

## JENSON: 'He was bright and deliberate and caring'

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lature came later in life. Jenson, who grew up on a Montana ranch and served in the U.S. Air Force, taught sociology and history for 26 years at Blue Mountain Community College.

Bob and Evelyn met at a teachers' training in Colorado and fell in love. Evelyn, who also taught at a community college at the time, decided to change to social work when they got married, thinking it would be a bad idea to work together at the college.

She laughs about that now. When Jenson first arrived in Salem in 1997, Evelyn came along to manage his office and serve as her husband's first line of communication for lobbyists and constituents. The Capitol was Bob's natural habitat, she said, and he had all the right qualities to succeed.

"He was bright and deliberate and caring," she said. "He tried very hard to be fair to all sides and he always tried to listen."

State Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, agrees with that description. As a Umatilla County commissioner, Hansell worked with Jenson for many years before joining him in the Legislature in 2013. He called Jenson a close personal friend and a man of integrity.

"First and foremost he voted for what he thought was best," Hansell said, citing Jenson's support for local education, agriculture and the Blue Mountain Recovery Center in Pendleton. "His heart was in Eastern Oregon."

A centrist who didn't always toe the partisan line, sometimes his non-conformity got the lawmaker in hot water with his own party. In 2010, some predicted Jenson's political demise after he voted with Democrats to put two budget-balancing tax hikes on the ballot (Measures 66 and 67). Ultimately, he kept his seat.

He continued to pick his



Rep. Bob Jenson leads fellow legislators on a field trip in the Hermiston area in the late 1990s.

**"Like everyone who comes down here, I probably had visions of grandeur. I think I've made a little difference."**

— Bob Jenson, just before he retired

battles carefully, focusing on such issues as water, education, mental health and, near the end of his career, wolves. He got a reputation for being crusty and courageous.

In 2009, Jenson got some press after he, the elder statesman, worked to find a solution for water issues with Jefferson Smith, a young, green Democrat from Portland. They became "the Odd Couple," a two-member subcommittee on water resources who put together a water bill that brought irrigation dollars to Jenson's district.

On Monday, comments flowed from Salem and beyond about Jenson's legacy.

Gov. Kate Brown tweeted, "Bob Jenson was a dedicated public servant and beloved by many here in Oregon. He will be missed! Sending our thoughts and prayers to his family and loved ones."

Rep. Greg Barreto, who won the seat after Jenson's retirement, offered condolences to Jenson's family and thanks for helping during his first term as a representative. "For years, Bob stood as a pillar of our district. He gave so much to our friends and neighbors over the years, and will be remembered fondly by many," he wrote.

House Republican Leader Mike McLane called him "a true illustration of what it means to be a servant leader."

Rep. Greg Walden wrote, "Bob Jenson served Eastern Oregon thoughtfully, effectively and with great civility. I valued his friendship and his counsel over the years as we worked together on federal and state issues."

Pendleton Mayor John Turner, former president of Blue Mountain Community College, called Jenson a mentor and champion of community colleges who

made sure community colleges got their fair share of state funding.

Jenson, a master card player, moved his role as strategist to the bridge table after retirement. He focused on his family, his annual Alaskan fishing vacation and trips to the family cabin near Lostine. This year, he served as chairman of the local Gideons International chapter and president of the Peace Lutheran church council.

Just before he retired, Jenson did a little self-assessment about his time in Salem.

"Like everyone who comes down here, I probably had visions of grandeur," he said. "I think I've made a little difference."

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Rancher and states' rights figure Cliven Bundy, center, emerges from court on Monday a free man, flanked by his wife, Carol Bundy, left, and attorney Bret Whipple, right, at the U.S. District Court building in Las Vegas.

## BUNDY: Feb. 26 date set for four defendants still awaiting trial

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gallery crammed with Bundy supporters.

It comes after prosecutors failed to gain full convictions in two trials against six other defendants who acknowledged carrying assault-style weapons during the April 2014 confrontation outside Bunkerville, 80 miles (129 kilometers) northeast of Las Vegas.

Jurors in Portland, Oregon, also acquitted Ryan and Ammon Bundy more than a year ago of taking over a federal wildlife refuge in early 2016 and calling for the U.S. government to turn over public land to local control.

The judge ended the latest case by ripping government prosecutors, led by First Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Myhre, for "intentional abdication of ... responsibility," "flagrant misconduct" and "substantial prejudice."

Navarro found "deliberate attempts to mislead and distort the truth" and blamed FBI agents for "reckless disregard" of requirements to turn over evidence relating to government snipers and cameras that monitored the Bundy homestead.

The defense also should have been given records of government threat assessments that concluded the Bundys would probably protest but not become violent if agents enforcing court orders began rounding up their cattle, the judge said.

Navarro set a Feb. 26 trial date for four defendants still awaiting trial, including two more Bundy sons, Mel and David.

Nevada's newly appointed acting U.S. attorney, Dayle Elieson, released a one-sentence statement saying she will make a determination about whether to challenge the ruling before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Ian Bartrum, a University of Nevada, Las Vegas, law professor who has written about the Bundy case and federal land policy, called the complete dismissal a "pretty incredible result" for the family and its followers.

