

# EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2018

142nd Year, No. 180

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

## ALL ABOARD

Group wants to get regional rail transportation on track



A Union Pacific freight train passes the Heritage Station Museum, which was originally constructed as Pendleton's train depot in 1909, on Wednesday in downtown Pendleton. A group known as Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Activists would like to restart passenger rail service to Eastern Oregon with a rail route between Portland and Boise.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

The acronym for the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Activists is AORTA. And like the artery it shares a name with, the organization is hoping to pump new blood into Eastern Oregon's defunct passenger rail system.

It's been more than 20 years since Amtrak shuttered the Pioneer line, a massive train route that connected Seattle with Chicago and many Eastern Oregon communities in between.

The association wants to revive a shorter version of the Pioneer line,

which would span from Portland to Boise and include stops in Pendleton, Hinkle, La Grande, Baker City, Ontario, The Dalles and Hood River.

The volunteer organization met in The Dalles on June 20 to discuss the concept and plan a rail passenger summit at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande in March 2019.

Association President Jon Nuxoll of Eugene said the group has 150 to 200 members all across Oregon, but the association needs to expand its base of supporters to achieve its goal.

"This is not going to happen overnight," he said.

There are a few ways to navigate

northern Oregon from east to west and vice versa. Driving a car along the Interstate 84 is tried and true, but travelers can also fly from Pendleton to Portland via Boutique Air or hop on a Greyhound bus.

But Nuxoll argued that reintroducing rail as a transportation option would offer an important choice for rural Oregonians.

Nuxoll noted the increasing popularity of the Amtrak Cascades line, a train that travels between Eugene and Vancouver, British Columbia.

With increasing congestion along

See TRAIN/6A

**"This is not going to happen overnight,"**

— Jon Nuxoll, AORTA association president

UMATILLA

## City manager Pelleberg resigns

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Umatilla City Manager Russ Pelleberg resigned after a short but turbulent time leading the city.

City recorder Nanci Sandoval confirmed the resignation in an email Wednesday morning, noting Pelleberg turned in his resignation "to pursue other opportunities" and his last day would be July 27. Pelleberg did not return a request for comment as of press time Wednesday.

Pelleberg joined the city in 2013 as public works director and was promoted in March 2016 to city manager while still maintaining his public works duties. Former city manager Bob Ward had been set to retire in February 2017 but asked the city council in October 2015 if he could end his contract early to make way for Pelleberg.



Pelleberg

The city council voted to accept Ward's offer and promote Pelleberg without looking at outside candidates. Later, David Trott resigned from his position as mayor, citing "irreconcilable differences" with the city council after it declined to take any action on concerns Trott had about Pelleberg's résumé and actions. Pelleberg claimed two degrees from disreputable diploma mills.

Two other city councilors — Mary Dedrick and David Lougee — resigned shortly after voting not to accept Trott's resignation, but did not specifically name the dispute between Pelleberg and Trott as their reason for leaving.

During his tenure, Pelleberg restructured city departments and created a community development director position, for which he hired former Umatilla County planning director Tamra Mabbott. He worked to create a parks master plan for the city and put in place initiatives for downtown revitalization. As of fall 2017 he made \$110,000 per year.

Mayor Daren Dufloth had no comment.

— Reporter Phil Wright contributed to this article.

## Waste permit revoked for controversial Boardman dairy

Operation faced mounting legal, economic trouble

By GEORGE PLAVEN  
EO Media Group

Oregon regulators announced Wednesday they are revoking the waste management permit for Lost

Valley Farm, a controversial and oft-troubled dairy producer that once sought to have 30,000 cows near Boardman.

The revocation comes just 15 months after the facility first

received its permit from the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Quality, which jointly manage the state's confined animal feeding operation, or CAFO, program. Lost Valley now has 60 days to shut down, move all its animals

and clean all waste systems.

Among the issues with Lost Valley and its owner, Greg te Velde, the agencies claim the dairy repeatedly violated terms of its wastewater discharge permit, putting the environment and human health at risk. The facility also lacks the infra-

structure to handle the amount of manure it generates, and has failed to keep accurate records, according to ODA and DEQ.

"Over the last year we have used every regulatory tool avail-

See DAIRY/6A



Contributed photo

Bob and MaryAlice Ridgway smile for the camera during a 2016 cruise to Greece.

## Judge leaves legacy of kindness

Ridgway gave offenders chance to better themselves

By KATHY ANEY  
East Oregonian

As Aesop once said, "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

Bob Ridgway, retired municipal judge and Pendleton attorney, was a beacon of kindness say those who knew him best.

"He had a gentleness," said friend Suzie Barhyte. "He was a person who made things feel settled and good. He lived life with grace."

Ridgway died at home this week at age 76. His diagnosis of stage four esophageal cancer came only a month ago. He died in the arms of his wife, MaryAlice, and daughter, Darcey, on Tuesday evening. They and other family and friends are reeling as they

consider a world without Bob.

Ridgway practiced law in Pendleton for 40 years. He received the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce's first Boss of the Year designation in 2006, the first year the chamber gave out the award.

Jeannie Huffman, who worked for Ridgway for two decades, nominated him for that honor. What made him worthy, she said, was his positiveness and genuine respect for his employees, clients, colleagues and anyone else who came into his orb.

"He loved life," said Huffman. "He made it a priority to be with family and allowed all of his employees to do the same."

See RIDGWAY/3A



7 29467110001 5