

PENDLETON

Commission approves \$3.5M line of credit for downtown projects

East Oregonian

The Pendleton Development Commission took the first step toward replenishing its coffers Tuesday night.

At a meeting, the commission approved a request for proposal to seek a \$3.5 million line of credit to fund the next spate of urban renewal projects.

The commission has typically taken out a large loan and used the tax increment revenue it collects from the urban renewal district to pay it back. But as the commission uses the last of its previous loan, it decided to use a different approach for the next round of financing.

Councilor Paul Chalmers, the chairman of the commission, said a line of credit allows the commission members to be more fiscally responsible by borrowing money as they need it while also providing the urban renewal district with the necessary funding as it heads toward the end of its term in 2023.

"It's tough to sell cookies without a cookie jar," he said.

Staff has projected \$3.36 million in expenses over the next seven years, which will be used for existing programs like Jump Start loans and façade grants as well as relatively new initiatives like the festival area and the second story improvement grant.

More funding will coincide with more work for Charles Denight, the commission's associate director.

Meeting later as the city council, members unanimously agreed to increase

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For video of the Pendleton City Council meeting visit eastoregonian.com

Denight's work hours from 20 to 27.

The increase in hours means Denight's budget will grow from \$35,000 to \$44,968. His pay will also receive a bump from \$26,400 to \$31,400.

City manager Robb Corbett said the launch of the second story program has eaten up much of Denight's time and is one of the reasons a work-hour increase was needed.

After meeting behind closed doors, the council also voted unanimously to sell three lots the city owns at Sunridge Estates to developer Dusty Pace for \$119,000.

The city owns several lots at Sunridge because they took out liens on the properties as a part of a local improvement district before they were foreclosed on.

Although Corbett asked city attorney Nancy Kerns not to disclose the city's loan obligation publicly, she did say that the sales price exceeded the obligation.

The council also approved an ordinance that will assess penalties to marijuana retailers that don't pay their taxes on time.

The city previously signed an agreement with the Oregon Department of Revenue for the state agency to collect the local 3 percent tax on behalf of the city, and the department requires to the city to create penalties as a part of the agreement.

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Luncheon discusses local economy

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Uncertainty was one of themes of the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce's annual economic outlook luncheon at the Pendleton Convention Center on Wednesday.

Economist Bill Conerly delivered the keynote address at the luncheon, where he told the city's business community that Pendleton's short-term economic prospects looked good.

With Umatilla County seeing both population and economic growth, Conerly told the audience that a low unemployment rate usually

causes turnover issues as workers feel more comfortable quitting their current jobs to seek other work.

Conerly said workers tend to leave jobs because of unhappiness with their bosses and suggested employers invest in training their managers.

While the local economy is improving in Conerly's view, he was less sure how President Donald Trump's positions would affect the national economy.

Given Trump's skepticism of current international trade deals, Conerly said a decrease in imports could hurt the retail and manufacturing industries.

"During trade negotia-

tions, I expect him to come right to the edge of disaster before stepping back," he said. "I'm keeping my fingers crossed."

Increased deportations of undocumented immigrants under Trump could also hurt businesses, Conerly said.

According to Conerly, undocumented labor makes up a significant portion of the agriculture, construction and hospitality industries, and some companies could see their workforce reduced by a third if their businesses are targeted in a raid.

Conerly suggested business owners and management plan ahead for any kind of economic downturn so they can respond quickly

if it comes to pass.

The luncheon also featured a speech from Jeff Lorton, the creative director of Duke Joseph Agency and the project manager for Oregon UAS Future-Farm, an organization that connects technology companies with local farmers.

Because of the success of previous events, Lorton said Pendleton's annual Precision Farming Expo would be expanded from two days to three and run from Aug. 15-17. He hopes the event attracts 350 people.

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LA GRANDE

Pop-up exhibit features art of Pendleton graduate

East Oregonian

A showcase of Erica Hitzman's recent studio work is featured in "Don't Blink," a pop-up exhibition this weekend in La Grande.

The daughter of Dr. Jon and Jacquie Hitzman of Pendleton, the artist is a recent graduate of Eastern Oregon University. The exhibit opening reception is Friday from 6-9 p.m. in the gallery at 103 Fir St., located in the Sac Annex next to Earth and Vine Wine Bar & Bistro in La Grande. Refreshments will be provided. Also, the gallery is open Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The exhibit includes acrylic paintings on unstretched, untreated canvas featuring a spilling technique in combination with detached or sleeping figures. The techniques, in combination with one another, attempt to achieve a dreamlike break from reality.

