revenue.

As for EOTEC's only building currently standing, Cannell shared a list of issues with the event center that need to be addressed.

A few of those issues included a strong sewage smell always coming from a drain in the men's bathroom, drinking water smelling like sulfur on some days, the hot water heater not getting water hot enough for the dishwasher's standards, a loud "jet engine" sound whenever the heat or air conditioning kicks on and constantly malfunctioning doors. The audio-visual equipment installation is also not completed because the beam that the projector in the great room is attached to shakes when the wind blows, bouncing the picture.

John Frew of Frew Development said many of the things on the list were under warranty, some could be addressed with the contractor and some would probably require a maintenance investment. He urged the board not to continue to waste time and money on the projector problem when they could just buy a cart to wheel the projector out on.

"You're experiencing what every new owner of a building, whether residential or commercial, does — there's always going to be something that needs a tweak," he said.

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Attorneys say racial bias played a role in Malheur verdict

By RYAN HASS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

As soon as the not guilty verdicts for Ammon Bundy and six people who led an armed occupation at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge came down Thursday, questions of racial bias from the jurors and law enforcement began circulating on social media.

And legal experts say implicit bias likely did play a role in the acquittals.

"They went through the system and they were found not guilty. You have to respect that," said attorney and former South Carolina legislator Bakari Sellers.

"But you also have to understand and question what is the definition of justice in this country?"

Sellers, who also works as a CNN political commentator, said the federal government faltered in the case by not acting aggressively enough toward

the all white defendants. "I don't think they would have been treated with such kid gloves, in fact, if they were African-American or Muslim or Native American," Sellers said. "To be honest with you, they would have all probably been dead."

Many people on social media noted the disparity in approach the federal government took in responding to the Malheur refuge takeover compared to Native American protesters standing against a controversial oil pipeline in the Dakotas.

In Malheur, the federal government spent 41 days negotiating for a peaceful surrender from the armed occupiers led by Bundy. In North Dakota on Thursday, the same day the Malheur verdict was delivered, law enforcement arrested more than 100 unarmed protesters using pepper spray, bean bags and military-style vehicles.

TRIAL: Few options for charges because defendants never attacked anyone

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as Juror No. 4, wrote in an email to *The Oregonian/OregonLive* that the verdicts were a "statement" about the prosecution's failure to prove a conspiracy charge "and not any form of affirmation of the defense's various beliefs, actions or aspirations."

The acquittal of the white occupiers came on the same day that officers in riot gear evicted protesters from private land in the path of the Dakota Access oil pipeline in rural North Dakota. Officers fired bean bags and pepper spray as they surrounded demonstrators, many of them Native Americans who have spent months fighting over tribal rights and the project's environmental effects. At least 117 people were arrested.

"Are we going to look at these protests the same way?" asked John Freemuth, a public land policy expert at Boise State University. "I certainly think the tribes will have a point if they find themselves arrested and in jail and these Oregon guys get off."

Bundy, his brother Ryan Bundy and five others were charged with conspiring to impede federal workers from their jobs at the refuge.

Chris Rasmussen, a defense lawyer in an armed standoff case that happened two years ago at Bundy's father's ranch in Nevada, said it is "obvious" that Oregon prosecutors gambled in seeking conviction

on felony conspiracy charges instead of misdemeanor trespassing charges.

But prosecutors had few other options for serious charges because the defendants never attacked anyone, said Laurie Levenson, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles and a former federal prosecutor.

Rather than attempting to retake the refuge headquarters and risking a gunbattle, authorities took a cautious approach. They closed nearby roads and stayed miles away while urging the occupiers to abandon the land.

"The upside of not confronting them was it was less likely there would be violence," Levenson said. "The downside was it was less likely that they could use the assault charge."

The standoff finally ended when the Bundys and other key figures were arrested in a Jan. 26 traffic stop outside the refuge. That's when Finicum was killed. Most occupiers left after his death, but four holdouts remained until Feb. 11, when they surrendered following lengthy negotiations.

Bundy remains in jail because he still faces charges in the standoff at his father's Nevada ranch.

Joel Hansen, Cliven Bundy's attorney, said Friday that he thinks the jury in Oregon "saw through the lies" of a government that "is trying to prove these Bundy brothers and their compatriots were some kind of terrorists."

PENDLETON: Commission recommended removing 1,000-foot park buffer

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and other city staff.

The amendments restricted marijuana retailers to the service commercial and central mixed-use zones and prohibited them from being within 1,000 feet of a school, park or another store. All retailers would also have to receive approval from the planning commission before they open.

Under the new code, marijuana growers, processors, laboratories and testing sites would need to be placed in the city's light industrial zone, most of which is located around Westgate and the airport industrial park.

Commissioner Ryan DeGroff made a motion to do something that had already been rejected by the council more than year ago — eliminating the 1,000-foot buffer between marijuana dispensaries and parks. The state requires a 1,000-foot

buffer for schools, but not the park buffer.

Although the council had restored that language when they voted on zoning regulations the first time, DeGroff said it still remained an unnecessary restriction on potential marijuana businesses.

Despite knowing that the city council would most likely restore the language, he thought it was an issue the commission should continue to press.

"We're not a rubber-stamp commission," he said.

There would be only a handful of commercial and central mixed zones that would be unaffected by park buffers, including sections of Southeast Nye Avenue near the Red Lion Hotel, a section of Tutuilla Road between Olney Cemetery and Grecian Heights Park and an area just southeast of Highway 11.

Removing the park buffer

wouldn't open all commercial zones to dispensaries, but it would make available more land on Southgate and a far east portion of Southeast Court Avenue.

Commissioner Terry Clarke argued that employees were already losing their jobs from drug testing in zero-tolerance workplaces and was concerned that increasing the availability of marijuana dispensaries would worsen that issue.

"We're trying to solve a social issue with land use planning," he said.

The commission voted 3-2 to remove the park buffer requirement from the code with Clarke and Vincent Papol voting against.

Clarke also voted against recommending the amendments to the council, though the rest of the commission voted in favor. The amendments to the code are now in the hands of the council, which will consider them at

its Tuesday meeting.

If either or both of the ballot issues legalizing recreational and medical marijuana sales pass, it would leave the city with less than two months to set regulations for the new industry.

In preparation of such an event, City Manager Robb Corbett said staff is requesting the council amend the zoning code on Tuesday and would ask them to change the language on the city business licenses if the measures pass.

The city's current business license prohibits businesses from violating federal law, which marijuana sales are still in violation of.

The council will meet Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

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

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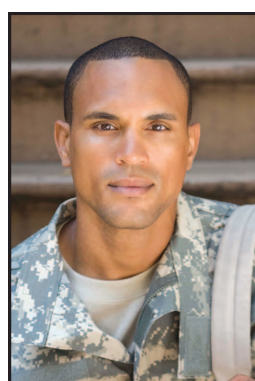


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