

ECONOMY: Pendleton's economic development structure is unique in county

Continued from 1A

With the downtown area being a big part of Pendleton's tourism efforts, new positions followed.

In 2015, the city hired Charles Denight to be the first associate director of the Pendleton Development Commission, creating a part-time position to administer the urban renewal district's grant and loan programs.

The city started funding the Pendleton Downtown Association and its director, Molly Turner, in 2016 and made the arrangement permanent at a Tuesday council meeting, although the city's contribution will eventually shrink from \$55,000 annually to \$25,000.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES

The five leaders of these various departments — Chrisman, Beard, Denight, Turner and Travel Pendleton coordinator Kristen Dollarhide — all say they meet with each other often and insist on the necessity of each economic development entity.

Denight, Beard, and the chamber each wrote a letter of support when the downtown association was seeking funding from the city, and Chrisman spoke in favor of the association at a meeting in January.

The group presents a picture of a cooperative ecosystem where each entity fills a niche that the others can't, while also collaborating in areas where their duties overlap.

"I see us all as partners in Pendleton," Beard said.

But Beard, and the rest of his peers, were also quick to define their specialty.

Beard said the convention center provides an event space that attracts thousands of people. In his first 100 days on the job, Beard reported bringing 3,600 people through the convention center lobby.

Denight said the urban renewal district is one of the few entities that generates its own revenue, drawing from a taxing district that spans most of the flats between North Hill and South Hill.

With the Pendleton Development Commission

The Five Leaders

STEVE CHRISMAN

Title: Economic development director and airport manager

History: Hired in 2013, position established in 2007

Duties: Managing day-to-day operations of the airport; developing industrial land and the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range

Annual salary: \$94,860

CHARLES DENIGHT

Title: Associate director of the Pendleton Development Commission

History: Hired in 2015, position established in 2014

Duties: Helping to manage and administer the commission's grant and loan programs that are meant to revitalize the downtown area through building restoration and support for new businesses.

Annual salary: \$31,400 (27 hours per week)

PAT BEARD

Title: Pendleton Convention Center manager

History: Hired in 2017, re-established as a full-time position same year

Duties: Managing convention center operations; recruit new events that will utilize the facility

Annual salary: \$72,000

TRAVEL PENDLETON (PENDLETON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE)

Leader: Kristen Dollarhide

History: Hired in 2017

Duties: Promote Pendleton as a tourism destination

2016-2017 contribution from city: \$126,225 for Travel Pendleton; an additional \$135,030 to chamber to operate welcome center and further promotion

PENDLETON DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

Leader: Molly Turner

History: Hired in 2016, promoted to executive director in 2017

Duties: Promote downtown Pendleton; organize downtown events; access grants through Oregon Main Street

Current Contribution from city: \$55,000 per year

already investing millions of dollars in façades and public projects, Denight has led an effort to renovate the underused second stories of downtown buildings.

Although he estimated he dedicates 10 percent of his time to non-industrial economic development, Chrisman said he spends another 40 percent of his time on the UAS range. Following years of slow business, the UAS range has recently attracted big name clients like Airbus, generating a small amount of local jobs and a more consistent stream of drone industry workers staying in town and patronizing local businesses.

Turner has touted the events the downtown association has led, like the Pendleton Holiday Stroll, and the \$100,000 grant the nonprofit helped secure for the Rivoli Theater restoration project — a

grant only an Oregon Main Street program can access.

And Dollarhide pointed to Travel Pendleton as a conduit to a larger tourist base, as it promotes Pendleton to a statewide audience and even internationally.

OTHER DEVELOPMENT

Pendleton's economic development structure is unique in Umatilla County.

Hermiston has no economic development department, instead assigning lead duties to assistant city manager Mark Morgan.

The city uses a portion of its tourism promotion assessment charge to market the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, and the city pays for a private company to manage the facility.

Hermiston allocates 3 percent of its transient room

tax to help the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce run its visitor center, and the urban renewal district is operated by other city employees.

Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering acts as the county's economic development director, and Gail Nelson was recently hired as the economic development and tourism director.

Elfering said the county's \$350,000 economic development budget comes from its share of Oregon Lottery revenue. That money pays for 25 to 30 percent of Elfering's salary, a full-time economic development and tourism coordinator, as well as contracts with Karie Walchli and Eastern Oregon Business Source for further tourism and economic development services.

Beyond staffing and consultants, the budget also covers the county's economic development grant program, which gives small grants to local businesses and organizations.

Back in Pendleton, Corbett defended the city's approach to economic development.

Although the city is now sending money to two organizations where they don't have direct control over personnel or budgetary decisions, Corbett said he isn't worried about a falling out between the city and downtown association or the chamber.

Corbett said the city has representation on the various boards and committees that govern the chamber and association and vice versa, and if there's any rough patch, it would be in the best interest of everyone if they worked it out.

Although some councilors have suggested the downtown association consolidate with another entity like the chamber, Corbett said he would take a wait-and-see approach about the potential for redundancy: "It's like a marriage: Once you start living together, you start to learn how to figure things out."

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AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., confers with his communications aide Matt House as he speaks to reporters following a closed-door strategy session on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday.

Pot politics: Schumer joins with politicians rethinking marijuana

WASHINGTON (AP) — The top Senate Democrat is using marijuana's informal holiday to announce a change of heart about the drug, another sign of the growing political acceptance of pot.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said Friday he'll introduce a bill taking marijuana off the federal list of controlled substances — in effect decriminalizing its use.

His bill would let states decide how to treat marijuana possession. Under the measure, the federal government would still enforce laws against moving pot into states where it's illegal and would still regulate advertising so it isn't aimed at children. Schumer said he also wants to ensure that minorities and women have a fair shot at getting involved in the growing marijuana industry and that the federal government invests in research to better understand the drug's health effects.

"My thinking, as well as the general population's views, on the issue has evolved," Schumer said.

Schumer is only the latest mainstream politician to endorse what once was viewed as a pet cause of stoners and ex-hippies. But as more and more states legalize some marijuana use and an industry is beginning to boom around its sale, powerful politicians in both parties are shifting their stances and seeing the political benefits.

Schumer unveiled his new position on HBO's "Vice News Tonight" where he was asked whether he had smoked pot before. "No," he replied.

Would he like to try? "Well, as you pointed out maybe I'm a little old. But, who knows? Who knows?" said Schumer, age 67.

Schumer timed his announcement to April 20, or 4/20. That's the numerical code for marijuana's high holiday, an homage to pot's enduring appeal and universal slang for smoking.

EAST OREGONIAN **Hermiston Herald**

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What: Triple P Seminar – The Power of Positive Parenting
When: Monday, 04/23/2018, 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM
Where: BMCC Hermiston Room 133, 975 SE Columbia Drive Hermiston, Oregon 97838
Register: Call or email Shayne Arndt: 541-278-5965, sarndt@bluecc.edu

What: Triple P Discussion Groups – Hassle-free shopping with children
When: Tuesday, 04/24/2018, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Where: St. Anthony Hospital, 2801 St Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR, USA
Register: Call or email Chelsea Maranville: 541-969-4061, cmaranville@gobhi.net

What: Triple P Seminar – Raising Confident, Competent Children
When: Friday, 04/27/2018, 10:15 AM – 11:45 AM
Where: Pendleton Public Library, 502 SW Dorion Ave, Pendleton, OR, USA
Register: Call or email Chelsea Maranville: 541-969-4061, cmaranville@gobhi.net

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