

EAST OREGONIAN

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HERMISTON

Strategic plan maps out EOTEC's future

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Trade and Event Center's RV park.

The city recently awarded Knerr Construction a contract to build new offices for the Umatilla County Fair and add hook-ups and other needed finishes to the RV park.

The park, currently unfinished, lies in the northwest corner of the property behind the event center. On Monday, rodeo board member Dennis Barnett told the council the rodeo had been notified only two weeks earlier that the city was "fast-tracking"

a plan to move the RV park next to the rodeo arena's east side, potentially taking away 10 acres of parking for the rodeo.

He said on Friday and Saturday nights of the rodeo, parking has been full even with the arena only about

60 percent full. Both he and board member David Bothum said they felt the decision had been rushed, and more due diligence was needed.

City manager Byron Smith said the RV park and fair office projects have been

on a fast track because of the urgency to get them constructed before the 2019 fair and rodeo. He admitted that more notice could have been given to the rodeo board,

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Highway holiday night show



Staff photo by E.J. Harris/

Traffic moves past a holiday light display in a small open park space off the Highway 11 viaduct Monday in Pendleton. Drivers can also tune in their radios to 89.3 FM and listen to Christmas music that plays in sync with the lights as they drive past.

Trucker releases great horned owl he saved back into wild



Contributed photo

Nick Infante releases Faith the owl on Saturday at the McKay Creek National Wildlife Refuge, 5 miles south of Pendleton.

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

A great horned owl owes her survival to a soft-hearted trucker.

On Aug. 23, Nick Infante drove his tractor-trailer rig west on Interstate 84, navigating the steep curves of Cabbage Hill. Infante, who works for the Oregon Department of Corrections, was returning home to Salem from delivering

his weekly load of food and other supplies to the Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario. He revealed in the warm glow of sunrise.

About 100 yards ahead near milepost 216, Infante spotted something sitting on the shoulder and peered curiously. "I was getting ready to pass and saw it was an owl," he said. "I slowed and pulled over immediately."

He switched on his four-way flashers, grabbed his

leather gloves and walked the 100-or-so yards back to the bird, not knowing if it was alive. As he leaned over to look, the owl opened its big yellow eyes.

"Her wing looked broken," he recalled. "It was extended out and flopping around and she had an injury to one of her eyes."

Infante phoned the Oregon State Police, hoping the agency would send someone from Oregon Fish & Wild-

life. The dispatcher called him back and said Bob Tompkins of Blue Mountain Wildlife was on his way.

"Have him look for a white semi truck with four-way flashers," he told the dispatcher.

Infante waited almost an hour for Tompkins to arrive, assisted him and resumed the drive to Salem.

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Wildhorse Resort & Casino expansion needs contractors

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The \$85 million expansion of Wildhorse Resort & Casino is going to need as many as 350 contractors.

Wildhorse last week revealed what the project would look like upon com-

pletion in 2020, from the second hotel tower to the 1,500-seat conference center to the bowling alley. Wildhorse CEO Gary George spoke Monday at the Pendleton Rotary Club about the cost and scope. He said Lydig Construction of Kennewick had the job of shap-

ing the grand vision to fit within the constraints of the budget.

Bob Bennie, Lydig's director of business development, said the work will need 250-350 contractors.

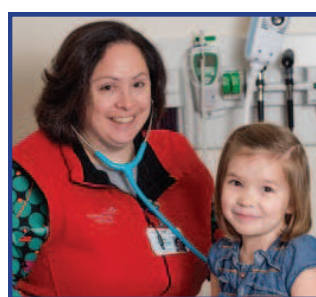
"To find people to fill these positions is going to be the reality test," Bennie said.

Lydig has been analyzing the reality of the expansion for the last 45 days. While architects get the accolades for their beautiful designs, Bennie said, the contractor considers the cost.

Lydig employs 200 people and this year estimates revenues of \$350 million,

Bennie said. The company has handled numerous educational projects for K-12 and beyond, as well as correctional and food processing facilities, including the Lamb Weston project last

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