

REACH: Wants to lease building 3-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday

Continued from 1A

Bethel Assembly of God
Joe Jackson's position was paid during summer operations but he is now volunteer, he said. The organization plans to offer more paid positions in the fall through grant funding.

What does REACH do?
REACH currently serves 50 teens. During summer, the organization hosted events like "supervised trips to the river, meals together, slip-n-slides and open gym basketball," Jackson wrote in a statement on behalf of the board of directors.

Some worry, considering their request to extensively use the rec center, that REACH will act as an overtly religious organization. REACH's website lists four church groups among its six current partners, and the nonprofit's business license uses the same address as the Pendleton First Church of God. The registrant is the church's lead pastor, Nate Jackson.

During a city council workshop held Aug. 8, Jackson said that proselytizing "is not on the agenda," but REACH "is not afraid to cross those boundaries if it will be beneficial to youth."

What does REACH want with the rec center?

REACH wants to lease the building from 3-8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Jackson said the planned programs for at-risk youth include tutoring, mentoring, job training and performing arts. REACH also aims to take over TRACK, an existing program sponsored by the Pendleton Police Department, which teaches youth technology skills.

City Manager Robb Corbett said the group was originally planning to build its own gymnasium. Corbett, a personal friend to some of the board members, initiated dialogue about leasing the rec center.

According to Lisa Patrick, the city of Pendleton's recreation supervisor, REACH has used the rec center less than half of the time that it has been reserved for them this summer.

Is there a need for REACH?

During the city council workshop, Jackson said the need is overwhelming, citing statistics on teen delinquency published on REACH's website.

Among them is the assertion that over 12 percent of Pendleton's junior high and high school students were arrested in 2016.

"The fact of the matter is that's flat wrong," said Dale Primmer, the director of Umatilla County Community Justice and a Pendleton city councilor. Based on 2016 census data, a more accurate statistic would be that 1.4 percent of the Pendleton's youth aged 9 to 17 had a felony referral (a referral is any reported contact with police).

Overall, the county's juvenile crime rates are down, Primmer said.

REACH also asserts that 10 to 12 Pendleton minors are removed from their homes out of necessity every month. Police Chief Stuart Roberts said that's higher than he'd estimate the statistic, but "people have no idea of the volume of these cases that exist."

Roberts confirmed that there is a larger need for youth social services in Pendleton than there used to be. He points to the erosion of traditional family units, which puts pressure on single-parent incomes.

Most youth crimes are drug-related or petty offenses like shoplifting, he said. "Many of those instances are survival tactics because they don't have living environments that provide them everything they need," he said.

The Pendleton Police Department sponsors a few delinquency prevention programs, but struggle to sustain them due to limited resources.

REACH's mission is almost identical to that of Lost and Found, a Pendleton group founded in 2003 through Cornerstone Community Church. They assist youth aged 12 to 18 by partnering with existing community resources, businesses and tribal agencies. They're funded through grants, civic groups, community members and local churches.

Director Suzanne Moore says Lost and Found hosts up to 10 weekly meet-ups throughout Pendleton, including at the rec center and schools.

"We try to meet youth where they're at," Moore said. "Youth want to feel a sense of belonging, but they can feel nervous about showing up in a public place."

More than 450 youth came through the program last year.

"There's lots and lots of need out there," Moore said.

How is REACH funded, and what would it pay to lease the center?

Jackson told city councilors that the group is funded through private donations and grants, but the organization had not yet formed an official budget.

Jackson serves as the organization's grant writer. Though he doesn't have experience writing grants, he said he has help from a professional consultant.

REACH does not pay for its current bi-weekly reservation.

According to Jackson, the lease as initially proposed would allow REACH to use the rec center for six months without charge, giving REACH the chance to pursue stable funding. Corbett said they've not yet negotiated a price, or determined whether REACH would be asked to retroactively pay for their current use of the building. The original plan stipulates REACH would pay the building's operating costs, including utilities and maintenance.

Corbett said REACH's intention to pay maintenance costs is particularly attractive to the city, which has long discussed how to sustain its facilities. Patrick said the center is mostly up-to-date on maintenance but could use a new heating and cooling system that, according to the facilities manager, would set them back about \$75,000.

Does the rec center currently generate revenue?

A recreation activities report for the 2016-2017 fiscal year shows that the combined revenue from the center's paid programs is \$43,000. Corbett said it would be difficult to assess the building's total operating budget, but estimates the annual utility cost is roughly \$20,000.

REACH is asking for the center's prime hours when users are most likely to pay, Patrick said. But from her standpoint, generating revenue is not the center's primary purpose.

"There's been some misconception that we just book the facility for groups that want to come use it and that's not it. We are Parks and Recreation. We plan programs for people to participate in and as a side, we rent around open spots," she said.

What would happen to the existing groups in the center?

Two groups — the gymnastics and dog obedience classes — were relocated to the Vert Auditorium and old Lincoln School building to accommodate REACH's summer use.

Jackson wrote that REACH "will work tirelessly to collaborate and partner with these other organizations" in relocating, and "those that we have spoken to have voiced positive intention in that regard."

Patrick said moving the existing programs would put them at risk.

"The recreation program won't be decimated, but it will be challenged," she said. She has already felt the strain of the center's uncertain future. Parks and Recreation has yet to publish their fall offerings, which could result in a drop in attendance.

