ATHENA

Caledonian Games highlight Scottish culture in sport, song

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

File photo

John Odden of Bend prepares to release a 56-pound weight during the athletic competition at the 2017 Caledonian Games in Athena. Activities take place Friday through Sunday in Athena.

Photo contributed by Sue Friese

Young dancers perform "The Sword Dance" during the 2009 Athena Caledonian Games. The event runs Friday through Sunday in and around Athena City Park.

Personal and up close is what Athena Caledonian Games is all about, said president Sue Friese

"We have many experiences that qualify," she said.

For instance, she said audiences love the experience when the Boise Highlanders Pipe Band marches in and makes a circle in the vendor's area. Friese said they even let people stand in the middle of the circle of pipers.

"Now that is closer than seeing the band on the field," Friese said. "It is up close and personal and way cool."

For more up close and personal experiences, be sure to catch some of the festival, which kicks off Friday. A Caledonian fundraiser, the dinner is from 5:30-7 p.m. at Athena City Park. The Candle Lighting Ceremony follows at 7:30 p.m. It serves as an informal blessing of the clans, family and the festival.

The festival gets into full swing Saturday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. It includes a parade, park vendors, entertainment, dancing, piping, kids' games and storytelling. The Scottish athletic events start at noon, which features the tossing of hammers, weights, hay bales, and the well-known caber. Beginners, masters and professionals — kilts not required — will compete all afternoon. The popular festival, Friese said, draws people from near and afar.

Friese encourages people to catch Shindig, which starts Saturday after the parade (approximately 10:15 a.m.). It features lots of dancing and a variety of other acts — everything from dramatic poetry reading and telling jokes or tall tales to singing and playing instrument — all with a Scottish flavor.

Thanks to a grant from Umatilla County Cultural Coalition, Cassandra Humphrys of Mid-Columbia School of Highland Dance of Richland has been teaching Highland dancing. About 12 dancers, ranging in age from 5-12, have been preparing to dance at Caledonian to show off their kilts and their dancing ghillies (shoes). The demonstration is Saturday at 1 p.m.

> "It is up close and personal and way cool."
> **— Sue Friese,**
> Caledonian Games president

"These are Athena youngsters that are doing a dandy job," Friese said. "This is quite personal and we are proud."

Another highlight of the event, Friese said, is Saturday evening's Caledonian Tattoo at 6:30 p.m. An outdoor concert, it features marching pipe bands — including Clan Macleay Pipe Band from Portland and the Boise Highlanders — who will join together for a fantastic finale with the Blue Mountains as a backdrop

Sunday's schedule features Kirkin' o' the Tartan, a church service, at 9:30 a.m. Also a new program will follow.

"We are recreating the picnic and games that were celebrated in Athena at first in 1899," Friese said.

The Caledonian Ceilidh, which translates as party, will offer an open mic time for people to share their stories, talents or family secrets, she said. People are invited to bring blankets or chairs and a picnic or purchase food and beverages from vendors.

"Again, this is downright fun. That's what Caledonian is all about," Friese said.

For more information about Athena Caledonian Games, contact Friese at athenacaledoniangames@gmail.com, 541-566-3880 or visit www.athenacaledoniangames.org.

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Former Pendleton citizen wins prestigious teaching award

By BRITTANY NORTON
East Oregonian

A former Pendleton citizen won a Presidential Teaching Award last week.

Straughan

Melissa Straughan teaches third grade at Waverly Elementary School in Albany and is also a mathematics instructional coach.

She was nominated for a Presidential Teaching Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching by a consultant for Teacher's Development Group, an organization that works to enhance mathematics teaching.

After graduating from Pendleton High School, Straughan left the city in 1995 to attend college. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Western Oregon University and has been teaching for 18 years.

Straughan told the *Albany Democrat-Herald* "I fell in love with teaching math because it is the land of the 'ah-has,' where the light-bulb moments live."

According to the PAEMST website, this teaching award is the highest recognition a K-12 teacher can receive from the United States government for teaching math and science. Awardees receive a certificate from the President of the United States and travel to Washington, D.C., to discuss how to improve science, technology, engineering and mathematics education with policy-makers. They also receive a $10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

The award was established in 1983 and recognizes up to 108 teachers each year.

PENDLETON

Council lops airport debt at expense of general fund

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Being both the bank and the debtor has its benefits.

With five "ayes," the Pendleton City Council wiped away more than $259,850 in debt owed by the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport at Tuesday's meeting. The move will further reduce the millions of dollars of debt the airport holds, but it will also mean less money for the general fund.

Across decades, the airport borrowed as much as $2.5 million from the general fund and other parts of the budget to subsidize operations.

The city is obligated to pay those interfund loans back by state law, and the city's auditing firm has for years urged the city to address the debt.

As the airport continued to accrue debt over the years, the city charged itself interest, ranging from 1 percent to 7 percent. The city has been paying back the interest, but according to City Manager Robb Corbett, the interest payments act like "IOUs" rather than a payment backed by cash.

For the past several months, staff have argued that the city isn't bound to charge itself a high interest rate and state law allows the city to declare a retroactive rate lower than what was originally charged.

