

PENDLETON

# Fire station gets PAC support

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**A PAC has been formed to support a bond to replace the Pendleton fire station.**

The Pendleton Fire Department hasn't been shy about their primary fire station's shortfalls, and its supporters are willing to raise \$25,000 to fix them.

Whether its been through discussions at public meetings or tours of the fire department's 911 S.W. Court Ave. station, staff has highlighted the station's awkward location that leads to slower response times, aging facilities rife with carcinogens and deferred maintenance and a building without the space and proper accommodations for female firefighters and new volunteers.

While emergency services staff have been vocal about the need for a new fire station, they'll have to convince the public to support something it hasn't done in more than 20 years — pass a city bond.

The city is currently proposing a \$9.93 million bond to build a new fire station on Southeast Court at the old St. Anthony property, in addition to purchasing new emergency equipment, for the May ballot.

Entrusted with leading the campaign is firefighter/paramedic Jeff Perry, who is the listed director for the fire bond's political action committee Pendleton Public Safety PAC.

Perry said he has been passionate about securing a new fire station for the city and was approached by some of his co-workers about running the PAC.

In addition to creating a

website and a Facebook page, early campaign efforts include a series of presentations from Mayor John Turner and Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo to community groups and city committees.

The presentation includes a city tax rate comparison between Pendleton and Hermiston.

Because of retiring bonds, the fire bond's 62 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value would result in a net increase of 15 cents and a total city property tax rate of \$6.73.

In comparison, Hermiston utilizes a fire district rather than operate its own municipal fire department.

The combined tax rates for the city of Hermiston and Umatilla County Fire District 1 is \$7.84.

Perry said the PAC will ramp up its campaign with a kick-off event in February.

From there, the PAC will start to engage in the hallmarks of most local bond campaigns: volunteer coordination, door-to-door campaigns, yard signs and reader board messages.

Perry said the PAC will focus its message not only on the condition of the current fire station, but also share the importance of providing new equipment for a department with an ambulance service area covering 2,000 square miles and 20,000 people.

The bond includes money for an ambulance, heart monitors and the "Jaws of Life" extraction equipment.

Mounting successful bond campaigns typically requires raising significant amounts of

money.

The last successful tax measure campaign — the 2009 gas tax to extend Airport Road — raised \$13,816 through its PAC.

The Pendleton Public Safety PAC has set its sights even higher, its members looking to bring in \$25,000 in contributions to support the campaign.

So far, the fundraising has gotten off to an auspicious start.

On Dec. 14, Ciraulo, his wife Gilda and Turner all donated \$500 followed by a \$1,000 contribution from the Round-Up City Development Corp. on Jan. 7.

The campaign has until May 16 to convince voters that a new fire station is worthy of their tax money.

PENDLETON

# Arts center hosts MLK Day of Service

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
East Oregonian



Contributed

**A copy of an ink and coffee portrait of Martin Luther King Jr. by Pendleton artist Sofi Smith will be given to a participant in Monday's MLK Day of Service at Pendleton Center for the Arts.**

help by joining the work crew Monday from 10 a.m. to noon at 214 N. Main St. The arts center will provide supplies,

equipment and coffee.

Roberta Lavadour, executive director, said activities include everything from painting and patching to polishing and transporting recyclables. Volunteers are encouraged to show up in the morning wearing comfortable clothes they don't mind getting dirty and a willingness to work.

A national effort, the MLK Day of Service was sparked from words King spoke to an audience in 1957 in Montgomery, Alabama, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?" The initiative, which according to the *Boston Globe* began in 1994, urges people to treat the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday as "A Day On, Not a

Day Off!"

Volunteers at the arts center's MLK Day of Service will have an opportunity to win a copy of a portrait of King created by Pendleton artist Sofi Smith. Lavadour called the ready-to-frame artwork "amazing."

The ink and coffee piece includes the text from King's "The Quest for Peace and Justice" Nobel Lecture — which he delivered when he received the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize — embedded within the image. The drawing will take place at noon.

For more information about the MLK Day of Service, visit [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov) and search under "Special Initiatives." For questions about the project at Pendleton Center for the Arts, call 541-278-9201.

# Commissioners stand take stand for vets

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Property tax relief is coming in Umatilla County for the surviving spouses of fire service personnel, police officers and reserve officers who died in the line of duty.

Senate Bill 1513, out of the 2016 Oregon Legislature, allows counties to exempt up to \$250,000 of assessed value of each homestead a firefighter's or police officer's surviving spouse owns and occupies. Umatilla County commissioners plan to adopt the policy when they meet Wednesday at 9 a.m. in room

130 at the county courthouse, 216 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton.

County attorney Doug Olsen said he was not aware of any property owners that would fall under the exemption. Any who do, though, can fill out a form in the county assessor's office and make a claim.

