

BRIDGE: Should cost about \$10M

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Both bridges together handle more than 8,000 vehicles daily. Derrey said the department does expect some traffic impacts but not very lengthy delays.

"Just plan on an extra few minutes if you're traveling over," she said.

Speed over the remaining bridge will be reduced to 55 miles per hour to encourage vehicles to be cautious while passing traffic coming across the bridge from the opposite direction.

Washington and Oregon split the cost of maintenance to bridges that run between the two states. The deck replacement project is expected to cost about \$10 million and will be managed by WSDOT.

After the deck is fixed, the next order of business will be painting the steel trusses. According to the *Tri-City Herald*, the paint job will cost as much as \$40 million and is expected to be funded in the 2021-23 biennium.

The eastbound bridge opened in 1955 and carried traffic in both directions, replacing a ferry previously used to transport vehicles across. In 1988 a second bridge — the one that will be used to carry all traffic until fall 2018 — was built to handle increased traffic flow across the river.

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HANGAR: A³ the type of client test range was looking for

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operations in Pendleton by the end of the year and have a product demonstration ready by 2020.

Everybody who took the stage expressed their excitement for the project, including U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden.

Although he considers himself a "privacy hawk," Wyden said jobs, security and liberty didn't need to be mutually exclusive when it came to commercial drone use.

With Project Vahana, Wyden said the Pendleton UAS Range was "cleared for takeoff at new heights."

After the speeches were over the ribbon was cut, the crowd mingled and explored the mobile command center, a travel trailer outfitted with UAS technology.

Steve Chrisman, Pendleton's airport manager and economic development director, said A³ was exactly the type of customer the test range was looking for as it aims to become the destination for "type certification," the process to certify the airworthiness of an aircraft design.

The hangar was funded through a \$1.7 million financial package from the state to develop the airport and UAS range. Wayne Green, associate city engineer, said the hangar cost approximately \$850,000 to build.

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HERMISTON: 'This class has extreme potential'

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Mountain Community College. Some were ready to go and never look back.

"I'm excited to be done," said Mallory Mulcare. "But I'll miss my friends".

Her friend, Jerica Reddick, agreed that she was excited to move on, but would miss the people she'd met.

"I'm going to miss Ms. Robinson," she said. "She gave me the confidence and the motivation to graduate."

Many students agreed that while the promise of new experiences is exciting, they were nervous about the unknowns ahead.

"I know everyone here," said Anders Lind, who will attend Central Washington University for engineering. "Just being comfortable and knowing everyone, I'm going to miss that."

Once the massive audience was seated, the largest class in HHS history filed into the gym. They heard from several of their classmates, who encouraged them to take advantage of opportunities, and never forget their parents and teachers.

"You were our first fans," said valedictorian Audrey Lincoln as she addressed the crowd. "We have not made it here on our own."

Kellie Zepeda, who welcomed the crowd in Spanish, told her classmates to remember one important thing:

"Our lives don't end here," she said. "This is just the beginning."

Principal Tom Spoo marveled at this year's graduating class, whom he called the most accomplished in the school's history, listing off the various honors and awards the class had collectively received.

Karen Sherman, chair of the school board, urged students to remember the power one person can have to do good.

"It's time to reflect on those in your life who have impacted you," she said. "Now is the time to realize that you may be becoming that person who may have an impact on others. Never underestimate the power of one. Each of you is important and can contribute a great deal."

The presentation of diplomas were broken up by some short speeches. Distinguished alumnus Bob Barton encouraged students to find their passion, wherever that leads them.

Ismael Arenas presented the class history, recalling some of the funny



Members of the 2017 Hermiston High School graduating class celebrate at the end of Saturday's graduation ceremony.



Paola Carmona takes a selfie before she and her class proceeded into the Hermiston High School gym for the school's 107th annual commencement.



Myra Lopez waves at someone in the bleachers as she waits in line to get her diploma Saturday during graduation at Hermiston High School.

moments the group has shared, as well as the sad ones. He asked the crowd for a moment of silence to remember Brok Palmer, a senior who died this school year.

"For me high school was memorable," he concluded. "You all made my day, every day."

Finally, the students got the moment they'd been waiting for.

"This class has extreme potential," said Isabel Bartley, before leading the group in the turning of their tassels. "I can't wait to see where we all end up."

The students marked their entry into adulthood the best way they

knew how — tossing beach balls and spraying silly string at each other as they filed out of the gym for the last time.

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EQUALITY: Speaker John Thomas said Pendleton has a 'vibe of acceptance'

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Read said one pair of marchers from Bakersfield, California were on their way to Washington state when they stopped in Pendleton and decided to join the demonstration. They reported that Bakersfield's march was only slightly larger than Pendleton's despite being home to more than 300,000 people.

"I think we've captured this point and time in history," she said.

After beginning the march at Brownfield Park, participants walked their way to the Umatilla County Courthouse where they heard personal stories from some of the marchers.

One of the speakers was John Thomas, 47, of Pendleton. In an interview after the march, Thomas said he told the crowd about his journey to coming out as gay.

As a boy growing up in Ontario in the 1980s, Thomas said he struggled to reconcile his sexuality with the views of his evangelical Christian family. As the AIDS epidemic was hitting its peak, Thomas said it was common to think that God was using the disease to punish gay men for their sins.

Thomas tried to suppress his sexuality, throwing himself deeper into his church, even going to far as to join an ex-gay ministry.

He eventually got married and raised four children, moving to Pendleton in 2002 to take a job at the KUMA



Liz Cahill, right, comforts her wife, Diane Groff, as Groff retells their story of getting married in 2004 only to have the Oregon Supreme Court nullify their marriage along with 3,000 others during an Equality March for Pride and Unity in front of the Umatilla County Courthouse on Sunday in Pendleton.

radio station. Still, Thomas found himself miserable.

"I hated myself," he said. "I was angry all the time."

Things began to shift when he got into a near-fatal car accident in 2005. He moved away from Christian counseling and started a process of personal discovery through a professional therapist. He came out of the closet in 2008, and although it led to some painful experiences including a divorce from his wife, it has since inspired him to pursue a career in therapy.

Although he still has his

concerns about sharing his story publicly and how it might affect his standing in the community and his family, Thomas said Pendleton has a "vibe of acceptance" that makes it easier to go through the process.

Echoing Thomas' comments, Read said Pendleton's reputation as a conservative town belies a broad community of people willing to support the LGBT movement.

Pendleton has been an unlikely hub of left-leaning activism in 2017.

Four hundred people participated in the Women's



Vickie Hendricks of Pendleton holds a sign with a Rev. Martin Luther King quote on in during an Equality March for Pride and Unity on Sunday in Pendleton.

March on Pendleton in January, 225 gathered for the Pendleton March for Science in April, and a smaller series of protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline throughout the year.

Outside of Pendleton, numerous businesses and

people took part in the Day Without Immigrants in February in heavily Hispanic communities like Hermiston and Milton-Freewater.

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