

HERMISTON

EOT celebrates new building, ownership

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Eastern Oregon Telecom's new headquarters are much larger than their previous ones, but it was still crowded on Thursday night as dozens of supporters and employees gathered to celebrate the new building.

The building wasn't the only change they were marking. EOT announced two weeks ago that its parent company, Umatilla Electric, had sold it to senior management.

"This is exciting new times for all of us for a lot of reasons and I'm so grateful you're here to celebrate," Franell told the group.

Longtime members of the "EOT family" came from as far away as Las Vegas, California and Pendleton (which is "at least as far," Franell joked) to celebrate with drinks and hors d'oeuvres and drawings for gift baskets from local businesses who get their internet and phone service through EOT.

The new building, located at 2180 S.E. Kelli Blvd. in Hermiston behind the old Hermiston Foods plant, provides more office space for staff, extra restrooms, a reception area, increased amenities like a mail room and a large shop that allows the company to park its vehicles and equipment indoors and on



Debbie Pedro, left, presents a plaque to Paul Keeler and Joe Franell of Eastern Oregon Telecom at the company's ribbon cutting for their new building.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

The extra room should come in handy as Eastern Oregon Telecom starts on the new, employee-owned leg of its journey. Franell said the new owners are still consulting with attorneys and employees before deciding how that will work. The

company also expects to do some strategic planning before expanding into new service areas, which will likely result in additional staff. EOT currently has about 3,500 customers.

On Thursday Franell introduced the current staff to attendees before

the ribbon cutting ceremony, noting their roles in making EOT run smoothly. The senior management team includes Franell, Chief Financial Officer Paul Keeler and Chief Operating Officer Richard Holbo.

Franell said when Keeler came to work for EOT he "changed the business forever" and got the company on a strong financial footing. EOT has been providing services since 2001, and Franell said those in the room who had been customers since the beginning knew that they had gone through some rocky times.

"For those who have seen the early days, it's astounding how well we have come along," he said.

He said after years on the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce board, it was fun to be the recipient of one of the chamber's ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the first time. Chamber director Debbie Pedro said Franell and EOT have always been a "great partner" for the chamber and in the community and it was exciting to see them get such a beautiful new building.

"We feel very fortunate, and proud of what you've accomplished," she said.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

BRIEFLY

Indian fishers salmon sales begin

The Columbia River Indian-caught salmon season opens Saturday.

Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs and Yakama fishers will make their way to the Columbia River for the opening of the first commercial season of 2018. They will harvest sockeye and summer chinook that will be available for purchase by the general public.

Public sales locations include: Marine Park in Cascade Locks, Celilo Park, North Bonneville (one mile east of Bonneville Dam on the Washington side), Hood River area, select farmers markets and Columbia Point in the Tri-Cities. Before traveling to sales locations, the public is encouraged to call the salmon marketing program at 1-888-289-1855 to find out where the current day's catch is being sold.

When purchasing fish from the tribal fishery, people should bring a cooler with ice. Prices are set by individual fishers and purchasers should request a receipt.

For more information about purchasing fish, visit www.critfc.org/harvest. Regular salmon sales updates also are available on Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission's social media sites.

Heppner chamber announces summer luncheons

HEPPNER — During the summer, the Heppner Chamber of Commerce luncheons will occur the first Thursday of the month.

The July 5 meeting will include an all-entities report and the Aug. 2 gathering will feature the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation, who will discuss the Community Economic Development Strategy for Heppner. The regular schedule will resume in September.

For more information or to register, contact 541-676-5536 or heppnerchamber@centurytel.net.

Alcohol study ends due to funding, credibility problems

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government is shutting down a study that was supposed to show if a single drink a day could prevent heart attacks, saying ethical problems with how the research was planned and funded undermine its credibility.

The National Institutes of Health used money from the alcohol industry to help pay for a study that ultimately was expected to cost \$100 million. It's legal for NIH to use industry money in addition to taxpayer dollars for research as long as certain rules are followed. The problem: An NIH investigation concluded Friday that a small number of its employees had close contact with

industry officials that crossed those lines.

Some of those interactions "appear to intentionally bias" the study so that it would have a better chance of showing a benefit from moderate alcohol consumption, said NIH Deputy Director Lawrence Tabak.

Those employees, from the NIH's National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, then kept their interactions with industry secret, he said, even after the NIH started the normal process for asking companies or other outside groups to help fund a research project.

Those actions cast "doubt that the scientific knowledge gained from the study would be actionable or believable," Tabak told a meeting of

the NIH director's advisers.

Another concern: Some outside experts who had reviewed the study plans raised concerns that it was too small and too short to address the potential problems of a daily drink — such as an increased risk of cancer or heart failure — and not just potential benefits such as a lowered risk of a heart attack.

"Purely on scientific grounds, I never really quite understood why this trial was being done," Dr. M. Roy Wilson of Wayne State University told NIH Director Francis Collins after hearing the investigation's conclusions. People who have a glass or two of wine — himself included, he said — "don't do it for health reasons."

The research was supposed



AP Photo/Eric Risberg, File

to track 7,800 people who were assigned to take either a drink a day, or totally abstain, for several years. Only 105 people had enrolled by last month, when Collins temporarily suspended the study after a *New York Times* article first raised questions about the funding policy violations.

On Friday, Collins announced he was completely shutting down the research.

A trade war looms as Trump slaps tariffs on Chinese imports

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump brought the world's two biggest economies to the brink of a trade war Friday by announcing a 25 percent tariff on up to \$50 billion in Chinese imports to take effect July 6.

Beijing quickly responded that it would retaliate with penalties of the same scale on Ameri-

can goods — and it spelled out details to impose tariffs on 545 U.S. exports, including farm products, autos and seafood, according to the Xinhua state news agency.

In announcing the U.S. tariffs, Trump said he was fulfilling a campaign pledge to crack down on what he contends are China's unfair trade practices and its efforts to undermine U.S. tech-

nology and intellectual property.

"We have the great brain power in Silicon Valley, and China and others steal those secrets," Trump said on "Fox & Friends." "We're going to protect those secrets. Those are crown jewels for this country."

The prospect of a U.S.-China trade war weighed on financial markets Friday.

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Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon

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PENDLETON

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