

HEPPNER

# New irrigation pipeline to save water, electricity costs

Gravity-fed line will span nearly seven miles

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
East Oregonian

Construction of a new gravity-fed irrigation pipeline is expected to save farmers water and electricity costs along a nine-mile stretch of Willow Creek between Heppner and Lexington.

The project broke ground earlier this spring after years of planning and design. Water will be diverted from the creek above Willow Creek Country Club at the edge of Heppner city limits, with the pipe following an old Union Pacific Railroad right of way.

The pipeline will serve eight landowners with roughly 1,900 acres of irrigated pasture, hay, wheat, alfalfa, potatoes and silage corn.

"We're going to have a way better and much more efficient system than we had," said Brian Thompson, of Thompson Land.

The project began taking shape in 2010, when a group of landowners — including Thompson — formed their own LLC to pursue the



Construction is underway on the Heppner-Lexington Diversion Pipeline, which will carry supplemental irrigation water from Willow Creek Reservoir.

Photo contributed by Kacee Lathrop

Heppner-Lexington Pipeline. The landowners had previously purchased supplemental irrigation water from Willow Creek Reservoir, which

Thompson said helped to alleviate pressure on groundwater wells.

The pipeline will further improve efficiency by elim-

inating seepage and evaporation from an open canal. Because it is gravity-fed, Thompson said the district also anticipates electricity

savings up to \$120,000 per year by reducing the number of pumps needed for sprinklers.

Heppner-Lexington

Pipeline LLC partnered with the Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District on a grant application for the project through the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The NRCS awarded the \$1.5 million grant in 2011.

Kacee Lathrop, district conservationist for the Morrow County NRCS, said money came from the agency's Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative, a program that was available under the 2008 Farm Bill. The pipe is made from a high-density polyethylene, with a 36-inch diameter at the top and 20-inch diameter at the bottom.

Lathrop said there are currently 17 creek and well pumps within the project area. Once the pipeline is finished, that number will drop to just five small booster pumps.

"We worked with a lot of partners to get here," Lathrop said. "There are a lot of different agencies involved to give their stamp of approval on the project."

The pipeline is expected to be ready for the 2018 irrigation season.

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

## Pendleton Coffee Bean & Bistro shuts down

Still owes \$22K from PDC loan

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

At a time of peak occupancy on Main Street, the Pendleton Coffee Bean & Bistro is packing it up.

"It is with a heavy heart that we have decided to close our doors. We appreciate and thank you for your support over the last two years!" reads a Facebook post and a note on the front door of the 241 S. Main St. business. The note is signed by owner Paula Dirks and "chef Chad."

The Pendleton Coffee Bean's closure represents a sudden end for a business with a winding journey on and off Main Street.

The Pendleton Coffee Bean started as a coffee shop in the Fraternal Order of Eagles building at 428 S. Main St. until 2007, when a fire gutted the building.

It reopened as a drive-thru coffee shop at 1803 S.W. Emigrant Ave. before making a move back to Main Street as a full-service restaurant and bar in 2015.

The Pendleton Development Commission made significant investments to bring the Coffee Bean back



EO file photo

In this January 2016 file photo, Paula Dirks, owner of the Pendleton Coffee Bean & Bistro, grabs a slice of lime while making a drink at her restaurant on Main Street in Pendleton. The restaurant recently closed its doors.

to the downtown area.

In 2014, the commission approved a \$30,000 loan from its Jump Start program to help with some of the start-up costs of moving to a new space and expanding the menu.

After proving that the business had hired the equivalent of more than 10 full-time jobs, the Pendleton Coffee Bean obtained a \$10,360 grant from the commission in 2016, utilizing a little-used feature of the Jump Start program that granted participants

\$1,000 for each new full-time job they create within the first year of their businesses' operation.

Charles Denight, the commission's associate director, said Pendleton Coffee Bean still owes \$22,000 from the loan and the owner is required to personally pay back the balance as a part of the contract.

Denight said the commission would be amenable to restructuring the payment plan given the circumstances, but if all else fails, the commission can take back the furnishings and equipment the owner bought with the loan as collateral.

Dirks, Pendleton Coffee Bean's owner, did not return a request for comment.

The Pendleton Coffee

Bean's predecessor at 1803 S. Main St., Kazi, also closed before paying off its Jump Start debt to the commission.

In addition to closing in 2014, the owner of the Korean barbecue restaurant, Judy Winn, filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy less than a year after opening Kazi's doors. Due to the bankruptcy, Denight said the commission was unable to recoup the value of the loan.

Since last September, when the commission announced that Main Street's storefronts were occupied at a 96 percent rate, the street has taken some hits.

Imaginarium, the 245 S. Main St. toy store that took the rest of the space Kazi left behind, closed earlier this year.

More significantly, J.C. Penney announced it was shutting off the lights later this year, putting an end to the department store's 106-year tenure at 124 S. Main St.

