

PENDLETON

# Council backs BMCC indoor arena with \$150,000

East Oregonian

The city of Pendleton is officially an investor in the Blue Mountain Community College indoor arena project.

At a meeting Tuesday, the Pendleton City Council unanimously voted to grant BMCC \$150,000 for the project, which is known as FARM II.

College President Cam Preus reiterated that the arena would provide more space for its agriculture program and a permanent home for its rodeo program. To be located on the Round-Up Grounds, the arena could also host sporting and entertainment events during the cold-weather months.

The \$10-\$12 million project already has a \$5 million commitment from the state and \$150,000 commitments from the Port of Umatilla and Umatilla County.

"We believe it's a great investment in our college," Preus said. "It's a great investment in our college and our community."

Almost every councilor voiced support for the project, but there was some concern about where the money would come from. City Manager Robb Corbett said the money would come from a community development fund created from a previous property sale to Keystone RV Co.

Councilor Scott Fairley

said he was uncomfortable giving money to a \$10-\$12 million project that would provide little revenue to the city's general fund. Fairley estimated it would take 25 years for the city to recoup its investment through tax revenue and suggested the city use urban renewal district money instead.

With multiple coun-

cilors uneasy taking money from the development fund, Councilor Paul Chalmers suggested the council make the \$150,000 commitment but determine the source of the funding later.

The council eventually agreed to spread out payments over a period not to exceed five years.

# Whoville comes to Hermiston

Students to present 'Seussical the Musical'

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
East Oregonian

Whimsical costumes, an elaborate stage and fun music are all featured in "Seussical the Musical" at Hermiston High School.

Drama and music students are staging the production, which opens Friday at 7 p.m. in the school's fine arts auditorium, 600 S. First St. Other performances are Saturday and Feb. 16-17, also at 7 p.m., and a matinee show Sunday, Feb. 18 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for senior citizens and \$5 for students.

Jordan Bemrose-Rust's face was animated as she stood swaying to the music during a recent dress rehearsal. The HHS choir director, who's also in charge of choreography, worked on a small-scale version of the popular Dr. Seuss-themed musical several years ago while teaching in Ione. She convinced drama director Beth Anderson — although it didn't take much convincing — to take on the production.

"This has big dance numbers. I wanted to go big," Bemrose-Rust said. "When you do choreography with 30 people, it's a lot more grand."

It's been a team effort to produce "Seussical" — HHS band teacher Sean McClanahan is directing the orchestra pit and Kathy Vore is the technical director. And, the excitement is contagious — from student performers to parents and community members who have stepped up in lending a hand.

Anderson said "Seussical" is the most produced show across America for good reason. She referred to the music as "fantastically fun."

"It's just fun and upbeat," said Alyssa Perkins, who plays the part of



The cast of "Seussical" rehearses recently at Hermiston High School.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

the Sour Kangaroo. "There are a lot of bright colors. It's going to be appealing to all ages."

The HHS junior credits Bemrose-Rust with encouraging her to step out of her comfort zone and onto the stage. While Perkins has been involved in choir during her high school years, this is her first involvement with musical theater.

Junior Kyle Ketchersid, too, is stretching his talents. During last year's "Fiddler on the Roof" production, he played bassoon in the orchestra pit.

Although he says he's not necessarily an obsessed fan of Dr. Seuss, Ketchersid has taken on the persona of The Cat in the Hat and The Grinch for the musical. He said he's enjoying the peppy and upbeat nature of the performance.

In addition to 14 students, there are four adults in the orchestra pit. Having the seasoned performers, McClanahan said, offers students an opportunity

to glean additional insight. And, they contribute to the fullness of the sound.

"Also, with more parts it adds more energy to the performance," McClanahan said.

Bemrose-Rust also sings praises for Margaret Wetterling. The pianist, she said, has played an integral role as an accompanist — not only for "Seussical," but also choir concerts and past musicals.

Brittany Sloan, a four-year veteran of the HHS stage, said the energy has been amazing. Sloan, who plays the role of Mayzie LaBird, said the cast has worked hard and is excited about staging the production.

"It's geared towards youngsters but it's still pretty fun for everyone," Ketchersid said.

Anderson agreed.

"I do not like green eggs and ham," she said quoting from the script. "How could you go wrong?"

# School board member Gomolski enters council race

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Mark Gomolski has added his name to the list of candidates for Hermiston City Council.

Gomolski, a Hermiston School District board member, is running for Ward I. Councilor Lori Davis, who currently holds the seat, has not announced yet whether she will run again.

Gomolski ran for an at-large seat on the council

in 2015 against a field of four incumbents but did not win. He said he was troubled by the "non-inclusion of residents" he was seeing as the city council made major decisions like taking sole ownership of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

"I dislike decisions being made without public input until after the deed is done," he said.

He said if elected he would push for more public involvement with city decisions. He

said he also had concerns about EOTEC he wanted to address.

