

# Hydropower off McKay Dam scrapped

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian



EO file photo

**The idea for a hydroelectric generator at McKay Dam has been scrapped because of the high costs cited by PacifiCorp to connect the project to the company's distribution system.**

Bill Hampton of Pendleton is giving up his idea of building a small hydroelectric generator at McKay Dam. The project would have produced 2 megawatts of power April through October, when the flow from the dam is higher. Hampton estimated the project would have cost \$3 million to \$4 million and generated 5.6 gigawatt-hours each year, or enough power for about 500 homes.

But he said PacifiCorp's 2016 feasibility study of the project also was its obituary. "That was when they told me I needed to build a transmission line to Yakima," Hampton said. His original project called for a 3,000-foot, 69 kilovolt line connecting to the Pacific Power distribution system. But a 90-mile, 230 kilovolt line to tie into that system would cost tens of millions more.

Hampton called the scenario ludicrous, but so was fighting PacifiCorp. Hampton said he is familiar with the state, federal and tribal permitting processes, but taking on PacifiCorp's legal team was another matter. "That's just a chal-

lenge that was too much to tackle," he said, so he surrendered the permit back to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Pacific Power spokesman Tom Gauntt said the company could not comment on particular business negotiations with a customer or even a potential customer, but "our support of qualifying facilities and renewable customer generation is well documented."

PacifiCorp has more than 6,500 net metering agreements in Oregon, he said, which bring 62.5 megawatts onto the grid to bene-

fit customers. The company also has 74 power purchasing agreements in the state involving 463 megawatts. Gauntt said that amounts to a "significant amount of power from biomass, wind, solar and small hydro."

Hampton said the McKay generator would have been similar to the small generator he worked on in Cottage Grove, or the 1.1 megawatt generator PacifiCorp owns on the Wallowa River near Wallowa Lake. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in early 2017 renewed the company's operating license for the site

for 40 years. Hampton said PacifiCorp likes small hydro as long as it owns it, but otherwise strives to obstruct small projects.

Gauntt said the company follows the law and looks closely at what it takes to connect projects to the grid. "Connecting these resources can be costly, and the feasibility studies we undertake when these new resources are proposed look closely at all costs involved and propose the most cost effective alternative available to the customer while not impacting costs to other customers," he said.

## UMATILLA COUNTY

### Meeting, short on commissioners, sees no action

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners took no action Tuesday during its meeting for lack of a quorum. Commissioner Bill Elfering said the blunder was his.

"I'm embarrassed, really," he said. The county board voted 3-0 in April to move the meeting to July 3, away from its usual Wednesday morning slot, because of Independence Day. Elfering said he fixed it in his mind the board meeting was on another day and so he attended other meetings

he scheduled in Hermiston. He said he wished he had a better reason but was thankful the meeting agenda was light.

The board planned to take action on renewing insurance coverage, adopting the Stepping Up Initiative to divert the mentally ill from jail and authorizing the sheriff's office to seek bids for new vehicles.

Commissioner Larry Givens was out for a doctor's appointment at 9 a.m., the same time the meeting started, leaving Commissioner George Murdock as the lone member to attend.

Murdock heard the presentation on the cost of

insurance for the new fiscal year, which will come to almost \$196,000 for SAIF, the State Accident Insurance Fund, and \$537,000 for property and causality. The staff recommendation is to renew both coverages, but Murdock could not do that alone.

Likewise, he held off on hearing from sheriff's Capt. Dave Williamson to issue a bid for new law enforcement vehicles.

Murdock, however, was able to recognize Riley Wortman as the county employee of the month. Wortman works in the computer information services and was instrumental when

the county upgraded its dispatch services. Murdock also said Wortman comes to work all hours of the day or night to help ensure computer updates and the like do not interfere with county business and delivering of service.

Wortman began working for the county about four years ago. The recognition comes with some perks, including a day off with pay.

Elfering said he called Murdock and county counsel Doug Olsen about rescheduling the meeting. The board now plans to meet Monday at 9 a.m. at the courthouse in Pendleton.

## BRIEFLY

### One person shot in possible robbery in Boardman

BOARDMAN — Boardman Police Chief Rick Stokoe reported one person was shot early Monday in a possible robbery.

"We do have a person of interest," Stokoe said Tuesday, "and hopefully we will be able to locate that person today."

Stokoe said Boardman police responded to the call about the shooting around 1 a.m. Monday. An aircraft ambulance flew the victim to Legacy Emanuel Medical Center, Portland. Stokoe added the injuries do not appear to be life-threatening.

He also said Boardman police is not revealing other information about the shooting at this time.

### Irrigon man injured in fatal I-84 crash

TWIN FALLS, Idaho (AP) — Authorities say an Ohio truck driver was killed in a fiery explosion when two tractor-trailers collided on Interstate 84 in southern Idaho.

The Idaho Transportation Department says all lanes of I-84 east of Twin Falls have reopened following Tuesday's collision that sent a

massive plume of smoke into the air and blocked traffic for hours.

