

FAIR: 2018 admission number about 82,000

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Wagner believes the admission number was about 82,000 — about 800 more than what he calculated for 2017. Wagner said they sold about 40,000 tickets through TicketMaster.

Wagner said there is no way to know for sure why gate sales were \$40,000 less than the county budgeted for. He said a part of that comes from the fact that people who paid for reserved seating at the concerts are still supposed to pay for admission but were not counted in with gate sales this year.

“That’s a pretty big hole there,” he said.

That will be fixed next year, he said, as well as a misconception the public seemed to have this year that they could enter the fair for free before 9 a.m., when in fact only people working the fair were supposed to be let in during that time. He said the fair board will work to find and fix any other factors that might be depressing gate sales.

The fair made up for the lower gate sales with increased revenue in other areas, such as concessions. Wagner said parking has also been a “huge boon” now that the fair has more of a “captive audience” at the new fairgrounds outside of town.

The budget Umatilla County adopted for 2018-2019 shows that the 2016 fair (the last at the fairgrounds in the center of town) brought in \$16,630 in parking, while the first year at EOTEC brought in \$41,327. Inside the fairgrounds, beer concessions jumped from \$13,272 in 2016 to \$19,917 in 2017 while food concessions had a small increase and sponsorship dollars rose from \$99,598 in 2016 to \$158,010 in 2017.

Wagner said it looks like it will end up being “about a wash” between the cost to hold the fair at EOTEC versus the old fairgrounds. There are some cost savings with the newer facility, but the county also has to pay rent and bring in more rented items like panels that can be removed the rest of the year.

Pahl, who said he plans to meet with the fair board soon about this year’s fair numbers, said he thought it might end up being bit little cheaper to hold the fair at EOTEC once all the kinks get worked out.

The fair has had four leaders in the past four fairs — longtime manager Peggy Anderson left for a new job, manager Don Slone was laid off after a year when the county decided to close the manager position, Cyndie Driscoll worked as an activities and sponsorship coordinator for a year and now Angie McNalley has the title of fair coordinator.

Wagner said he believes the fair has found the right staffing formula going forward and McNalley is a great asset to the fair.

“We stumbled our way through and found our footing now,” he said.

Farm-City Pro Rodeo

For the Farm-City Pro Rodeo, after fair week Dennis Barnett said the final attendance numbers for the rodeo would fall somewhere between 16,000 and 17,000 people — similar to numbers for 2017, he said. The rodeo saw about a 5 percent increase in attendance between 2016 and 2017 when it made the jump from the old arena in the center of town out to EOTEC.

Barnett said there was no doubt the extreme heat on Wednesday and Thursday of fair week encouraged some people to stay home, so better weather next year (2017 also saw temperatures over 100 degrees) could encourage some extra attendance.

The rodeo itself went “outstanding,” Barnett said, and the rodeo board is always looking for ways to improve each year. They continue to make improvements to the arena, as well, and this year featured wrought-iron fencing in the Chute 8 area and a new scoreboard.

He called the Farm-City Pro Rodeo the “best rodeo on the west side of the Mississippi” and said when there are empty seats in the arena, people are missing out.

“Everything’s there, we just have to get people there,” he said.

The rodeo gained four new sponsors this year. The rodeo signed a lease with EOTEC for \$10,000 a year, and Barnett said while that doesn’t create much of a cash flow problem for the rodeo, the organization does have extra costs now associated with debt service from the approximately \$1 million it has put into building the mercantile building and other improvements to EOTEC.

issues for the county.

“Do we need to do an urban growth boundary expansion? Do we need to do different zoning?” she said. They may not get all those answers by the end of the study, but she said they hope to get a better immediate understanding of other things — such as the demand is for residential land in south Morrow County.

McLane said there may be a few opportunities for community input, but the project is more focused on analysis.

“There are clear stakeholder groups that (consultants) will want to ask questions of. Builders, developers, real estate agents — people that have their thumb on the pulse of the housing market in Morrow County.”

She said there is no specific action that the county will take at the end of this project, but it will inform potential steps afterward.

She said in the next couple of weeks the firms will begin collecting data from the entire community. They will present some preliminary findings at a meeting in early November.

McLane said she was excited about the project, and that although Eastern Oregon is not unique in its need for housing, it has different needs than the rest of the state.

“I don’t know what all the limits and constraints are, but hopefully this will illuminate some of them so we can target them,” she said.

CAMERAS: Boardman also using body cameras

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a heightened situation,” Edmiston said. “Why wouldn’t we want our cameras rolling?”

Camera footage has come into play in criminal investigations and prosecutions, he said, and Hermiston Municipal Court Judge Thomas Creasing has asked to see footage.

“Any judge is going to want as much information as possible to make decisions,” Edmiston said.

Local departments have cameras in their police vehicles, but Boardman is the only other local agency to use body cams. Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Rob-

erts maintain he would like to bring on the cameras, but the cost is prohibitive.

The basic recording system — from the cameras to data storage — would run a bit more than \$70,000, Roberts said, “but to do it right would be about \$100,000.” And Pendleton has more pressing needs, such as keeping its fleet of police cars running.

“I can’t think of a week where we did not have at least one if not two cars red-lined or in the shop,” Roberts said, and that costs “eats up an entire line item in our budget.”

The department has applied for a federal grant to cover the cost of body cams,

but Roberts said he was not holding out hope for success. Similar efforts did not secure the crucial funds.

The Pendleton chief also said some departments, including Boardman and Hermiston, jumped into the camera use early, when companies were offering sweet deals. Some departments nationwide are finding subsequent contracts pack much higher costs, Roberts said, and are dropping their camera systems in spite of their obvious benefits.

Edmiston pointed out Hermiston, Pendleton and other local law enforcement contract with the company Lexipol to provide policy

and procedure manuals and training, and Lexipol has increased its price 40 percent in the last three years. But Lexipol’s team of lawyers keep up with “all the crazy case law” that comes out of federal courts and does a good job of updating the information, so departments pay. Otherwise, he said, some city attorney would shoulder that work load.

Edmiston said he expects the next contract for the body cameras to come with higher costs, but he does not see Axon asking for a significant increase, but rather something moderate. And hopefully, he said, even minor.

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— Stuart Roberts, Pendleton police chief



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DEVELOP: Zoning and tax lot information provided

Continued from 1A

The project will cost about \$55,000 and is scheduled to be completed by February or March of next year. It will include assessments of lands around Morrow County.

McLane said the project will involve a lot of data collection and input.

“We’re providing them with zoning information, tax lot information,” she said.

The consultants will assess not only what land is available, but also what condition it is in. There may be land that has the potential to be developed but no access to services.

“When we look at our five communities, all five have community water, but only three have community wastewater,” she said. Houses in Ione and Lexington operate on individual septic systems, while Boardman, Hepner and Irrigon have city services.

“That’s a limitation on density for development that other communities wouldn’t necessarily have,” she said.

The study will also look at other potential reasons for slow development in Morrow County.

“Is it about a lack of developers, are our processes too cumbersome? Is the price of land too much?” McLane said. “They may be able to give us some insight into the reality.”

She said the project will look at a variety of long-term