

EAST OREGONIAN

FRIDAY, MARCH 16, 2018

142nd Year, No. 107 WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD One dollar

Your Weekend



- Three-day St. Patrick's party begins on Friday
- Fish fry at Our Lady of Angels in Hermiston
- World's shortest parade in Pendleton

For times and places see Coming Events, 6A

Weekend Weather		
Fri	Sat	Sun
51/36	49/35	53/31

HERMISTON Psychiatric facility gets approval

East Oregonian

Lifeways is now one step closer to opening its Hermiston-based psychiatric facility. The Oregon Health Authority on Thursday approved the opening of the facility, pending final review.

Before Lifeways can move forward, affected parties have until March 25 to request a hearing. OHA Certificate of Need Coordinator Jana Fussell said an affected party is someone who has demonstrated private or public interest in the project, and groups or individuals must apply to qualify as affected parties. If no one requests a hearing, OHA will issue a final decision.

From then, Fussell said, affected parties have 60 days to request a contested hearing.

After that, Fussell said, Lifeways still must go through the licensing process for the facility, and may have to take other steps.

Lifeways did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

The completed facility, which is located near Good Shepherd Medical Center, is slated to have 16 beds, and serve people 18 and older who are going through mental health episodes.

Lifeways applied for state approval on the project in August of 2017, a process that was delayed by other facilities' applications, according to Lifeways' communications director Rick George in August.

PENDLETON WHISKY MUSIC FEST Double shot of Shelton, Pitbull



Left: Pitbull performs at the Latin American Music Awards at the Dolby Theatre on Oct. 26, 2017, in Los Angeles. Right: Blake Shelton performs "EveryTime I Hear that Song" at the 2017 CMT Music Awards at Music City Center in Nashville, Tenn.

'Mr. Worldwide' to open for country star of 'The Voice' at third annual festival

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

When selecting a follow-up to Maroon 5 and frontman Adam Levine, the organizers behind Pendleton Whisky Music Fest looked no further than one of the neighboring swivel chairs on "The Voice."

Whisky Fest announced country star Blake Shelton as its 2018 headlining act at the July 14 concert. He will be joined by rapper Pitbull as his opener.

Co-organizer Andy McAnally ticked off the reasons why Shelton was a logical fit for the festival.

Shelton is a judge on the popular singing competition "The Voice," which includes other pop stars like Levine, Alicia Keys and Kelly Clarkson.

He's also no stranger to the tabloid section at the supermarket checkout line: he was named People magazine's "Sexiest Man of the Year" in 2017 and drew attention for his high-profile relationships with fellow

See WHISKY/10A

Restoring an Athena gem



The Gem Theater was originally built in 1901 as a saloon by Jacob Betz and later transformed into a theater after the city council banned all saloons in 1908. A renovation project started in 2008 is beginning to breath new life into the old theater.



LEFT: Weston-McEwen music teacher Rob McIntyre gives instructions to students Calvin Papineau and Cade Bryan while restoring an old organ Monday in Athena. For more on that project, see Saturday's East Oregonian. RIGHT: A glass ornament of a lion protrudes from a section of an old bar purchased out of Oakland, California.

Downtown theater intertwines past, present

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Back in 2008, some people thought Rob McIntyre was a just a little bit crazy.

The Athena man, the driving force behind the renovation of the town's vintage Gem Theatre, remembers getting the cold shoulder from foundations about funding.

"When we started, nobody was doing this," McIntyre said. "The information we were getting from other nonprofits was, 'You can't do that.' We couldn't even apply to the big foundations until 2012. It took that long for the stock market crash to cycle itself out."

Despite the audacity, McIntyre and a stubborn cadre of volunteers got going anyway, stripping the theater's interior. Carefully, they rescued the dusty time capsule's most precious contents. Treasures came from an old projection room, closed up since 1968, with the discovery of an ancient projector, movie reels, little cans of oil and other items.

"We treated it like an archeological dig," McIntyre said. "We took pictures. The kids came and put everything in boxes with notes about where each item came from."

The projection room artifacts will eventually go inside a glass case installed in the lobby.

When finished, the theater will provide space for movies, plays, school functions, streaming concerts and other performances. A museum there will feature vintage Hodaka motorcycles, once designed and assembled in Athena. A multi-level apartment on one end

See GEM/10A

HERMISTON EOTEC welcomes new general manager

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center now has a general manager at the helm.

Al Davis is settling in at EOTEC after moving from Kansas this month to manage the center full-time. He was hired by VenuWorks, the event management company that took over EOTEC's day to day operations in January.

"I think this is a great facility," Davis said. "I can tell there's a lot of heart and soul that's gone into it."

Davis most recently served as president and CEO of Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership,



Al Davis

was the operations manager of American Royal, a Kansas City nonprofit that encompasses — among other things — an annual livestock show, horse show, rodeo, barbecue contest

a two-year program that trains farmers and others in Kansas' agricultural industry to provide leadership through challenges facing agriculture and rural America.

Before that he was the operations manager of American Royal, a Kansas City nonprofit that encompasses — among other things — an annual livestock show, horse show, rodeo, barbecue contest

and year-round youth programs. He is also a former 4-H leader and extension agent.

"I'm a 4-H guy by heart," he said. "I grew up with 4-H, I love 4-H."

He said the EOTEC general manager position seemed like the perfect opportunity to merge all of his experience with event management, agriculture, 4-H, fairs and rodeos into one place.

Davis visited for two weeks in February before returning to Kansas to get his family and officially move to Hermiston. He said he has been working to get to know the facility and meet with those connected to EOTEC.

He has also been working to

prepare the facility for an upcoming horse sale, private weekend events and Cinco de Mayo. (For more, see Page 3A)

He said he described EOTEC as the perfect location to recruit events from around the Pacific Northwest, and said he was looking forward to taking the facility "to the next level."

Davis will be backed up by other staff from VenuWorks, which contracts to provide professional management of arenas, stadiums, event complexes, the Toyota Center in the Tri-Cities and other facilities around the country. The operation will be overseen by the city of Hermiston, which took full ownership of EOTEC this week.



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