



Photo Courtesy of Oregon State University

The 1957 completion of The Dalles Dam inundated Celilo Falls.

## EDMO: Appeared in an episode of 'Portlandia'

Continued from 1A

no electricity or running water.

However, they had a rich source of fish 200 yards from their front door.

Edmo doesn't obsess about the heart-wrenching loss — it took him most of the hour to get around to the subject as he spoke Tuesday in the Bob Clapp Theatre at Blue Mountain Community College. Until then, he spoke in stories, his words ebbing and flowing in a poetic waterfall of words. He spoke of snakes, salmon, animal people, fire, the Great Spirit and sparks that changed into mosquitoes. He spoke of a monster woman with long hair, claws for fingers, "snot down to here" and bad breath.

Edmo regularly brings his traditional tribal stories into mainstream America by speaking to diverse audiences. He collaborated with the Eugene Ballet Company, narrating productions based on the legends of four Northwest tribes. He did a gig as a television actor, appearing in "Portlandia" in Season 3, Episode 9. During the show, the storyteller morphs from a coyote into a man.

On Tuesday at BMCC, he wore his "Portlandia hat." He has modified the hat since then. The brim now has beads. A hat band sports the words "Eat, Sleep, Powwow."

Edmo fell into storytelling naturally, the stories lodged deep in his soul after hearing them from his father eventually coming out unbidden. That's the way of things in the oral traditions of Native Americans.

Edmo told the BMCC audience a story about two Indian men who wanted the same woman. By the end,

he'd told the legend of the Bridge of Gods and how Mt. Rainier, Adams and Hood were formed.

He segued from this topic to Celilo, directing the audience to two slides, a before and after of the fishing area. A series of falls in the first and a wide expanse of smooth water in the second. Celilo Falls became a casualty of the construction of a new hydroelectric dam at The Dalles. Affected tribes got \$26.8 million in compensation.

A map showed the flow of tribal traders to Celilo before it was flooded. Burns-area Indians brought obsidian, roots and seeds. From the Plains came pipestone, buffalo products, horses and clothing. Blankets, beads and bone shell arrived from elsewhere.

One slide showed Edmo's father proudly displaying a 65-pound salmon he had speared and netted. In another, his older brother smiles as he struggles to lift his catch. Ed wasn't yet big enough to lift an average size fish from the river. He offered himself instead as a model to travelers who stopped to take photos of the fisherman.

"If they had a camera or binoculars around their neck, I knew they were tourists," Edmo said. "I charged them a quarter to take my picture."

With his take, he bought soda pop, candy bars and Bazooka bubblegum.

After the water rose, Edmo said, his extended family dispersed.

"We were in two states, seven counties and three or four Indian reservations," he said.

Edmo channeled his memories and stories into his storytelling performances, poetry and a one-act play called "Through Coyotes Eyes: A Visit with Ed Edmo."

## ROUND-UP: Final vote was 118-106

Continued from 1A

we not trust them to choose our president?" he said.

The first attempt at collecting paper ballots was marred when Jim Swearingen, a former Round-Up director, told Collins that he saw someone submit multiple ballots. The election was held a second time with stockholders now required to sign their name at the bottom to verify their ballot.

At the request of the audience, three non-board stockholders joined three board members to count the votes. Although two votes for O'Neill were disqualified because the ballots weren't signed, he ultimately won the vote 118-106.

After the results were announced, a stockholder asked Collins if the board had learned its lesson from the election after it failed to follow the Round-Up bylaws for the past two years.

The main source of consternation seemed to revolve around the 2015 and 2016 financial statements, which were supposed to be shared during



O'Neill

Culham

their respective stockholder meetings but were only barely being released at Tuesday's meeting. Outgoing President Bill Levy said the 2017 statement would be finished by Dec. 15 and would be shared with stockholders in February.

Levy said the late statements was due to turnover at the bookkeeper position and their current accounting manager, Beverly Thomas, was a capable replacement.

