

HERMISTON



EO file photo
A three-year mosaic project created by Highland Hills fifth grade students was donated to the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center on Friday.

EOTEC still working out fair, rodeo contracts

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Less than six months remain until the Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Rodeo. And while construction is progressing at their new home, some details have yet to be worked out.

At the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center board meeting Friday, Farm-City board member Mike Kay raised a concern that a contract between EOTEC and the rodeo has not yet been finalized.

“From a history standpoint, we’ve been waiting for a year for this,” Kay said, recalling repeated attempts to solidify a contract. “We’re now five months away from the rodeo, and we still don’t have any type of a working agreement.”

He added that the agreement for the rodeo-specific mercantile building had already been completed and a year-long lease had been signed.

“We have a piece of property that we have to start developing that’ll be at financial cost to the rodeo,” he said. “It doesn’t do us any good to continue to work on the mercantile piece if we don’t have a working agreement on the piece of property.”

Byron Smith, who is both EOTEC board chair and Hermiston city manager, said the contract has been delayed so the fair and rodeo contracts can be brought before the board at the same time, but told Kay and the Farm-City board to trust in the “good faith” agreements between the entities.

“It’s been a little slower putting together the contract for the fair than for the rodeo,” Smith said. “We’re starting to work with them, and have gone through a first draft.” He said many people want to be able to comment on the agreement before it is finalized, but that should happen in March.

The EOTEC board includes representatives of the fair, rodeo, city and county.

The board received some construction updates at the meeting as well. Smith

reported Hendon Construction is continuing to pour concrete walls for the arena despite the cold weather, and construction has also begun on ticket booths and sound racks. Gravel is scheduled to be brought in Monday, and Smith said the city is also paying for the drilling of a second irrigation well.

The board also discussed how to handle sponsorship of the fair and rodeo this year. Smith noted that in the past EOTEC has sponsored both entities, but this year may be a little different, as both events will now be on EOTEC property.

Both groups said they would still like EOTEC’s sponsorship, and will go through the application process.

Smith said EOTEC paid about \$5,000 in sponsorships for each group last year, and anticipates EOTEC’s contribution will be similar this year.

Also at the meeting:

- Hermiston teacher Pat Temple and Rotary president Dean Fialka presented a mosaic artwork donation, which depicts the Hermiston Butte and was created by students over the past three years. The artwork will hang in the EOTEC building for the public to enjoy.

- The board announced a neighborhood meeting at 5:30 p.m. on March 7 where fair and rodeo representatives will discuss logistics for the events including parking, traffic and noise issues.

- The board discussed the proposed organizational structure for EOTEC. At the top of the chart is the Hermiston City Council and Umatilla County Commissioners, followed by the EOTEC board. The board oversees the manager, who in turn is in charge of an administrative assistant and operations/maintenance manager. The board hopes to finalize this structure at its next meeting, March 10 at 7 a.m.

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at 541-564-4534 or jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com



Contributed photo by Gregg Rietmann

Large hole opens up on Griffith Road

Rain, snow and flooding earlier this week took its toll on Morrow County roads.

“We got roads closed all over Morrow County,” said lone farmer Gregg Rietmann. He said on Tuesday he drove on Elmer Griffith Road north of lone and saw water making a ditch a couple of feet wide. About three hours later he drove by again and found the ditch grew into this washout. He estimated the hole was about 10 feet long and 14 feet deep.

“If you didn’t know it and came down there, it would swallow your car right up,” he said.

The East Oregonian is looking for more examples of what winter’s weather wrought on local roads. Send your pictures to editor@eastoregonian.com.

States set spring chinook season on Columbia River

By GEORGE PLAVER
East Oregonian

Spring chinook fishing season will run March 1 through April 6 on the Columbia River from the mouth upstream to Bonneville Dam, and March 16 through May 5 from the dam to the Oregon-Washington border.