Currently the school board and city council both meet on the second and fourth Monday of the month, forcing people to choose between the two meetings. Gomolski said if elected and serving in both capacities he thought it would be a good opportunity for one body or the other to change their meeting dates so that citizens could attend both if they wanted.

"I think a lot of people would like to go to both," he said.

Gomolski said he was also

troubled by youth suicides in the community and would like to see both the school district and the city tackle that issue.

He won his seat on the Hermiston School Board as a write-in candidate in May 2017 with 14 votes.

Gomolski retired to Hermiston from Chicago in 2015 and soon after was the manager of Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering's 2016 re-election campaign.

The deadline to file for city council is March 6 at 5 p.m. and the election is May 15. Incumbent Doug Smith and newcomer Shean Fitzgerald have also filed.



Gomolski

# DEPOT: The former depot contains areas of historical significance

Continued from 1A

create a four to seven-month delay.

Tom Lederle of the Army's BRAC office was more optimistic, saying he thought they could work on the RCRA permit at the same time as other outstanding issues with the transfer and it would not create a long delay.

"We were very surprised when the EPA made this demand at the 11 and a half hour," he said.

Michele Lanigan, also of BRAC, said they had made a plan for permits with the state three years ago and the EPA had been on board with it, but a recent personnel change in the EPA's Region 10 had seemed to prompt the change in direction.

Lederle said sometimes people look at something like the depot transfer and decide it's so important it needs more public process.

"There's been a public process for 29 years. Don't tell me it needs more," Gary Neal replied. "How many more years does it need?"

"Probably 100 years, at the rate we're going," someone on the call remarked.

Smith said he planned to take a trip to Washington, D.C. on March 11 to lobby on behalf of the CDA, and he would work to find the

"highest person in the EPA I can get" to meet with and ask for help in speeding along the process.

The CDA has also been facing delays over the programmatic agreement, which deals with cultural and historical preservation. The former depot contains areas of historical significance, such as a piece of the Oregon Trail, as well as areas of religious and cultural significance to the tribes. Smith said he was trying to find a "fair and reasonable" way to balance those concerns with maintaining the CDA's ability to develop portions of the depot for industrial use as agreed upon years ago.

"I think there is a compromise that can be reached, but it really requires everyone to come to the middle," he said. "If we dig in our heels I think we're going to come to an impasse."

The Oregon Military Department's 7,500 acre

portion of the 19,728-acre depot was transferred to the department in November for creation of an Oregon National Guard training facility, but the remainder of the land is still under the Army until the transfer to the CDA takes place.

BRIEFLY



Photo contributed by Oregon State Police

Ever Moreno Lerma died Monday night in a fiery single-vehicle crash on Interstate 84 near Hermiston.

## Boardman man killed in crash on Interstate 84

A Boardman man died Monday night in a fiery single-vehicle crash on Interstate 84 near Hermiston.

Ever Moreno Lerma, 48, was driving eastbound on I84 at about 8:40 p.m., according to a press release from Oregon State Police, when he rolled his 2004 Chevrolet Trailblazer near Milepost 181 between the Westland Road and Highway 207 exits.

When emergency crews arrived they found the vehicle engulfed in flames. Moreno Lerma had been ejected from the vehicle and died at the scene.

One lane of the freeway was closed for about three hours during the investigation. Speed is believed to have contributed to the crash, and Moreno Lerma was not wearing a seatbelt. It is not known why the vehicle left the roadway.

## Excavator on semi damaged I-84 overpass

BOARDMAN — Oregon State Police reported a semi-tractor hauling an excavator caused the damaged Monday morning that led to the shutdown of the Interstate 84 overpass at Boardman.

The arm of the excavator collided with the underside of the overpass, state police reported, breaking off concrete that fell and caused "significant damage" to a white Ford F450 pickup following closely behind the semi.

State police cited the semi driver, David Glenn Bradley, 48, of Boardman, for exceeding maximum width, exceeding

maximum height and improperly securing the excavator.

The Oregon Department of Transportation is allowing traffic to use one lane of the overpass while crews make repairs. The work could take up to two weeks, and ODOT estimated driving delays at less than 20 minutes.

## Relay for Life announces planning meeting

PENDLETON — Gearing up for its second year as the Relay for Life of Umatilla County, organizers have announced meetings to discuss plans for the 2018 event.

In an effort to maximize resources, the American Cancer Society combined the Hermiston and Pendleton events into one larger event last year. Plans for a single Umatilla County event are underway again this year.

Carol Preston, event lead, invites people to get involved with the fundraiser. Money is used to fund cancer research and provide assistance with patient care programs.

The upcoming planning meeting is Thursday at 6 p.m. in the medical office of Dr. Patricia Winn, 3001 St. Anthony Way, Suite 135, in Pendleton. Meetings continue the second Thursday of each month.

The Relay for Life of Umatilla County is Saturday, June 16 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Roy Raley Park in Pendleton. For more information, contact Preston at relaypendleton@yahoo.com or 541-379-6294.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

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