"Our accounting issues are behind us," he said.

Before the meeting ended, the stockholders made a motion to create a committee that would take another look at the Round-Up bylaws.

The heavily contested election butted up against the direc-

tors' reports, which were largely positive. Most financial figures showed growth in the Round-Up's various revenue streams, which Levy said wasn't a sure thing after the Round-Up's centennial celebration in 2010.

Moments after securing a narrow victory, O'Neill made a joke to break up the tension.

"Well, wasn't that fun?" he said dryly.

In an interview after the meeting was adjourned, O'Neill said the election showed the passion among the stockholders and said the Round-Up needs to improve transparency between the board and its stockholders, volunteers and other constituencies.

To avoid further book-keeping issues, O'Neill said he would like to see a succession plan in place for Round-Up employees to ensure consistency.

With the Round-Up continuing expand its campus, he said the Round-Up should look for land purchase opportunities while continuing to protect its brand.

## THANKSGIVING: There is much more to share about Bill's life

Continued from 1A

"I think he's excited to see you," the clerk said with a laugh. She was referring to all of us, my wife, equally loaded with luggage and travel accessories, and our two children, oohing and ahing at the lobby, pool and vending machine.

Indeed, he was excited to see us. Bill, who had checked into a room adjacent to ours the day before, wasn't good at sitting still. He had probably made a dozen trips to the lobby by then and knew the hotel staff like family. Our arrival meant grandchildren to tease and people to introduce. That was his hobby.

We finished our check-in, met up with Bill and my mother-in-law, Laurie, and had a warm and joyful holiday weekend with family that lived in town. The food was good and the kids got along. We watched movies and played poker. We shared stories and

laughed, and Bill was the best at both. His laugh, high and uncontrolled, infected us all.

It was the last time we saw him. He had a heart attack days later and we rushed to the hospital in Bend hoping for the best, but he never regained consciousness. Family and friends gathered and said goodbye, but we wouldn't hear his voice again. A week after Thanksgiving I wrote his obituary for the newspaper.

Though the pain was slowly numbed through the frigid winter that followed, the one-year anniversary of our last holiday together is reminding us how fresh the wound really is. We will remember Bill in every season, but his December passing will always shade the holidays.

There is much more to share about Bill's life, but there's not room here. We're still writing his obituary every time we get together and talk about his life and his love for other people. We will add a chapter

this Thanksgiving, and another at Christmas. We will make each one better, forgetting the unimportant but elaborating on the details.

I write this fully aware of the fresh and powerful pain in many lives this holiday season. I read the daily obituaries and know that each person is mourned, whether young or old, after a long illness or taken suddenly. In most cases, it seems too soon.

We become acutely aware of who's missing when there's an empty seat at the holiday dinner table, whether it's just for one year or forever. We should use the opportunity to share stories and keep their memories alive.

I don't know what the coming year will hold for us in the slow process of familial grief. I do know that we are fortunate and honored to carry on the memory of Bill Tatum.

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## RETAIL: Amazon's first data center in Morrow County came online in 2011

Continued from 1A

said most retailers employ 30 percent of their workers full-time and 70 percent part-time, but Walmart flips that statistic.

The Hermiston store employs around 400, and the distribution center has about 930 employees. Employees also have access to insurance, Heidegger said, and "the vast majority" have 401K plans.

The associates are part of the community, he said, and the distribution center and two stores in Umatilla County have a collective annual payroll of \$63 million.

Walmart this year paid \$21,933 in local property taxes for the Pendleton store and \$32,520 for the Hermiston store. The company paid \$35,575 in property taxes in 2002 for the Distribution Center in Hermiston.

The tab this year came to \$186,042.

Heidegger said building new stores is not likely for the region, but the company remodels locations every five to seven years. One of the biggest upgrades at Pendleton took place behind the scenes — replacing the aging cooler that housed dairy products.