Tax year 2017-18 is the first year someone can claim the exemption.

The county board also will consider a resolution showing its opposition to Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's proposal to cut \$10 million in funding to veterans services in the upcoming two-year state

budget.

According to the resolution, which the Association of Oregon Counties drafted, Oregon receives \$1.3 billion in federal funds for veteran non-health care benefits and \$1.1 billion in health care benefits, both about double the amount from a decade ago. Yet "one in three of our veterans access their earned benefits and two-thirds of our veterans need assistance to effectively access their medical, disability, education and other federally funded benefits."

The \$10 million decrease to veteran services, according

to the county's language, also undermines the will of Oregon voters, who in November approved Ballot Measure 96, the law that dedicates 1.5 percent of state lottery proceeds for veterans services.

In other business, the board will consider an update to the joint management agreement between the county and the cities of Umatilla and Hermiston to allow Umatilla to oversee land use within the urban growth boundary. And county commissioners also will hold a public hearing on the co-adoption of Weston and Pilot Rock transportation system plans.

BRIEFLY

## Air stagnation warning in effect through Monday

PENDLETON — The National Weather Service has issued an air stagnation warning in effect until Monday afternoon.

The warning covers northeastern Oregon and southeastern Washington east of The Dalles and as far south as John Day.

Air quality is expected to be moderate Friday evening and continue to deteriorate until Monday at 5 p.m. Winds of less than 10 miles per hour combined with other weather factors mean pollution "has the potential to increase to dangerous levels" near the ground, according to the advisory.

Persons with respiratory illness should follow their physician's advice for dealing with high levels of air pollution. Outdoor burning is discouraged and residential wood burning devices should be "limited as much as possible."

## Lead found at P-Tech school

PENDLETON — Less than a month after its opening, the Pendleton Technology and Trades Center found lead in its water.

The Pendleton School District announced Friday that it had tested eight water sites at the former West Hills Intermediate School, which resulted in two sites testing above 20 parts per billion, the Environmental Protection Agency's action level.

Between the two sites, a press release states that the district removed a water fountain in a spare room and is retesting a water source in the new kitchen that has been installed.

The center opened last week and houses Hawthorne Alternative High School and some of the district's career technical education classes.

## Council could adopt new goals at next meeting

PENDLETON — The Pendleton City Council's goals for the 2017-2019 biennium could be passed as soon as Tuesday, but figuring out how the city will achieve them might take longer.

Although the city council will consider adopting these new goals at its Tuesday meeting, Mayor John Turner said he doesn't expect to have objective measures for each goal for several more weeks.

Turner said city councilor Dale Primmer and city manager Robb Corbett have been working on the measurements and will report their progress at a city council work session Monday at 3 p.m.

Shortly after Turner was elected in May, he convened a committee to create new goals for the city.

After the committee compiled a draft list of 12 goals, the public was asked to prioritize their top goals for the city, which would then be adopted by the

council. 245 ballots were returned and the top goals were determined, including:

- Develop sustainable infrastructure funding (67 percent of the vote)
  - Increase economic development activities (66 percent)
  - Facilitate quality development of lands and properties (54 percent)
  - Increase housing availability (53 percent)
- At 47 percent, "maintain public safety" was just outside the top four. "Work with the Round-Up and Happy Canyon to expand capacity" (20 percent) and "build a sports complex" (22 percent) were the lowest vote-getters.

While the top four will be the primary focus of the council, Turner has said the rest of the goals will still remain priorities for the city.

During the meeting, the council will also consider adopting new manufactured home standards.

Both the work session and the council meeting will be held at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave. The work session will be held at 3 p.m. Monday and the council meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

## Pilot Rock council to hear sewer lagoon update

PILOT ROCK — Pilot Rock City Council plans to hear the latest update on the progress of upgrading the city's old sewer lagoons.

The council meets Tuesday at 7 p.m. at city hall. Brad Baird and Jadon Herron of the engineering firm Anderson Perry & Associates, Inc., are going to review the \$5.2 million project and discuss the status of the city's application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for project funding, as well as the project's environmental report.

The council will also consider awarding a \$63,600 contract to Steve Lindley Contracting, Inc., of Union, to replace the stairs to the school.

## Shuttle running for HHS events

HERMISTON — With multiple events going on at Hermiston High on School Saturday evening, the school district will make extra parking available at West Park Elementary, and will provide a shuttle between the two schools.

The basketball game and the Dancing with the Hermiston Stars event will both take place Saturday night, and with the snow accumulation in the parking lot, parking space will be limited at the high school.

The district will provide a free shuttle between West Park and the high school for those two events. Shuttles will start running at 5 p.m. and go until the end of both events. The girls' varsity game starts at 5:45 p.m., and the boys' varsity game starts at 7:30 p.m. The Dancing with the Hermiston Stars event starts at 7 p.m.

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