

PENDLETON

Oregon East Symphony downsizes April concert due to budget constraints

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The Oregon East Symphony may be cutting down, but it's not at risk of cutting out.

Oregon East Symphony executive director J.D. Kindle said Tuesday that budget constraints caused the symphony to reconfigure its April concert, but the rest of the nonprofit's operations should remain the same.

Kindle said a few grants the symphony usually receives didn't come through this year, forcing him to cut the number of musicians planned for the April 22 concert at the Vert Auditorium and using music in the public domain instead of renting it.

Kindle said the symphony's status as a small nonprofit — its current annual budget is only \$159,000 — means he and the symphony board can move quickly when encountered with a budget issue.

"We are fortunate that we are a small nonprofit and we're nimble enough to shift things around," he said.

The symphony's fleetness allows it to avoid a situation similar to that of the Eugene Opera House, Kindle said,

which recently ended its season early because of its budget woes.

Although the symphony's budget is small, costs can still add up for its productions.

Kindle said a full symphonic concert can cost up to \$15,000 in personnel costs alone.

If a piece of music requires an instrument that isn't commonly played, like the harp or French horn, Kindle will recruit musicians from across the Northwest to play with the symphony, paying them a stipend to come out to Pendleton. Utilizing a smaller ensemble of local players keeps costs down.

Another cost saving measure is to use music in the public domain — material that is free for anyone to use.

Kindle said there isn't any rhyme or reason for the costs of renting music for use in a performance.

The symphony originally planned to play "Pines of Rome," an early 20th century "symphonic poem" by Italian composer Ottorino Respighi, but the rights to perform the music cost \$700 and hit the cutting block once the symphony decided to do some trimming.

While he's optimistic about the symphony's fiscal health in the short term — he and the board are already discussing how they will lower their revenue expectations for the next budget cycle — he has a more bleak overview of the future of arts and culture nonprofits in the long term.

Kindle said income inequality is hurting these kinds of nonprofits in multiple ways. As individuals have less money to donate to arts and culture, larger charities that would ordinarily patronize smaller nonprofits are now honing their focus on income inequality.

Kindle said he's also concerned about conservative "saber rattling" over eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts.

Although the endowment doesn't directly donate to the symphony, he said money does trickle down through the Oregon Arts Commission.

If the commission's grants stop coming, Kindle said, the symphony will have to use utilize its nimble nature once again.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.



Photo contributed by Pacific Power

Pacific Power has received a license to operate the Wallowa Falls hydroelectric project near Wallowa Lake for another 40 years.

Pacific Power relicensed to run Wallowa County hydro project

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

Federal energy regulators will allow Pacific Power to continue operating the Wallowa Falls hydro project for the next 40 years, while also requiring additional protections for bull trout in the Wallowa River.

The facility, located south of Joseph near Wallowa Lake, consists of a dam on the river's east fork that diverts water to a small powerhouse with a single 1.1-megawatt generator capable of producing enough electricity for about 500 homes.

Pacific Power has run the system since 1942 when it acquired the original operating license from Inland Power and Light. On Tuesday, the company announced it received a new license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission after the previous license expired last year.

As part of the agreement, project manager Russ Howison with PacifiCorp said they will invest \$3 million over the next three years to improve stream

flow and habitat for bull trout, which are now listed as threatened in Oregon under the Endangered Species Act.

"Environmental standards have changed so much," Howison said. "With an old operating license, you have to bring the project up to new environmental standards."

Most of the work will involve leaving more water in stream for fish, and blocking passage into areas where bull trout may be vulnerable, Howison said.

In previous years, Howison said the minimum in-stream releases from the dam into the river bypass were just half a cubic foot per second. Those figures have since bumped up significantly to 4 cubic feet per second during the winter, and five cubic feet per second during the summer. One cubic foot of water is equal to roughly 7.5 gallons.

"That's putting considerably more water in the portion of the stream below the dam," he said.