The council's action on Tuesday reset its interest rate to 1 percent, resulting in the $259,850 debt reduction

The airport's gain will be a loss for the general fund, which has been the airport's primary subsidizer. The general fund, which pays for services like public safety and parks and recreation, will be reduced by $201,400.

Paired with a separate $200,000 payment the council agreed to in June, the city has reduced the airport debt by $459,850 over the course of two months.

The council took action on several other issues.

• The council unanimously approved a $185,629 change order to increase the price of the first phase of the new fire station project from $1.9 million to $2.1 million.

Public Works Director Bob Patterson said some bids came in higher than anticipated, but he still expected the total cost of the station to come in at its $9.4 million estimate.

• The council agreed to provide a $2 million match if the city secures a $25 million BUILD grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The grant would cover the project costs of realigning the Interstate 84 Exit 209 interchange to alleviate traffic in that area. Patterson said the grant application is due July 19.

• The council agreed to a 10-year, $118,180 lease with Queen B Storage to use the old Blue Mountain Recovery Center property.

The city will continue to market the 4.76 acres to industrial companies for development, and the city can terminate the lease at any time provided they give Queen B 180 days notice and reimbursement for any improvements made to the property.

Queen B already leases 8.82 acres of land from the city, a point of contention from Pendleton resident Gale Marshall, who said the city's lease rate was too low and drove his own RV storage company out of business.

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7:10
3D 4:30 9:50
THE FIRST PURGE (R)
4:40 7:20 9:40
JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM (PG13)
4:00 7:00 10:00
INCREDIBLES 2 (PG)
4:10 6:50 9:30
SICARIO: DAY OF THE SOLDADO (R)
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Port of Morrow programs for teachers, students

East Oregonian

The Port of Morrow will become a classroom this month, with two new programs focused on educating people about careers in manufacturing and industrial technology.

The Port of Morrow will host a teacher externship, as well as a camp for junior high school students.

The camp, called "Nuts, Bolts and Thingamajigs," will take place from Monday, July 23 to Friday, July 27. The port applied for a grant last year from the Manufacturing and Fabrication Association. Students from around Morrow and western Umatilla County will tour businesses at the port, including Lamb Weston and Portland General Electric, and hear from speakers at Amazon Web Services and Boardman Foods. Students will also spend half of each day working on a manufacturing project, applying the skills they've learned.

There are only a few spots left in the camp, but those interested can contact Port of Morrow Workforce Training Coordinator Kalie Davis at kalied@portofmorrow.com.

Five teachers from around Eastern Oregon will also study some businesses at the port, in order to develop lessons that help their students understand careers in the manufacturing industry.

Davis said the teachers are from different disciplines, including math, career counseling and science. The teachers will spend a few days in Portland, and then will spend July 19, and July 23 through 26 at the port. They will shadow someone at Lamb Weston, meet with the Port of Morrow Road Crew, Amazon Web Services, PGE and several construction groups.

BRIEFLY

Juvenile injured in Umatilla shooting

UMATILLA — Police are looking into a shooting in a McNary neighborhood Wednesday afternoon.

Around 5 p.m., police were called to Chenowith Street for reports of a male who had a gunshot wound. Police Chief Darla Huxel said the victim was a juvenile, and that he was taken to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston.

Huxel would not confirm where the boy was shot, but she said his injuries were not likely to be life-threatening.

Huxel said at the time, the incident was not being treated as a drive-by shooting, and that the police would continue to follow up.

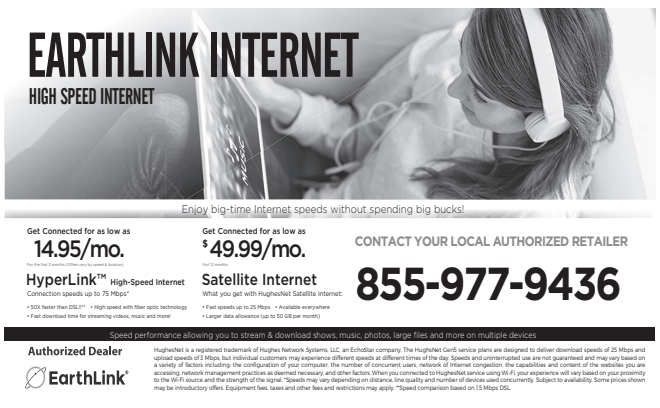
She said some of the witnesses were not being cooperative, and that the police had not yet identified who the shooter was.

Wildhorse Casino temporarily closes for technical updates

PENDLETON — Wildhorse Resort and Casino is normally open 24-hours per day, but standard maintenance forced the casino and a few other facilities to close for about 13 hours Wednesday, according to a Wildhorse press release.

Wildhorse officials said the casino, restaurants and retail stores closed at midnight Wednesday and reopened about 2 p.m. to usual operations.

A press release stated only that the casino closed for a "portion of the day" for "technical upgrades and maintenance to internal systems."

The hotel, golf course, and RV park were not affected by the closure.

In a statement, Wildhorse CEO Gary George said the upgrades were a necessary step to keep the casino running efficiently.