

**HERMISTON**

# New places, old friends at 2016 fair appreciation dinner

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

Supporters of the Umatilla County Fair celebrated “new faces, new places and old friends” Saturday night at the 2016 Fair Appreciation Dinner.

The theme of the night — and the 2017 fair — was a nod to preparations for moving the fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo to their new digs at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, where the dinner took place.

“This is a whole new ballgame up here,” Umatilla County Fair board member Gay Newman told the audience.

There was a very long list of people to thank throughout the night, and board member Dan Dorran said reminded them that they had the opportunity to make history with “year one” at EOTEC.

“This is the beginning,” he said.

Two important people to thank were the 2016 volunteers of the year. Male volunteer of the year went to Warren Smith, who has done “odds and ends” for the fair since the 1970s, including work on the sound system, the rodeo, and building stronger gates for the pigs. Smith had to leave early to participate in the Melonville Comedy Festival, but said before he left that he has made good friends through the fair and enjoyed helping out.

“I think this is an exciting move this year up here,” he said.

Female volunteer of the year was Alice Newman, who has worked through the years on everything from coordinating exhibitors to serving as a chaperon for the Umatilla County Fair Court.

“This individual has a lifelong history and family tradition of supporting youth activities and the Umatilla County Fair,” board member Don Miller said when announcing Newman as the 2016 winner.

“All I can say is I love this fair and love supporting it, so thank you,” Newman responded after receiving her award.

The business partner of the year went to Shelco Electric, after Dorran gave a demonstration with potatoes of how they somehow manage to fit “15 pounds of potatoes in a five pound bag”



Staff photo by Jade McDowell  
**Lou Lyons, center, accepts the 2017 Umatilla County Fair grand marshal title while Dan Dorran, left, and Gay Newman, right, look on Saturday at the 2016 Umatilla County Fair appreciation dinner at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.**



Staff photo by Jade McDowell  
**2016 Male Volunteer of the Year Warren Smith shows off his award.**



Staff photo by Jade McDowell  
**2016 Female Volunteer of the Year Alice Newman thanks the fair board.**

when it comes to supplying electricity to all of the fair’s needs.

“I’d like to recognize Shelco Electric for carrying the Umatilla County Fair for as long as I’ve been on board — and it hasn’t burnt down!” Dorran said.

The county’s youth sale committee was also recognized by the Oregon State University Extension Center for their work in making each year’s youth livestock auction such a success.

In addition to thanking those that made the 2016 fair possible, the dinner Saturday night was also about passing the baton on to a new group of people ready to be the face of the 2017 fair.

Lou Lyons, owner of Elmer’s Irrigation & Supplies in Hermiston, will be the fair’s 2017 grand marshal. Board member Bob Wolfe said Lyons has been a huge supporter of 4-H, FFA and other aspects of the fair, including providing hundreds of tickets for youth

to attend the Farm-City Pro Rodeo each year.

“The fact that he embodies giving to youth in the community is an understatement,” Wolfe said.

The board introduced the 2017 Umatilla County Fair Court on Saturday. The court said goodbye to 2016 princess Raylee Lenhart, but 2016 princesses JaNessa Prewitt and Kira Krumbah-Kuhar were joined on the 2017 court by newcomer Karolyn Jones.

Prewitt is a Hermiston High School senior, Krumbah-Kuhar is a McLoughlin High School sophomore in Milton-Freewater and Jones attends Pendleton High School.

Prewitt said she learned on the fair court that “creating friends and memories is what life is all about.” She said she especially appreciated the support of the fair community during 2016, when her family’s house burned down with all of her fair court clothing and accessories

inside. “When I lost my home last June, they jumped right in and I was able to continue to every event,” she said.

Another new face to the 2017 introduced Saturday night was Cyndie Driscoll, who was recently hired as the sponsorship and marketing director for the fair.

“I always think outside the box and color outside the lines, so look forward to new everything,” she said.

Board member Lucas Wagner also announced the entertainment lineup for the fair. This year’s fair-goers can look forward to country pop duo LoCash on Tuesday, Southern rock/country band Marshall Tucker Band on Wednesday, country music artist Tracy Lawrence on Thursday, Latino Night on Friday (band to be announced) and rock band Great White on Saturday.

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**PENDLETON**

# Southgate exit on I-84 may get rework

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

At a meeting Thursday, the Pendleton Planning Commission will take another look at a plan that could significantly change how Pendleton drivers navigate the area surrounding the Southgate exit on Interstate 84.

In 2010, the commission approved an interchange area management plan that is meant to ease congestion along the off-ramp and on-ramp at exit 209.

The plan calls for the four-way intersection of Southwest Emigrant Avenue and Southwest 20th Street to be moved west, where some homes and retail spaces are now.

Instituting such a change would require realigning 20th Street and building a new road to access the Exit 209 entrance and exit, among other changes.

The plan broke the project into three phases with an estimated total cost of \$18.5 million.