The Idaho State Journal reports that 39-year-old Corey McCaslin, of Port Washington, Ohio, died in the crash.

State police say a tractor-trailer driven by an Oregon man crossed over the center line in a construction zone and collided with McCaslin's truck.

Police say David Wetmore, of Irrigon was airlifted to a hospital in Pocatello. He was in stable condition Tuesday and is expected to survive.

### Crash injures Milton-Freewater woman

MILTON-FREEWATER — La Vonne Anderson of Milton-Freewater was injured in a crash Monday near Burbank, Washington.

The Washington State Patrol reported the crash occurred at 2:29 p.m. on State Route 12 about two miles south of Burbank. Anderson, 70, was driving a 2003 Mitsubishi Galant west on the highway when Eriberto Perez-Leyva, 18, of Kennewick, who was heading east in a 1998 Toyota Camry, tried to turn left onto Dodd Road and smashed into Anderson's vehicle.

An ambulance took Anderson to Lourdes Medical Center, Pasco. The state patrol did not report Anderson's injuries.

Perez-Leyva did not yield the right-of-way, according to Washington State Patrol, and received a citation for second-degree negligent driving.

### BMCC hires new VP of instruction

Blue Mountain Community College will have a new person overseeing all academic programming and faculty.

In a Tuesday press release, BMCC named John Fields as its new vice president of instruction.

Fields comes to Eastern Oregon from Florida State College at Jacksonville, where he worked for 12 years as a French professor, a department chair, and a dean.

"We're excited to have John join our team," BMCC President Cam Preus said. "He has strong leadership skills that will continue to help guide our academic programming and outstanding faculty in innovative ways that put our students first."

Fields has bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Florida and

a law degree from Rutgers University in New Jersey.

He's also multilingual, fluent in French, proficient in Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, and is currently learning Italian.

While at Florida State College, Fields was an executive board member of the Jacksonville Sister Cities Association and the coordinator for the southern region of the National French Contest.

Fields replaces Mary Jeanne Kuhar.

## PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Passengers disembark the afternoon flight of Boutique Airlines on May 1 at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport in Pendleton.**

### Boutique unexpectedly changes flight schedule

Later flights irk some passengers, but airline sees increase in usage

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

A change to Boutique Air's schedule came as a surprise to regular passengers and the Pendleton airport administration alike.

A few weeks ago, Dave Conant-Norville was notified that his Tuesday flight from Portland to Pendleton would be switched from 8:05 a.m. to 10:05 a.m. as a part of a permanent schedule change.

A licensed psychiatrist, Conant-Norville ran a practice in Pendleton from 1987-1993, and although he's since moved to Hillsboro, he continues to commute to Pendleton once a week to see patients.

As the only psychiatrist in Pendleton, Conant-Norville said the schedule change is forcing him to condense his schedule to meet the last flight out of Pendleton at 4 p.m. while trying to accommodate his patients.

"I wasn't a happy person about it," he said. Over the years, Conant-Norville has flown on all the air services that have run passenger flights at the Pendleton airport, whether it was Horizon Air, SeaPort Airlines, or Boutique. Despite the schedule change, Conant-Norville said he is satisfied with Boutique's level of service and the quality of its aircraft.

Boutique now has a flight departing from Pendleton at 7:15 p.m. on Thursdays, so Conant-Norville said he's working around the problem by moving his appointments to that day. But he wishes Boutique would have given him more advanced warning so he could have changed his practice's schedule sooner.

Boutique, which is based out of San Francisco, didn't return multiple requests for comment, but schedules posted on its website provide some information on the new schedule.

While Boutique originally offered three flights into Pendleton and three flights back to Portland seven days a week, the new schedule offers only two flights both ways on Saturday while bolstering Sunday to four flights in and out.

On the ticket booking page, it shows a fourth flight on Thursday and Friday in the evenings that doesn't show on the schedule, but instead of a ticket price it states "non-available."

Pendleton Airport Manager Steve Chrisman said he too was surprised when Boutique modified its schedule and inquired with the company about why it made the change.

According to Chrisman, Boutique responded by saying it used a "heat map" to determine what times were selling the least tickets.

To boost enplanements, Chrisman said Boutique moved some flights away from Saturday and redistributed them elsewhere in the schedule.

Chrisman said he admired Boutique's initiative to boost enplanements — the U.S. Department of Transportation uses that figure when evaluating whether Pendleton should continue to receive the Essential Air Service subsidy — but he doesn't want to alienate loyal passengers either.

"It didn't sit well with some people," he said. "We caught some complaints."

While Boutique tries to boost enplanements, Chrisman said it was already an area of strength for the airline.

In 2017, its first full year serving Pendleton, Boutique had 5,689 enplanements, an 87 percent increase from the year before.

Boutique is already ahead of the curve compared to last year.

From January through May, Boutique has 2,427 enplanements. During the same time period in 2017, the airline had 2,099 boardings.

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