Fisheries managers from both states set the seasons Thursday during a joint state hearing in Vancouver, Washington. This year’s forecast calls for 227,900 returning spring chinook, including 160,400 fish migrating upriver. The prediction is down from last year’s return of 274,700 spring chinook, and the 10-year average of 285,900 fish.

From Bonneville Dam to the Oregon-Washington border, the daily bag limit is two fin-clipped adult salmon or steelhead in

combination, of which no more than one can be a chinook. Anglers can also retain up to five fin-clipped jack salmon per day.

Up to 921 chinook will be available to harvest, and the fishery may be shortened or extended depending on the catch. Boat fishing for salmon and steelhead is prohibited between Bonneville Dam and the Tower Island power lines, about six miles downstream from The Dalles.

Downstream of Bonneville Dam, the bag limits are the same. The states have also adopted a no-fishing sanctuary around the mouth of the Lewis River in Washington to protect returns.

For more information about salmon and steelhead fishing, check the 2017 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations.

Cantu pleads guilty to manslaughter

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

George Rodriguez Cantu pleaded guilty Friday to second-degree manslaughter for the slaying of Guadalupe Jose Diaz.

Cantu, 24, of Walla Walla, appeared in person in the courtroom at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton. Moments before the hearing, he maneuvered his shackled hands so he could sign the petition to change his plea and accept the charge.



Cantu

Two armed sheriff’s deputies sat near Cantu while other security staff watched over the court. A handful of Cantu’s supporters sat on the benches behind him while people who knew Diaz sat across the aisle. Some cried and none spoke.

The state accused Cantu of killing Diaz in a drive-by shooting in July 2015 in Milton-Freewater. Cantu has been in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, since March 2, 2016. He was to go to trial starting March 6 on charges of murder,

unlawful use of a weapon, unlawful discharge of a weapon and unlawful possession of a firearm. His attorney, Robert Klahn of Pendleton, announced Thursday that both sides had reached a deal.

Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer asked Cantu if he acknowledged he “recklessly contributed to causing the death of Guadalupe Diaz, thereby committing the crime of manslaughter in the second degree.”

Cantu said he did. “You want me to accept and sign this petition?” Brauer asked.

“Yes, please,” Cantu responded.

Second-degree manslaughter carries a mandatory minimum sentence of six years, three months. Brauer set Cantu’s sentencing for March 15.

Courts allow the offender and victims to give statements at the time of sentencing. Until then, Cantu remains in the county jail.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

BRIEFLY

Umatilla County Jail gets two new deputies

PENDLETON — Two Umatilla County sheriff’s corrections deputies graduated Friday from the Oregon Public Safety Academy.

Jeff Reichle and Anthony Scott completed the basic corrections course, according to the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. They were among 40 graduates at the event in Salem that included Union County corrections deputy Dylan Hamilton and Malheur County corrections deputy Derrick Peasley.

The Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office also reported their results from the recent nationwide “Click It or Ticket” campaign.

Deputies from Feb. 6-19 worked more than 33 extra hours to focus on seat belts,

child restraints, texting and speed violations and issued more than 69 warnings and citations for traffic offenses.

Hermiston schools plan community forums

HERMISTON — The Hermiston School District announced a day of community forums to talk about enrollment challenges, safety and security concerns, aging infrastructure and present information about the proposed 2017 bond.

Three sessions are scheduled Friday, March 10 in the Hermiston School District office, 305 S.W. 11th Street. The forums will begin at 7 a.m., noon and 7 p.m. Translation services will be available.

All who are interested in learning about the different aspects of the bond or who have questions, comments or concerns are encouraged to attend.

U&C UMATILLA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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

Call for Vendors!

Community Health Fair
Saturday, April 8, 2017
Pendleton Convention Center
9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Free Community Event to Promote Wellness

NO CHARGE TO HOST A BOOTH

To Reserve a Space
Call Emily @ 541-278-2627
emilysmith@chiwest.com

CHI St. Anthony Hospital

2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR 97801