

EAST OREGONIAN

JANUARY 20-21, 2018

142nd Year, No. 68

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50



EO file photo
Companies located inside enterprise zones can receive exemptions on property taxes for new construction or equipment, as long as the investment causes the company to add jobs or increase productivity. Businesses in enterprise zones include (clockwise from top left) Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery in Pendleton, Pioneer Hi-Bred facility in Hermiston, Hill Meat Company in Pendleton, and Lamb Weston in Hermiston.

Action plan put in place as Lifeways put on spot

Mental health provider agrees to outside consultant

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN and KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

A Friday meeting left mental health professionals and local law enforcement “cautiously optimistic” about improvements that can be made to crisis services in Umatilla County.

“The most important thing is that Lifeways and law enforcement agreed to work together to create a better structure for communication and information sharing,” said Kevin Campbell, the CEO of Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc.

The meeting included county mental health provider Lifeways, its administrative organization GOBHI, and chiefs of most of the county’s police departments.

It was prompted by a message last week from Campbell, who issued a public statement saying that if Lifeways did not make “key changes” by Feb. 20 their contract for crisis services in Umatilla County would be terminated.

After Friday’s meeting, Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said he felt more optimistic about mental health services in the county than he had in a long time.

“We agree that as long as there are deliverables in the next 90 days we are willing to work together,” he said.

Roberts said the group formed a couple of immediate goals: specifically, bringing in an outside consultant to work with Lifeways and setting up a coalition to address case-specific issues.

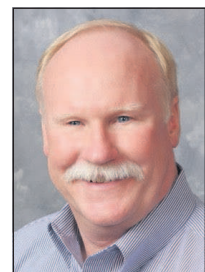
He said Lifeways hoped to hire a consultant within the next couple of weeks.

Roberts said the idea for a coalition was proposed by new Lifeways CEO Tim Hoekstra, who started work with the organization just this week.

“It’s a strategy he’s previously employed,” Roberts said.

Campbell said they also identified some of the challenges Lifeways has faced.

“I believe one barrier in the past has been



Campbell



Roberts

BAITING BUSINESS

Enterprise zones give significant tax breaks to local companies

By JADE MCDOWELL AND ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Some of Eastern Oregon’s biggest businesses get a tax break only they can access, but it comes with a catch.

The enterprise zone, an Oregon program that provides multi-year property tax exemptions on new investments, has been utilized often by Pendleton and Hermiston over the past decade. Companies in certain industries located inside one of the zones can receive a three- to five-year exemption on property taxes for new construction or equipment, as long as the investment causes the company to add jobs or increase productivity.

The exemptions

From the beginning of Hermiston’s enterprise zone in 2005 until the end of 2017, the city gave enterprise zone tax exemptions to \$85 million in capital investment. Those breaks exempted the companies —

Shearer’s Foods, DuPont Pioneer, Pioneer Hi-Bred and Eastern Oregon Telecom — from paying any property taxes on the new construction or equipment for three to five years.

In early January, the city gave its first tax break longer than five years — known as a long-term rural enterprise agreement — to potato processor Lamb Weston. The company will not have to pay property taxes for 15 years on a \$225 million project expanding its Hermiston plant. But in exchange for the longer tax break, the company has agreed to a \$1 million per year payment to be split between the city of Hermiston and Umatilla County. Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said that \$15 million spread over 15 years will equal about 42 percent of what Lamb Weston would have paid in property taxes over that same time period.

See ENTERPRISE/12A

Hermiston Enterprise Zone exemptions

| Company | Project cost (\$ millions) | Year begun | Year expired |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Pioneer Hi-Bred | \$35 | 2009 | 2015 |
| Pioneer Hi-Bred | 13.9 | 2013 | 2019 |
| Dupont Pioneer | 2.6 | 2013 | 2019 |
| Shearer’s Foods | 3.1 | 2010 | 2014 |
| Shearer’s Foods | 25 | 2011 | 2015 |
| Shearer’s Foods | 3.5 | 2014 | 2018 |
| Eastern Oregon Telecom | 2 | 2017 | 2021 |
| Lamb Weston* | 225 | 2018 | 2033 |

Pendleton Enterprise Zone exemptions, 2013-2021

| Company | Project cost (\$millions) | Year begun | Year expired |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Keystone RV | \$0.75 | 2013 | 2015 |
| Keystone RV | 0.25 | 2014 | 2016 |
| Keystone RV | 0.2 | 2015 | 2017 |
| Rocky Mountain Colby Pipe | 1.5 | 2016 | 2018 |
| Rocky Mountain Colby Pipe | 4.2 | 2017 | 2019 |
| Rocky Mountain Colby Pipe (pending) | 4.5 | 2019 | 2021 |
| Hill Meat | 1.2 | 2013 | 2015 |
| Hill Meat | 6.5 | 2016 | 2018 |
| Pendleton Woolen Mills | 0.35 | 2016 | 2018 |
| Oregon Grain Growers | 0.15 | 2017 | 2019 |

*\$1 million per year to be paid instead of property taxes.

Sources: Cities of Hermiston and Pendleton

EO Media Group graphic

Pendleton’s finest get the spotlight

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Emcee Steve Hill said the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce First Citizens Banquet was “Pendleton’s Oscars,” not only because it’s one of the community’s highest honors, but because of the suspense involved in announcing the winners.

With one notable exception, the presenters at the Wildhorse Resort & Casino lived up to their billing Friday night by taking their time in announcing Kathy Houk as

Woman of the Year and Ron Martin as the Man of the Year for 2017.

A native Pendletonian, Houk spent a lifetime building up her credentials for the award.

As a Blue Mountain Community College student, she played on the Timberwolves’ first woman’s basketball team, ran track, and served on a team that helped start the BMCC community Christmas dinner, where she has served meals for more than 30 years.

See CITIZENS/9A



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Kathy Houk smiles at the crowd after being named the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce 2017 Woman of the Year.



7 29467 10002 2