The commission is meeting with the Oregon Department of Transportation on Thursday to discuss whether the area surrounding exit 209 has met a traffic benchmark that would trigger the implementation process for the first phase of the project, which would realign parts of the intersection, widen southwest 20th Street to a five-lane cross section between southwest

Emigrant Avenue and southwest Court Street and widen the southwest-bound Court to accommodate dual left-turn lanes at the 20th Street intersection.

To trigger the first phase, the traffic queue on the northbound lane at the existing intersection must consistently back up past the I-84/Southgate terminal.

Even if the commission decides that the traffic meets the trigger, ODOT spokesman Tom Strandberg said Pendleton residents probably won’t see designs or construction in the near future because neither the city or state has committed money to it.

“It would be kind of a shelf project — we could have it ready to go once the funds are found and take it off the shelf,” he said.

Although the action at the commission meeting is mostly procedural, the management plan warns that the interchange area could pose a safety hazard to motorists and pedestrians if the issues aren’t addressed within 20 years.

At a larger level, the plan states that an unsafe interchange could cause I-84 travelers to avoid stopping in Pendleton or force the city to declare a development moratorium on the south side of town.

The commission will meet on Thursday at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at Pendleton City Hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

**BRIEFLY**

**Legislators to talk budget in Hermiston**

HERMISTON — The Oregon Legislature’s Joint Ways and Means Committee will visit Hermiston Feb. 17 as a part of a series of town hall meetings to discuss the state budget for the 2017-2019 biennium.

Members of the public will have the opportunity to comment on the upcoming budget and the “Existing Resource Framework” released by committee co-chairs state Rep. Nancy Nathanson and state Sen. Richard Devlin, which anticipates a \$1.8 billion shortfall if revenues remain the same.

The committee will meet at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St., on Feb. 17 from 5-7 p.m.

**Superintendent to address retired educators**

PENDLETON — Andy Kovach, superintendent of the Pendleton School District, is the special speaker for the upcoming Oregon Retired Educators Association-Unit 9 meeting.

Anyone who is interested is invited to the no-host gathering. Kovach will discuss current school district news Thursday at 11:30 a.m. at Sundown Bar

& Grill, 233 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton.

OREA membership isn’t limited to retired educators, the group is open to anyone interested in promoting education. For more information, call unit president Bill Mayclin at 541-276-4540.

**Oldies Night takes listeners to Chicago**

MILTON-FREEWATER — With more than three dozen albums and 50 chart singles, the band Chicago was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2016.

Originally known as The Big Thing, they later were called The Chicago Transit Authority. After the real transit authority — which operates buses, subways, and elevated trains — threatened to sue the group, they shortened their name to Chicago.

BJ the DJ will spin tunes of the group — including “If You Leave Me Now,” “Hard to Say I’m Sorry,” “Look Away” and “Hard Habit to Break” — during Oldies Night at Milton-Freewater. The free event is Saturday from 7-10 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church, 816 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. Light snacks will be available from The Frogs.

For more information, contact Bob Jones at 541-938-7028 or [dubiquer@charter.net](mailto:dubiquer@charter.net).

**HERMISTON**

# Simplot Grower Solutions opens new, larger location

**Largest dry fertilizer blending facility in Eastern Oregon**

East Oregonian

Simplot Grower Solutions has expanded its Oregon offerings with a new facility in Hermiston.

The new location, at 79319 Simplot Road, is a “state-of-the-art” 19,000-ton dry fertilizer blending facility and the largest in Eastern Oregon, according to a news release from Simplot.

It is already operational and open for business.

At the new facility customers can choose from a “wide variety” of products on site to create custom blends of crop nutrient products that will be mixed and loaded

on demand “within minutes of arrival,” according to the news release.

“The new location enables us the flexibility to provide the same top-of-the-line products our customers desire, accurately blended, much more quickly,” said George DesBrisay, Simplot area manager for the Lower Columbia Basin and Willamette Valley, in a statement. “We do everything we can to ensure farmers maximize the success in all their fields and this is one more tool to help in that effort.”

The entrance and load-out for trucks is designed so that drivers can remain in their trucks while orders are being loaded, increasing safety.

Simplot previously operated in Umatilla on Umatilla River Road. The company will keep that facility for

organic fertilizer, while much of its other business has been transferred to the new Hermiston facility (located on Simplot Road off Highway 207 near the Space Age fuel station).

Dave Dufault, vice president and general manager of Simplot’s retail business, said in a statement that Oregon is “extremely important” to the Boise-based company.

“We know our customers expect great products with great service, and this new facility will enable us to handle more of those products and deliver when our customers need them,” he said. “We are very proud of that capability.”

For more information call 541-922-5672 or visit [www.simplotgrowersolutions.com](http://www.simplotgrowersolutions.com).

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**MONEY RAISED BY OUR BANQUET STAYS IN OREGON!**  
Columbia Basin Chapter supported the following events and many others:

- Youth Bow Hunt
- Coyote Predation Management
- OHA/ODFW Pheasant Hunt and Skeet Shoot