

# FUNDING: CAPECO employs about 56 people, and 8-12 could lose their jobs

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The nonprofit uses some of the federal money, she explained, to apply for grants from big utility companies to give the program a boost.

Randy Moulton is the president of Mr. Insulation Co., Hermiston. He said the business handles about 20 CAPECO projects a year, often during the slack time of winter when crews are not on bigger construction projects.

"I would hate to see it go bye-bye," he said. "It keeps about four or five guys busy."

Justin Stewart is the residential installation manager for Thews Sheet Metal, Pendleton. He installs heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems and equipment. He said he probably put in bids on 20-25 CAPECO projects and won a third or more of them.

"For residential, it's been a good chunk of the pie," Stewart said, and cutting the income would affect the company.

"It's all trickle down," he said.

Trump's budget also calls for wiping out the Community Services Block Grant. CAPECO receives about \$155,000 from the program, which Hall described as "grassroots funding for community action organizations."

Most grants comes with restrictions on the how to use the money. LIHEAP, for example, only can provide for energy assistance. But the Community Services Block Grant is flexible, Hall said, and organizations can use that money to address a variety of needs.

CAPECO uses some of the money to pay for four affordable housing projects, and a big chunk goes to food services, which includes distributing food throughout the region and operating a food bank on Pendleton's Airport Hill.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

**Jim Barnes, CAPECO's warehouse coordinator, organizes the warehouse's walk-in freezer on Friday afternoon. The community action program loses approximately \$2 million in President Trump's proposed budget.**

## Heating and weatherization program local numbers

President Donald Trump's proposed budget eliminates the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and the Weatherization Assistance Program. The nonprofit Community Action Program of East Central Oregon administers the federal funds for Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties. CAPECO reported the following figures for the two programs for fiscal year 2015-16:

- 2,755 households received LIHEAP.
- 7,319 people received LIHEAP. Of those, 42 percent were children and 16 percent were seniors.
- CAPECO's budget for LIHEAP was \$1,392,295; 5.9 percent of that was for administrative costs.
- The aggregate value of direct-client payments in LIHEAP was \$1,065,109.57.
- 34 households received weatherization.
- 86 people received weatherization.
- CAPECO's budget for weatherization was \$383,013. (CAPECO has additional funding sources for weatherization services but are not part of the federal budget.)
- CAPECO used 5.6 percent for administrative costs.
- CAPECO paid \$199,843.05 to local contractors and vendors for the weatherization work.

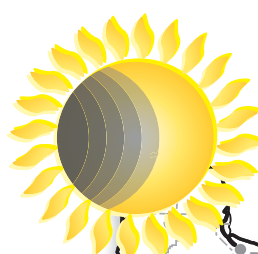
Killing off the LIHEAP, the Community Services Block Grant and others would save the federal government \$4.2 billion annually, according to the Trump budget, and eliminating the Weatherization Assistance Program and the State Energy Program to would save about \$2 billion.

Hall said the potential cuts amount to a loss of about \$2 million a year for CAPECO. Less money also means less staff.

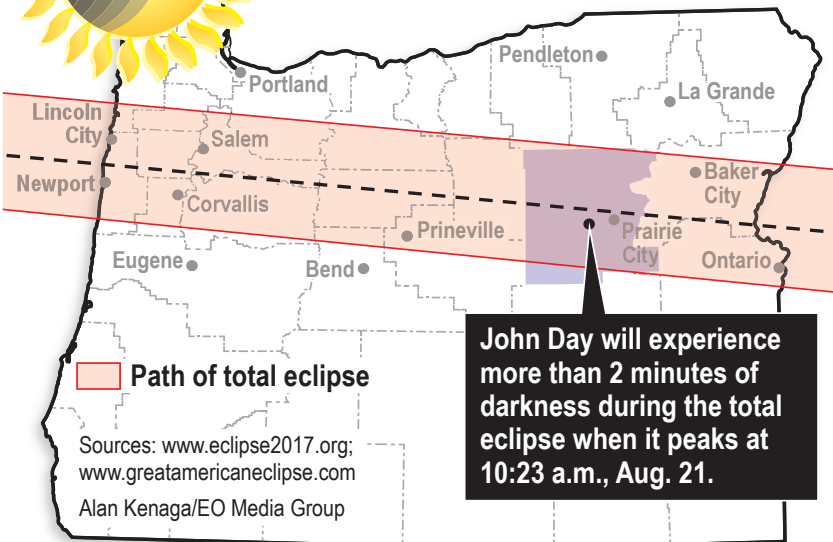
The nonprofit employs about 56 people, Hall said, and eight to 12 employees could lose their jobs. She said many of those are the people providing services right to clients.

And the people CAPECO serves is who this comes down to, Hall said, and they are who will feel any budget cuts the deepest.

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## Solar eclipse to darken Oregon skies in August



## ECLIPSE: Rooms and campgrounds are booked solid in the path of totality

Continued from 1A

clear skies and low light pollution, and there may be no better place in the world for people to catch a glimpse of the cosmic ballet. A total solar eclipse will not happen again in Oregon until Oct. 5, 2108, making this a once-in-a-lifetime event.

"Most likely, they are going to have a great view of the event," said Elizabeth Farrar, solar eclipse coordinator for the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association.

Farrar was hired by the visitors association last year to help counties plan for the crush of incoming tourists. While the path of totality is 90 miles wide, Farrar said she expects the eclipse will affect the entire region.

"I think it's just a matter of time before folks in Pendleton, Hermiston and Boardman start getting calls for reservations," Farrar said.

Travel Pendleton is already in discussions with the visitors association about making the Round-Up City a gateway to the eclipse farther south. Event recruiter Pat Beard said they are considering hotel packages that would include a charter bus to carry tourists

down Highway 395 to the Fox Valley, in the path of totality.

"There are a lot of logistics that have to be dealt with," Beard said.

Pendleton is no stranger to big crowds, hosting the annual Pendleton Round-Up, Pendleton Bike Week and Pendleton Whisky Music Festival. The city has the most lodging and restaurants of anywhere in Eastern Oregon, Beard said, with 1,200 rooms including Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

"We're used to being good hosts," Beard said. "Pendleton really is the hub of hospitality in Eastern Oregon."

Debbie Pedro, director of the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, said the eclipse is not yet on their radar but added there is plenty of time to plan. A new Holiday Inn Express recently opened in the heart of the city, adding 93 rooms and 18 suites for potential travelers.

"The chamber would absolutely promote seeing the eclipse," Pedro said. "If people are going to be coming our way, of course we will welcome them into our community."

Already, Farrar said rooms and campgrounds are booked

solid in the path of totality. Numerous parties are also being planned throughout the area, including Oregon Eclipse 2017, a week-long festival at Big Summit Prairie in the Ochoco National Forest. That event will feature seven stages and 300 acts.

The Eastern Oregon Visitors Association is working with counties to help them brace for the impacts of having so many people, as well as distribute information to let visitors know what to expect. Planning efforts are underway to account for things like public safety, traffic, parking and wildfire safety.

"We're trying to make sure we're giving them the tools to come in and have a great time," Farrar said.

Conversations with Travel Pendleton and Umatilla County are still preliminary, Farrar said, but reiterated it would only be a matter of time.

"Those communities can really expect some direct economic benefit, even if they're not in the path of totality," she said.

Contact George Plaven at [gplaven@eastoregonian.com](mailto:gplaven@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0825.



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