Corbett said there are plenty of Pendleton facilities for recreation classes, such as schools. Some programs are already housed in school gymnasiums, Patrick said, but the Pendleton School District is asking the recreation program to pay fees to host additional programs.

Patrick said that REACH has expressed interest in incorporating the programs that would support its mission, like some youth sports or Lost and Found's gaming nights.

"There's never been the intent to make Pendleton's recreation program go backwards," Corbett said. "We want to continue to have outstanding programming while allowing other programs to grow or even exist."

The expanded offerings would put a strain on the systems and staff, but allow more facilities to be used by more people, Corbett said. "That's a good problem to have."

When will the council decide on REACH's lease?

The lease will not be on the Sept. 5 meeting agenda as initially proposed. Corbett said he will work with the council to determine an appropriate date for a vote as lease conversations continue.

"There's been enough concern and misconceptions on social media that the council has raised a lot of questions," Corbett said. The council plans to meet with the REACH board soon.

COMING EVENTS

- FRIDAY, AUGUST 25
MEGA SPORTS CAMP: CONQUER THE DAY, 8-11:30 a.m., Salvation Army, 150 S.E. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton. Kids in grades 1-6 can choose baseball, basketball, soccer or cheerleading and learn new skills and fundamentals in a positive and encouraging environment. Between sports session, coaches lead songs and inspiring sports and Bible stories. (Rick and Sylvia 541-276-3369)
HEPPNER FARMERS MARKET, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Heppner City Park, 444 N. Main St., Heppner. Local produce, crafts, baked goods and more. (Don or Jo Ann Shannon 541-676-8957)
STORY TIME, 10:15 a.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-2882)
PENDLETON FARMERS MARKET, 4-7 p.m., 300 block, South Main Street, Pendleton. Local produce, baked goods, crafts, jewelry, live music, food vendors and more. (Cheryl Montgomery 541-969-9466)
VFW BINGO, 6 p.m., Hermiston VFW, 45 W. Cherry St., Hermiston. Doors open at 6 p.m., games begin at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome. (541-567-6219)
PENDLETON BLOCK PARTY WITH HILL-STOMP, 6:30-10 p.m., 400 block, South Main Street, Pendleton. The Joseph Hein Band will open for headliners Hillstomp. 21-and-over beer garden, all-ages show. Free. (Adam Mack or Peter Walters 503-720-5370 or 541-310-1768)

- SATURDAY, AUGUST 26
PENDLETON ON WHEELS RELAXED BIKE RIDE, 7 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Parking Lot, 501 S. Main St., Pendleton. Weekly casual ride. Meet with those taking a longer ride, but take a shorter route that matches participant interests that day. Usually in the 10 to 20 mile ride as participants desire. (Pete Wells 541-379-2180)
POW SATURDAY BIKE RIDE, 7 a.m.-1 p.m., Information kiosk at Museum Park, 108 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton. Weekly bike ride by Pendleton on Wheels. Rides are open to the public, as far and at a speed comfortable for you. (Pete Wells 541-379-2180)
IMAC FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST, 7:30-10:30 a.m., Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. Supports Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center project to preserve 1921 building and create regional art center. Costs \$4.50. (Peggy Price 541-676-3806)
HERMISTON FARMERS MARKET, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Festival Plaza, Northeast Second Street and Main, Hermiston. Local produce, baked goods, crafts, jewelry, art, live music, food vendors and more.
FREE FOR ALL, 9:30-10:15 a.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free art classes for children up to age 12. Children under 8 should be accompanied by an adult. (Roberta Lavador 541-278-9201)
FAMILY HISTORY WORKSHOPS, 10 a.m., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 850 S.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Workshops, photo scanning and more. (Stephanie Blackburn 541-567-6251)
YARN CLUB, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-2882)
DRIVE 4 UR SCHOOL FUNDRAISER, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Hermiston High School parking lot, 600 S. First St., Hermiston. Ford will donate \$20, up to \$6,000, for every test drive by a licensed driver. Proceeds benefit the Hermiston High School choir program. (Maria Duron 541-667-6036)
HIP & HANDMADE, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free drop-in project class for adults. (Roberta Lavador 541-278-9201)
GOLF "FORE" LIFE TOURNAMENT, 1 p.m., Echo Hills Golf Course, 400 Golf Course Road, Echo. Annual fundraiser begins with 1 p.m. sign-in, 2 p.m. shotgun start, catered dinner at 4:30 p.m. \$60 per person, \$240 for 4-member team, includes greens fees, cart and dinner. Sponsorships available, donations welcome. Register online at www.pregnancycareservices.com, by phone or email, or fill out a registration form at the Pendleton or Hermiston locations. (Phyllis 541-276-5757 or 541-567-3393)

FRIDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING

Table with columns for time slots (12 PM, 12:30, 1 PM, 1:30, 2 PM, 2:30, 3 PM, 3:30, 4 PM, 4:30, 5 PM, 5:30, 6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various channels (FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, CABLE, PREMIUM) listing programs and their descriptions.

FRIDAY LATE NIGHT & SATURDAY MORNING

Table with columns for time slots (12 AM, 12:30, 1 AM, 1:30, 2 AM, 2:30, 3 AM, 3:30, 4 AM, 4:30, 5 AM, 5:30, 6 AM, 6:30, 7 AM, 7:30, 8 AM, 8:30, 9 AM, 9:30, 10 AM, 10:30, 11 AM, 11:30) and rows for various channels (FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS) listing programs and their descriptions.