Howison said they are working with the U.S. Geological Survey to install a real-time stream

gauge to monitor required minimum flows on the East Fork Wallowa River. The dam's intake structure will be modified to account for additional releases.

Crews will also build a fish passage barrier leading into the tailrace below the powerhouse, which had attracts bull trout especially during the summer. The problem, Howison said, is when the dam faces an unplanned outage, the tail-race is suddenly drained of water.

"That's the real risk to bull trout," he said.

Since the project is right next to a number of popular hiking and snowshoeing trails, Pacific Power has agreed to work with the Forest Service on putting new signs and landscaping to conceal the powerhouse for visitors. Once the work begins, Howison said there may be some temporary access restrictions, though the company will notify neighbors if and when that happens.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

Wife assaulter sent to prison

HEPPNER — John Alexander Brown of Hermiston pleaded guilty Feb. 15 to assaulting his wife in front of their children.

The father and husband will go to prison for almost six years.

Morrow County Circuit Court records show Brown pleaded guilty to second-degree assault for beating his wife with a stick and causing her serious physical injury.

The attack took place in April 2016 in mountains near Heppner, where Brown and his family were camping, according to the Morrow County District Attorney's Office. Brown's wife called 9-1-1 to report the assault and sheriff's deputies rushed her and the children to safety. They caught Brown a day later when he left the campsite.

Second-degree assault carries a mandatory minimum sentence in Oregon of five years, 10 months. In exchange for the guilty plea, the district attorney's office dismissed charges of fourth-degree assault and felon in possession of a firearm.

Brown is now at the Oregon Department of Correction's intake center in the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, Wilsonville.

Motorcycle safety courses start in Pendleton

PENDLETON — Motorcycle safety courses begin this month in Pendleton.

Oregon law requires all new riders to take an approved safety course. Anyone younger than 21 must complete an Oregon basic motorcycle training course to earn a motorcycle endorsement. Riders 21 and older can take a basic or intermediate course to meet state requirements.

Team Oregon, the state's motorcycle safety program, announced a basic course cost of \$199 for 15 hours of instruction over three days that combines classroom learning with on-cycle instruction and practice on a closed course. The state provides training motorcycles and helmets.

Intermediate courses cost \$169 for eight hours in one day and are for riders who are self-taught or who haven't ridden in some time and are getting back into motorcycling.

Both courses are available with an online classroom option.

Riders who complete courses are eligible for testing waivers from the Oregon Division of Driver

BRIEFLY

and Motor Vehicles. Riders are required to follow up at a DMV office to have the motorcycle endorsement added to their driver's license.

Courses run from February to October in Pendleton, and from March through July in Baker City, and May to early October in La Grande. Courses also run April through October in Ontario.

For more information or to register, visit team-oregon.org or call 800-545-9944.

Hwy 730 upgrades to cause delays around Umatilla

UMATILLA — Upgrades to Highway 730 around Umatilla will cause some traffic delays over the next few months.

The eastbound traffic

signal at Brownell Road and Interstate 82 will be upgraded with technology that can detect traffic. And sidewalk ramps between River Road and Brownell Road will be updated and made ADA-accessible. That work started Monday.

A paving overlay will also take place in April, running from Southshore Drive to McNary but skipping downtown Umatilla.

Drivers can expect minor delays and lane closures through mid-April. After the sidewalk work is done and paving begins, flaggers will be used and delays could run up to 20 minutes. The \$2.5 million project is expected to be finished in mid-June.

Traffic fines are double in work zones, and the Oregon Department of Transportation asks drivers to slow down and use caution around the project.

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THU—MAR 9—7 PM
Anchor Point Seventh-day Adventist Church
77 West Highland Ave--Hermiston
Info: 541-289-3022

Admission is free – An offering will be received.


