

EAST OREGONIAN

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PENDLETON Developer asks city to build road to proposed apartments

Previous agreement
included splitting
cost of road

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

Pendleton Heights developer Saj Jinvajee is asking for more financial help to complete the final phases of his housing project, and he wants it soon.

The Newberg developer laid out his proposal in a June 7 letter to City Manager Robb Corbett. If the city grants his requests, Jivanjee said he can begin construction on the first 20 units of a 100-unit apartment complex.

Jivanjee proposes:

- Rather than split the cost of extending the road to the apartment complex, Jivanjee wants the city to cover the entire cost of the street. The total estimated cost is \$394,000.

- The current deal places \$720,000 in liens on the property as a part of a local improvement district. Jivanjee wants to make a payment for every unit he builds rather than annually. If he builds all 100 units, that would be \$7,200 per unit.

At a Pendleton City Council work session Tuesday, Jivanjee told the council that he needed an answer soon or his financing would be withdrawn.

A mixture of confusion and wariness seemed to permeate the council as members tried to comprehend the latest change to a project.

The city was involved with Pendleton Heights from its start in 2012, donating city-owned land near Olney Cemetery and fronting infrastructure costs to help seal the deal.

In exchange, Jivanjee agreed to pay back most of the infrastructure costs. As enforcement measures, the city placed liens on Jivanjee's properties and created a stipulation in the agreement that allowed the city to retake the land if it went

See **DEVELOPER/5A**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Army veteran Stephen Jensen served as a vehicle gunner in northern Iraq in 2004. Jensen is now about to graduate from BMCC and help his fellow veterans transition to civilian life.

BATTLE TESTED

BMCC graduate to run new center that helps
veterans transition from military to college

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

Stephen Jensen wears his life on his sleeve. Tattoo sleeves cover both of Jensen's muscular arms. Each arm conveys an opposite theme. One is light, the other dark.

When the Iraq War veteran graduates Thursday from Blue Mountain Community College, his gown will hide his collection of meaningful tattoos, but he will know they are there. They tell his story.

On the left arm are his kids' names and dates of birth, his

combat action badge, the American flag. On the other, a zombie who depicts who Jensen says he once was. Many of the images come in pairs, one on the right, the other on the left. Jesus and the devil. The seven deadly sins and the seven heavenly virtues.

"Every morning when you wake up, you have different paths you can take," Jensen said recently. "I'm trying to take the right path."

Jensen returned to college two years ago after a long hiatus. He had started at BMCC the fall of 2000 after graduating from Pendleton High School.

"Then 9/11 happened," he

BMCC graduation
Thursday, June 14, 7 p.m.
Pendleton Convention Center

said. "I felt like our country needed as many people to step up as they could."

He joined the Army and headed to Iraq in 2004. In and around Kirkuk, Jensen spent his days as a gunner atop a Humvee, scanning the landscape for improvised explosive devices. He and his fellow soldiers rode in a caravan looking for anything irregular, nooks and crannies where an IED could lurk such as inside a dead animal or a hole in the road. It wasn't relaxing work.

"You're on the edge the whole time," Jensen recalled.

He returned to the states with

a damaged knee and hearing loss from IED explosions. Back home, he eased back into American life. Re-entry took time.

"You're used to being on guard all the time," he said. "You don't need to be anymore, but you still are."

Instead of going back to college, he worked as a veteran navigator. With funding from the Westcare Foundation, he helped veterans navigate the system, get housing, build resumes, find food and whatever else they needed.

A few years ago, his boss, John Lee, and now-wife Fia Jensen convinced him to return to college before his GI Bill ran out in 2020. Jensen enrolled at BMCC. As he settled into his classes, the

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Staff photo by Jade McDowell
Artie Kellar Jr., left, and Gerald Duncan stand together at Kellar's Irrigon home after reuniting for the first time since 1969.

IRRIGON Veteran reunited with the man who saved his life in Vietnam

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

On Dec. 1, 1969 Artie Kellar Jr. and Gerald Duncan were on a helicopter in Vietnam when Kellar was hit by a round that tore a silver dollar-sized hole in his right leg just above the ankle. Duncan tied a tourniquet over the wound that kept Kellar from bleeding to death on the way back to base.

The two men were reunited for the first time this week as Duncan stopped by Kellar's home in Irrigon during a cross-country trip.

"This guy here saved my life," Kellar said.

Back in 1969, Kellar was 18 and Duncan was 21. Both were "Copperheads" — gunners for the Army's 162nd Assault Helicopter Company. Kellar had enlisted at 17 and Duncan had been drafted.

Duncan said door gunner was the most dangerous job in the Army — one buddy

told him during his infantry days he got shot at maybe twice, but as soon as he went up in a helicopter he got shot at 15 times on his first day. Gunners were more likely to get hit than the pilots, he said, because enemies shooting at the craft had a habit of aiming directly at the helicopter instead of slightly ahead of it.

On Dec. 1 they were protecting troop carriers when they took fire. Suddenly, Kellar was "grabbing his leg and screaming."

It's interesting what people think of in a moment like that, Duncan said.

"What was going through my mind at that time was that he was bleeding all over my helicopter, and he was not going to be there to help clean it up at the end of the day," he said.

He jumped into action, applying a tourniquet and providing medical care until they landed. Kellar said the feeling of getting shot was "like being hit with a 10

See **REUNITED/5A**