"In some ways, it vindicates what they're claiming," Bartrum said of people who believe federal agents and prosecutors overreached to indict 19 people on charges including conspiracy, assault and threats against federal agents.

"Not only did they not go to prison, but they drew attention to their political cause — rethinking land management policy in the West," Bartrum said.

Kieran Suckling, an official with the Center for Biological Diversity, which fought for decades to protect endangered desert tortoises on rangeland where Bundy cows graze, called the prospect of a wider audience for the states' rights figure cause for concern.

"Federal prosecutors clearly bungled this case and let the Bundys get away with breaking the law," Suckling said. "The Bundys rallied a militia to mount an armed insurrection against the government.

The failure of this case will only embolden this violent and racist anti-government movement that wants to take over our public lands."

## HERMISTON: Will also create more jobs in the area indirectly

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Morgan said the city and county plan to work together to use the \$1 million per year from Lamb Weston to invest in a water infrastructure project designed to spur increased housing development in Hermiston, which should in turn create even more jobs in Hermiston as workers previously living in the Tri-Cities instead pay for things like car insurance or doctors' visits locally. He cited a study done by Washington State University estimating that for every job created in the area indirectly, 5.4 more jobs are created in the area indirectly.

Councilor John Kirwan said the city has been working for a long time to lay the groundwork for large investments like Lamb Weston's, and it was exciting to see that work start to pay off.

"We have 140 jobs, but that 140 jobs is not just 140, it's going to multiply by five," he said.

Mayor David Drotzmann said the project was an example of how public investment often leads to private investment, and said he was pleased to see that the city and county planned to re-invest the payments by Lamb Weston back into a growth-inducing project instead of just melting it into their general fund.

During the time for public comment on the project, Umatilla County Fire District 1 Chief Scott Stanton congratulated the city on landing such a "big fish" and said he was pleased that the city was growing. However, he said while the city will be getting payments from Lamb Weston in lieu of property taxes, other taxing districts like the fire district will not, creating an added burden for the district without any added revenue.

"There is no funding for public safety in this at all," he said.

Ric Sherman, who is on the fire board, said the project would create a need for the district to increase staffing of Station 23, nearest Lamb Weston, to 24 hours a day. He and Stanton both urged the city to consider setting aside some of the money paid by Lamb Weston over the next 15 years to help the fire district cover the costs of protecting extra infrastructure and workers.

Drotzmann said those were important points to consider, but overall the agreement was a win for the community.

"These are the things you have to do to stay competitive and over time these things pay off," he said.

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The Pendleton Round-Up Association has purchased the old Albertsons store across from the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds. The store has been vacant since 2014.

## ROUND-UP: Building will be remodeled and repurposed for exhibits

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street," he said.

Thomas said the Round-Up is convening a facilities committee to determine how to use the Round-Up's new properties. Potential projects like a complementary hotel for Pendleton Convention Center or the Blue Mountain Community College indoor rodeo arena would require the Round-Up to reorganize its campus, he said.

While a press release states the Round-Up "will provide future updates on their plans for the building as they become available," a consent judgment between the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the association reached last year shows one of the possible options.

"The existing building will be remodeled and repurposed to contain exhibits related to the Pendleton Round-Up Rodeo," states the judgment, which Umatilla County Circuit Court Judge Christo-

pher Brauer signed Oct. 27. "The Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame museum is located across the street from this Property but does not have capacity to display larger items (i.e. wagons) exhibits. The repurposing of this Property will provide substantial public benefit by providing employment and education opportunities for the community as we as addressing one of the several large vacant commercial properties present in Pendleton."

Thomas said a wagon museum is one of the ideas being considered, in addition to expanded retail space, but the association hasn't committed to a concept yet.

In use since at least the 1920s, the property has been occupied by the Umatilla County road department and a farm equipment and supply store before the current facility was built in 1972. Pesticides, fertilizers and petroleum were reported in the soil and groundwater during a 1998 remodel along

the south side of the building, necessitating a consent judgment between the Round-Up and DEQ.

Thomas said the judgment requires the Round-Up to address any contamination issues should they arise during a construction project. Additionally, the judgment states the DEQ will review the property every five years to make sure it isn't harming public health or the environment.

The building may have been operated by Albertsons, but the 3.5-acres of land at 1300 S.W. Court Ave. have been owned by the same family since 1960s.

Ester and Cash Dove entered into a lease in 1971 with Buttrey Food & Drug, a regional grocery chain acquired by Albertsons in 1998.

The Doves passed on the property to their grandchildren — a group of six cousins — who continued to maintain the lease with Albertsons.

Albertsons' parent

company bought Safeway in 2014, and to avoid competing with itself, the Pendleton Albertsons was shut down.

Despite the store's closure, Dick Cook, one of the six cousins who owns the property, said the family wasn't able to get out of the lease until October 2016. By the following month, Cook's cousins and the Round-Up had a handshake deal, he said.

After negotiations and the DEQ judgment, the deal was finalized Friday. Both Thomas and Cook declined to disclose the property's purchase price, but Cook said it was a fair price.

Spread across Pendleton, the Walla Walla area and Idaho, Cook thought the family was happy with the agreement and its potential to benefit the community.

"I probably felt just as happy for the Round-Up as I did for myself," he said.

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