STUDENT OF THE WEEK



Sara von Borstel
Weston-McEwen High School

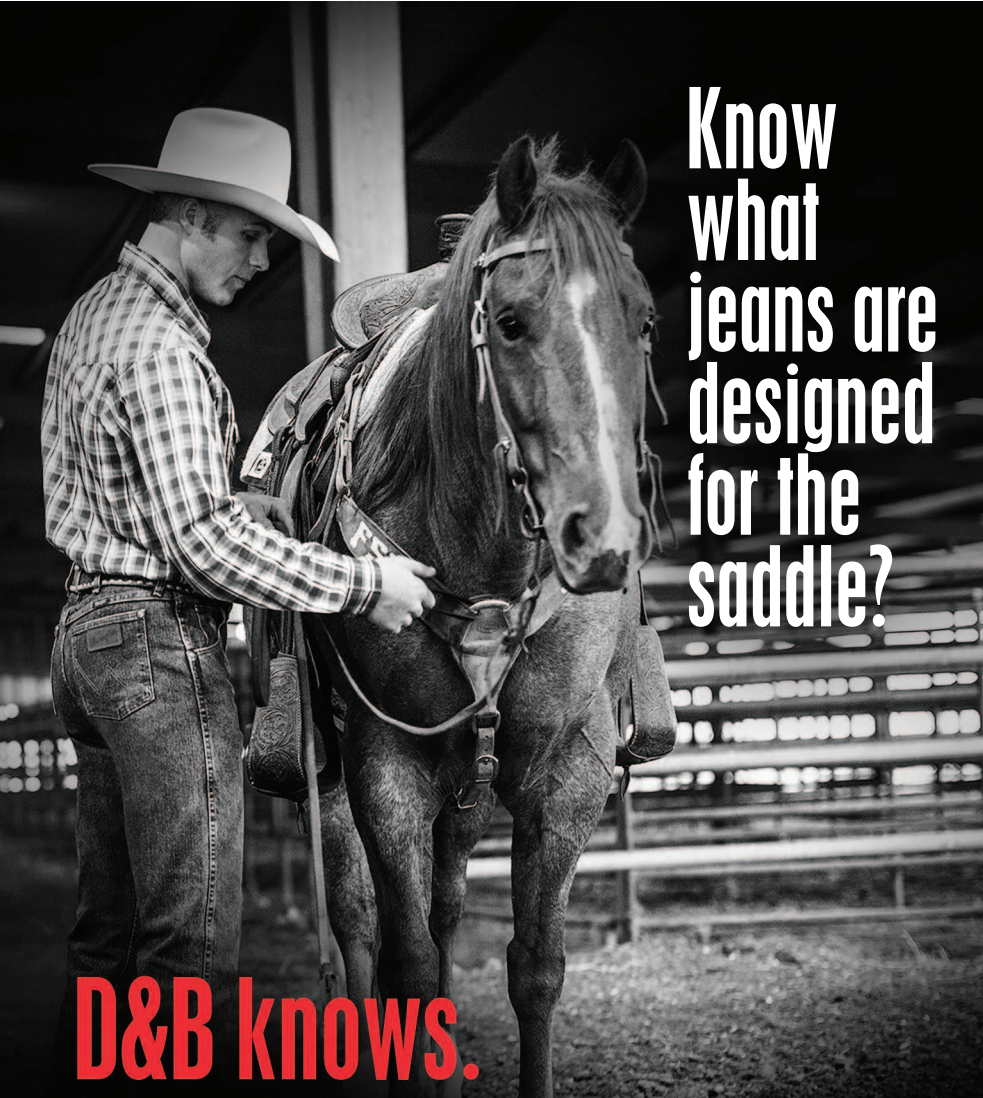
Sara von Borstel is currently a senior at Weston-McEwen High School with a 4.26 weighted GPA. She has received numerous honors and academic awards while a student at WMHS. She has been on the honor roll all four years and is a current member of the National Honor Society as well as treasurer of the senior class. She was awarded the Athena Youth Citizen of the Year last month and is also an outstanding athlete – this past fall her and her teammates were crowned State 2A Volleyball Champions and she was named Player of the Game and selected to the All-State Tournament First Team.

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