Hitzman aims to show strength and fragility in combination with one another by painting highly rendered images of a woman onto a less precious and tattered canvas, commenting on the weight of reality and the feeling of being exposed. She aspires to express the desire so many have to disappear from reality into their own dreamscape, while also acknowledging the impos-



Contributed by Laura Hancock

A pop-up exhibition of works by Erica Hitzman of Pendleton is featured Friday and Saturday in the gallery at 103 Fir Street in the Sac Annex in La Grande.

sibility to do so most of the time. For Hitzman, creating this body of work has been — somewhat ironically, she said — a reality check as well as a small escape from it.

Born in Ukiah, California in 1993, Hitzman grew up in Pendleton. According to her biography, she moved to La Grande in 2011 to study at Eastern Oregon University. After her first year, Hitzman attended the Hochschule der Medien in Stuttgart, Germany, where she studied media and fine arts for two years.

She returned to La

Grande to complete her undergraduate studies, receiving a bachelor's degree in art in 2016. Hitzman has exhibited work in the university's Nightingale Gallery as well as The Blackfish Gallery in Portland.

For more information, contact Laura Hancock of EOU university advancement at 541-962-3585 or lhancock@eou.edu. For more about Hitzman, visit www.ericahitzmanart.com.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

BRIEFLY

Irrigon man injured in crash

UMATILLA — An Irrigon man crashed into the back of a semitrailer Tuesday morning near Umatilla.

John M. Thorp, 59, was southbound on Interstate 82 about a mile from the Oregon border when he drove into the back of a 2014 Freightliner towing a trailer, according to the Washington State Patrol.

The semi driver, Gary L. Holloway, 72, of Selah, Washington, was not injured. Thorp, however, was injured, and an ambulance took him to Trios Health, Kennewick. The *Tri-City Herald* reported he was in good condition at the time.

The state patrol also reported troopers gave Thorp a citation for following too close.

Annual Echo bike race postponed

ECHO — Echo's annual mountain bike race, the Echo Red 2 Red, has been postponed and will now be held on Saturday, April 1. The race was originally planned for March 3-4, but was rescheduled due to weather complications.

"Nobody's been able to ride the trails, there's been too much snow and water," said Stephanie Myers, owner of Echo Bike and Board and an organizer of the race.

This will be the ninth annual race. Myers said usually about 400 people participate.

Participants can register until March 27, the Monday before the race, at www.echored2red.com.

PENDLETON



Photo contributed by Emily Callender

Pendleton high school students (from left) Kaci Graber, Wade Coleman, Diana Cisneros, Jonathan Wolotira, Hannah Mosman and Kalli Hubbard participated in All-Northwest Choir this month.

Students participate in regional honor choir

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Several Pendleton High School students joined young musicians from all over the western United States Feb. 16-19 to participate in the All-Northwest Honor Choir.

Diana Cisneros, Wade Coleman, Kaci Graber, Kalli Hubbard, Hannah Mossman and Jonathan Wolotira traveled to Bellevue, Washington, accompanied by their teacher Emily Callender, where they rehearsed and performed music with more than 1,000 other students. Students attend the event from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming.

"It's unusual to have this many accepted to All-Northwest," said Callender, who has taught orchestra at Pendleton High School for nine years and choir for seven. "Typically it's two or three students. Six is kind of exciting."

There are two choirs, a treble choir (comprised of all female singers) and a mixed choir, which includes

both boys and girls.

Callender said she submitted 18 applications. Auditions are blind, meaning a judge listens to all the submissions for one voice part without any information about the students, ranks the vocal submissions and selects the top ones. There is no limit on how many students from one school can be accepted. According to a press release from All-Northwest Honor Ensembles, more than 4,600 auditioned to participate.

Callender said the students learn music in different languages and styles spanning spiritual, folk and classical.

"It's more challenging music, at a high level," Callender said. "They go with the music already prepared, and get to work with a top choir director, with other students with the same ambitions."

Callender said the students are enthusiastic about the chance to learn new things about music.

"They're great musicians and students," she said. "It's a huge opportunity for these kids."

U&C UMATILLA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
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SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Umatilla Electric is offering the following scholarships for the 2017-18 school year:

ACADEMIC

Twelve \$2,500 scholarships are available for members of UEC and/or their dependent children who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program at a two- or four-year college. Apply online at: www.oregonstudentaid.gov.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

A \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems. Apply at www.oregonstudentaid.gov.

LINEMAN TRADE

A \$2,000 scholarship is available to members and/or applicants whose parent or guardian is an active member, and are interested in the Line Construction trade and will be attending an accredited Line College. Go to: UmatillaElectric.com to download the application.

For more information visit our offices in Hermiston or Boardman or our website: UmatillaElectric.com.

You can also call us at 541-567-6414 or OSAC at 1-800-452-8807.



Deadline is March 1, 2017

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: 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.