Despite these setbacks on Main Street, Denight said other Jump Start loans have been successful, and the program is an overall plus.

He said that the commission's Jump Start committee will discuss ways to further market the program and expand the radius of businesses eligible for it at a meeting Monday.

BRIEFLY

### Boardman cleanup coming in July

BOARDMAN — The city of Boardman will host a community-wide cleanup during the month of July, with garbage vouchers available for residents.

Vouchers are valid at Finley Butte Landfill and the North Morrow Transfer Station, with a \$50 limit, and can be picked up at city hall beginning June 30.

This is the first year the garbage voucher program will be held in July, with previous events in April and November. Residents are encouraged to clean up their homes and properties by disposing of yard debris.

For more information, call Boardman City Hall at 541-481-9252.

### North Umatilla County paving project on hold

UMATILLA — The Oregon Department of Transportation announced drivers moving along Highway 730 in northern Umatilla County will get a reprieve from nighttime paving work.

A state contractor has been working on the road between Southshore Drive west of Umatilla and McNary, but the project is on hold. ODOT reported the contractor is scheduled to return and finish the paving work in September or October.

The state road agency also reminded travelers to continue to drive with extra caution through all work zones and watch for paving activities gearing back up along Highway 730 in a few months.

### AARP offers driving refresher

PENDELTON — Locals can sharpen their driving skills this summer in Pendleton. The AARP is offering its Smart Driver class for \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members.

The classes teach

defensive driving skills, how to stay current with the latest driving technologies and more. AARP is offering the classes Saturday, July 8, and again Saturday, Aug. 12, from 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. at St. Anthony Hospital, 2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton.

The classes require registration. For more information or to register, call instructor Nikki Murtaugh at 541-861-0024.

Participants need to make their own arrangements for lunch during an hour break. AARP members should bring their membership card.

### BMCC partners with SOU for early childhood program

Blue Mountain Community College has entered a partnership with Southern Oregon University to make transferring for a Bachelor's Degree for Early Childhood Education students a smoother process.

The partnership will allow students who earn an Associate's Degree in Applied Sciences at BMCC to transfer that degree and general education requirements to Southern Oregon University, and continue their online studies to pursue a Bachelor's degree from SOU. The program will allow students to transfer directly from BMCC to SOU as juniors, and begin their Early Childhood Development classes without any loss of credits.

"This new partnership gives our students the opportunity to transfer without obstacles to continue the pursuit of a career in early childhood education," said Dawn Kennison-Kerrigan, BMCC's early childhood education program coordinator. "This ultimately saves students time and money since all of their credits will seamlessly transfer to SOU in junior status."

## OLCC recruiting new liquor store contractors

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission is ready to open Eastern Oregon for business.

About a dozen people attended an OLCC town hall in Pendleton Thursday, where state liquor officials explained how they could become participants in Oregon's liquor market.

In Oregon, the OLCC controls the liquor inventory and then distributes it directly to independent contractors throughout the state.

Brian Flemming, the OLCC retail services director, said the state's rising population is fueling the OLCC's push to recruit new contractors. According to the OLCC, there are 16,000 Oregonians for every liquor store in 2015, up from 12,000 three decades ago.

That problem is most prevalent in Oregon's metro areas, where that ratio can get as high as 21,000 to 1.

After appointing 13 new contractors in the Portland area and six in the Eugene area, Flemming said the OLCC is now turning its attention to the 14 counties that comprise Eastern and Central Oregon, including Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Density is less of a concern in the region (1 liquor store for every 8,400 people), but Flemming said some residents have to drive as much as 60 miles to buy a bottle of whiskey or gin.

The OLCC website states that there are 11 cities with a liquor retailer in Umatilla and Morrow counties — Pendleton, Hermiston, Athena, Pilot Rock, Umatilla, Milton-Freewater, Stanfield, Ukiah, Heppner, Boardman and Ione.

Flemming said the state doesn't have a target density ratio or area it would like to see new liquor stores and isn't aiming to overpopulate the region with new retailers.

"There won't be one on every corner," he said.

Liquor stores can be located in either stand-alone buildings or in an existing business, although the latter setup requires a separate door for the liquor section or a control plan to prevent access from minors.

OLCC officials highlighted some of the unique businesses that sell liquor, including pharmacies, coffee shops, sporting goods stores and gift shops.

The OLCC will accept contractor applications through July and evaluate them on their capital investment and financing, retail or business experience, knowledge of alcohol industry,

location, business plan and estimated sales and revenue.

"If you propose \$7 million in liquor sales in your first year, we're probably not going to talk with you," OLCC district manager Graham Alderson said. "It's beyond reach, especially in Eastern Oregon."

If an applicant makes it through the review stage, they'll present their proposal to the OLCC Board of Commissioners in October or November. The board will have the final say in appointing new liquor contractors.

Contact Antonio Sierra at [asierra@eastoregonian.com](mailto:asierra@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0836.

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