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HERMISTON EOTEC overflow could be lacrosse complex

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

The city of Hermiston is looking at developing 20 acres of lacrosse fields at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The proposed sports fields would be created in the undeveloped acres near EOTEC's main entrance, currently used for overflow parking during the Umatilla County Fair.

According to a news release from the city, "the intention would be to design the grass fields in a way to allow that temporary (parking) use to take place each August and return them to playing condition for the remainder of the year."

Hermiston Youth Lacrosse approached the city, which took over full ownership of EOTEC this spring, and VenuWorks, the professional management company running EOTEC on behalf of the city, with the proposal.

Under their proposal, the lacrosse organization would contribute about \$95,000 in monetary and in-kind donations it has secured to develop the multi-sport fields, with the understanding that lacrosse would take first priority.

As Hermiston has grown, the community has struggled to keep up with demand for sports fields. In 2012, the city invested approximately \$180,000 toward developing two soccer fields near Rocky Heights Elementary School.

"The sport of lacrosse has been growing rapidly in the Hermiston area, but the growth causes field availability shortages when other sports seasons overlap," the news release states. "Field development with a preference given to Lacrosse will take pressure off of other fields to allow them to be used more frequently for

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BIG DATA

Amazon's footprint expands in Eastern Oregon, with room to grow

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

Though the tech giant has been firmly planted in the area since 2010, it was a while before anyone said the name "Amazon" out loud.

The electronic commerce enterprise operates several data centers at the ports of Umatilla and Morrow under the name Vadata, Inc., and is constructing others in Umatilla County. But it has been mum on most of the details of its operations in the area, even as its footprint continues to expand.

In nearly a decade since the company came to Eastern Oregon, it has established data centers at two sites in Morrow County and two in Umatilla County. Two others are under construction — one in each county.



Neal



Puzey



Chalmers

Amazon has tapped into the area's natural resources, workforce, and business incentive programs that allow them tax breaks, but many of the basics of Amazon's operations in the area are still unclear, including the number of data centers on those sites and what types of data they process.

Over the course of the week, the *East Oregonian* made several requests to Amazon for information about their operations

in Umatilla and Morrow counties, but Amazon declined to comment on the record. Interviews with port managers, county assessors and data from Business Oregon provided a glimpse into the business and where it's heading.

Plugging in

Amazon began its official relationship with the Port of Morrow in 2010, then with the Port of Umatilla in 2012.

Kim Puzey, the general manager at the Port of Umatilla, said his initial contact with the business was strictly about costs, available infrastructure and amenities.

"There was not a lot of disclosure about what the services would be," he said.

The data centers at the ports employ nearly 400 people, according to a Business

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Photo contributed by James Thomas

The Amazon data center in Umatilla is one of four sites in Umatilla and Morrow counties that have been completed since 2010, with at least two more on the way.



Forest Plan calls for increased timber harvest

Final draft of 15-year overdue plan enters home stretch

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
EO Media Group

Logging trucks growl over the Blue Mountains in northeast Oregon, hauling freshly cut timber to one of Boise Cascade's three manufacturing facilities scattered around the region, including a plywood mill in the rural town of Elgin.

About 250 people work full-time at the Elgin complex, making plywood panels for building construction. Elsewhere on site, a stud mill sits empty after Boise Cascade announced an indefinite curtailment, ceasing operations in mid-July.

Mill closures are nothing new in Eastern Oregon. Since 1990, the industry has lost 18 mills and more than 1,200 jobs locally, said Lindsay Warness, forest policy analyst for Boise Cascade. On a percentage basis, that's equivalent to 106,000 jobs in the Portland metro area.



E.J. Harris/EO Media Group

A log shovel stacks bunches of logs in the yard at Boise Cascade's Elgin plywood mill.

To keep the remaining mills open, Boise Cascade buys roughly 33 percent of its timber from as far as Mount Hood and southwest Idaho, trucking in logs from 250 miles away. A smaller percentage comes from the three national forests within the Blue Mountains —

the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur — where Warness said the company has seen a "significant decline" in available timber supply.

That could change soon, as the U.S. Forest Service has proposed doubling the timber harvest in its latest recommendations for the Blue

Mountains Forest Plan Revision, encompassing 5.5 million acres of public lands — an area about the size of New Jersey.

After 15 years, the Forest Service released its final draft of the management plans and environmental study for all three forests in June, focusing on a wide range of environmental, social and economic factors.

The public now has until Aug. 28 to file objections, kicking off another 90-day resolution period. Only groups and individuals who have previously established legal standing can file objections. Once that is complete, the Northwest regional forester in Portland will sign off on a record of decision.

Jim Pena, the previous regional forester in Portland, retired July 3. The Forest Service has not yet named his replacement.

In general, forest supervisors for the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur said the plans strive for more active management

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