

**HERMISTON**

# EOTEC requests marketing plan from subcommittee

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center board has directed a subcommittee to come up with a marketing and staffing plan for the project.

The decision during Friday's meeting came at the request of the project's two managing partners — the city of Hermiston and Umatilla County — after the city council and county commission met for a joint work session on EOTEC Monday.

Board member Dan Dorran said he agreed that the time was right to build on the discussions about operations that took place during a November work session, and requested that the marketing subcommittee come back to the full EOTEC board for a "full-throated discussion" before sending it on to the city and county.

Byron Smith, board chair and Hermiston city manager, noted that the board has been "hesitant to spend more than we have and trying not to be a burden on the city and county" but said it sounded like the two entities were willing to consider kicking more than their \$45,000 per year each if that's what's needed to help fill the center with events.

He said it was important to start on a plan with no specific people in mind for the positions.

"Just 'these kind of positions doing these things,'" he said.

The event center has had 43 events so far since it opened last May. During a budget discussion Friday,

city finance director Amy Palmer broke down revenue and costs by event so the board could see how the fee structure was working out. She reported that so far in the 2016-2017 fiscal year EOTEC's operations costs had been about \$100,000 for a net loss of \$4,645.

Dorran reported to the board that the sign committee had been working with the Oregon Department of Transportation on directional road signs pointing the way to EOTEC, and those should be ready in a couple of weeks. He also shared the brick and stucco designs for a large, decorative entryway sign. The fundraising committee is also working to design the donor wall that will thank major contributors to EOTEC, and the board asked that there be some continuity of color and materials between the two signs.

Carl Hendon of Hendon Construction reported that the cold, snowy weather had pushed the expected completion date for the rodeo arena from June 1 to June 15.

John Eckhardt of Knerr Construction reported that the bid for concrete for the barns had been awarded and other subcontractor bids are not far behind. He said prolonged freezing and snowy weather — which his company is considering a once-every-75-years event — has caused some "real issues" staying on schedule.

"We're a little nervous, but we're going to get through that and find some solutions," he said.

Contact Jade McDowell at [jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4536.

**BRIEFLY**

## Asher's Army sets fundraiser

HEPPNER — Blazer tickets, a market steer and pig, a saddle, an AKC Labrador puppy, a custom fishing rod and more are among the silent auction items offered during a fundraiser by Asher's Army.

Money is being raised to help find a cure for leukodystrophy, a disease that is affecting Asher Schonbachler, the son of Eric and Rachel Schonbachler of Heppner.

The event is Saturday Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. at the Heppner Elks Lodge, 142 N. Main St. The meal is \$20 for ages 11 and up, or \$10 for 10 and under.

For more information or to make a donation to the event, visit [www.facebook.com/asherarmy](http://www.facebook.com/asherarmy).

## Heritage commission offers museum grants

SALEM — Grants are available for museums for collections projects, heritage

tourism and education and interpretation projects through the Oregon Heritage Commission.

Typically awards of \$2,000 to \$10,000, the projects can include cataloging/storage, museum marketing and promotions, training museum staff, online education, workshops and camps. Museums may partner with other organizations for projects.

A free two-hour grant workshop on project planning and grant writing is Wednesday, March 15 in Salem. A shorter webinar will be available Thursday, March 16.

For more information, contact Kuri Gill at [kuri.gill@oregon.gov](mailto:kuri.gill@oregon.gov), 503-986-0685 or visit [www.oregonheritage.org](http://www.oregonheritage.org).

Submit information to: [community@eastoregonian.com](mailto:community@eastoregonian.com) or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

**MILTON-FREEWATER**

# Portland photographer focuses on soldiers' stories

Conversation Project encourages dialogue

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**  
East Oregonian

Jim Lommasson has noticed a disconnect between the American public and soldiers who have fought in the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Portland-based freelance photographer and writer is on a mission to change that. Lommasson's 2015 book, "Exit Wounds: Soldiers' Stories — Life After Iraq and Afghanistan," is about United States soldiers who served in the wars. The book features Lommasson's photographs and interviews, as well as photographs by the participants. The project includes a traveling exhibit.

In addition, Lommasson has been active with the Oregon Humanities Conversation Project. He will facilitate a discussion titled "Life after War: Photography and Oral Histories of Coming Home." The free event is Friday, Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m. at Frazier Farmstead Museum, 1403 Chestnut St., Milton-Freewater.

Lommasson shares about the words of a Marine scrawled on a wall near Baghdad: "America is not at war. The Marine Corps is at war; America is at the mall."

Statistics, he said, indicate 100 percent of the American people knew a soldier who fought in combat during World War II. And, nearly 100 percent knew someone who fought in Vietnam. As far as the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, Lommasson said the statistics are staggering — maybe two or three percent know someone who was involved in combat.

"We don't know the soldiers that we send to war," he said. "They need to tell their stories and we need to hear their stories."

More than 60 years after the Battle of the Bulge — the bloodiest battle experienced by U.S. forces during World War II — Lommasson's father finally began to share more in-depth about his painful experiences on



Contributed by Jim Lommasson

"Growing up, my dream was to be in the Army. All I ever wanted to do was to be in the Army and lead men into combat. I got 30 seconds of my dream, I'd give my other leg to live it again." — Lucas Wilson



Contributed by Jim Lommasson

Photographer Jim Lommasson will discuss his book "Exit Wounds: Soldiers' Stories — Life After Iraq and Afghanistan" during an Oregon Humanities Conversation Project — titled Life after War: Photography and Oral Histories of Coming Home — Feb. 3 at the Frazier Farmstead Museum in Milton-Freewater.

the battlefield. Lommasson's conversations with his father the last couple years of his life served as motivation to document oral histories of recent war veterans.

Conversations with veterans, he said, need to take place sooner rather than later. It provides a better opportunity for soldiers to move forward in their lives, Lommasson said.

Starting the project in 2007, Lommasson connected with soldiers at Veterans of Foreign Wars meetings, college campuses and social media.

"Sometimes one vet would lead me to a pool of veterans," he said. "I didn't know what to expect when I started this — it started with a basic interest."

Initially, Lommasson envisioned the project as focusing on veterans' homecomings. However, as the conversations progressed, the soldiers kept coming back to sharing about their war experiences, even showing him and giving him pictures.

"I thought, 'I just need to shut up and start listening better.' The stories and photos flooded in — that's when the project took off,"

"We don't know the soldiers that we send to war. They need to tell their stories and we need to hear their stories."

— Jim Lommasson, Portland-based freelance photographer and writer

Lommasson said. During the Conversation Project event, Lommasson will show slides and share stories. The audience is invited to join the dialogue and share their thoughts and experiences.

"I try to make it so that we sit in a circle instead rows of seats," he said. "We want to encourage conversation."

For more about Lommasson's project, visit [www.lifeafterwar-soldiersstories.blogspot.com](http://www.lifeafterwar-soldiersstories.blogspot.com). For a calendar of Oregon Humanities events, go to [www.oregonhumanities.org/calendar](http://www.oregonhumanities.org/calendar). And, for more about Frazier Farmstead Museum, contact Kristin Williams at 541-938-4636 or [frazier1868@gmail.com](mailto:frazier1868@gmail.com).

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at [tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com](mailto:tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4539

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For more information visit our offices in Hermiston or Boardman or our website: [UmatillaElectric.com](http://UmatillaElectric.com).

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