The remodels are two-fold, he said: They keep stores fresh and updated for customers and make them more efficient and sustainable. Tiffany Wilson, Walmart's director of communications, said as the world's largest retailer it is important for Walmart to "use our strengths to not only further work in our own operations, but to also help create a more sustainable value chain."



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Walmart CEO Doug McMillon has been pushing the company to grow their online market share since taking over four years ago.

Walmart has a goal of zero waste. Wilson said the company's U.S. operations by the end of fiscal year 2017 diverted 82 percent of materials previously considered waste from going into landfills. In Oregon, that reached 86 percent.

Since Doug McMillon became Walmart CEO four years ago, the company has pushed into online retail. Walmart is testing a lot of technologies and strategies, Heidegger said, including 6-foot tall robots that scan an entire aisle in one minute to determine the inventory. The information from the robot goes to an associate's tablet, and that employee stocks the shelves.

"We're playing offense," he said. "We're getting out in front of this and anticipating what next big thing is going to be."

Clicks and bytes  
E-commerce, meanwhile, has long been the name of the game at Amazon, which has grown into the largest online retailer in the world based on

revenue and second-largest in total sales.

Every order placed at Amazon.com is stored in one of the company's large, nondescript computer server warehouses known as data centers. The concrete structures are the physical manifestation of what techies refer to as "The Cloud," storing everything from Tweets to downloads to Internet purchase information.

Data centers require an abundance of water and cheap electricity, which is what drew the industry to the ports of Umatilla and Morrow along the Columbia

River. The first data center in Morrow County came online in 2011 and construction hasn't slowed since.

Amazon is notoriously tight-lipped about its business in the region, operating under the subsidiary Vadanta Inc. and requiring partners to sign nondisclosure agreements. Corporate communications for Amazon did not return a request for comment Monday.

A look around the two counties, however, shows the company is becoming an economic force with the rapid construction of multiple data centers. Though each facility only hires around 20-30 full-time employees, they are well-paying jobs. Experienced technicians earn between \$30-35 per hour.

Mike Gorman, assessor and tax collector for Morrow County, said Amazon has two main sites at the Port of Morrow's East Beach Industrial Park near Boardman, including one on Rippee Road and another on Lewis and Clark Drive. The company also purchased a third site east of Lewis and Clark Drive for \$2.9 million earlier this year.

The Rippee Road site has three data centers, Gorman

said, with a total market value exceeding \$703 million. Of that total, \$641 million is exempt under agreements inked with the Columbia River Enterprise Zone, which provide three to five years of tax exemption as an incentive for companies to build in the region.

The nearby Lewis and Clark Drive site also has three completed data centers and a fourth under construction. Gorman said the total market value is more than \$926 million, with \$836 million currently exempt from taxation.

In Umatilla County, assessor Paul Chalmers said Amazon has four completed data center buildings at the McNary Industrial Park east of Umatilla, and a fifth is now under construction. Amazon also plans to build four new data centers at a site west of Hermiston, at Westland and Cottonwood Bend roads.

Like in Morrow County, the Umatilla County data centers are subject to tax exemptions through the Greater Umatilla Enterprise Zone and Oregon Strategic Investment Program, or SIP. But once those values come on the books, Chalmers said the tax base will receive a

substantial boost.

"Everyone reaps a benefit from this investment, from a tax standpoint," Chalmers said. "There is a direct benefit to having these folks develop here in Umatilla County."

Chalmers said the added value will help offset the recent devaluation of the Hermiston Generating Station, a change that caused some sticker shock among taxpayers earlier this year.

The data center boom has also resulted in a rising demand for local workforce. Blue Mountain Community College is in the third year of offering a data center technician certificate program, and instructor Pete Hernberg said a "very large percentage" of students who complete the program go directly to work in the field.

This year, Hernberg said he will have 17 students finishing the program, and all 17 already have jobs lined up at a data center.

"There's a great deal of demand for those skills locally," Hernberg said. "I don't have a crystal ball, but from everything I've heard and everything I know this is something that will continue to grow for the immediate future."

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