

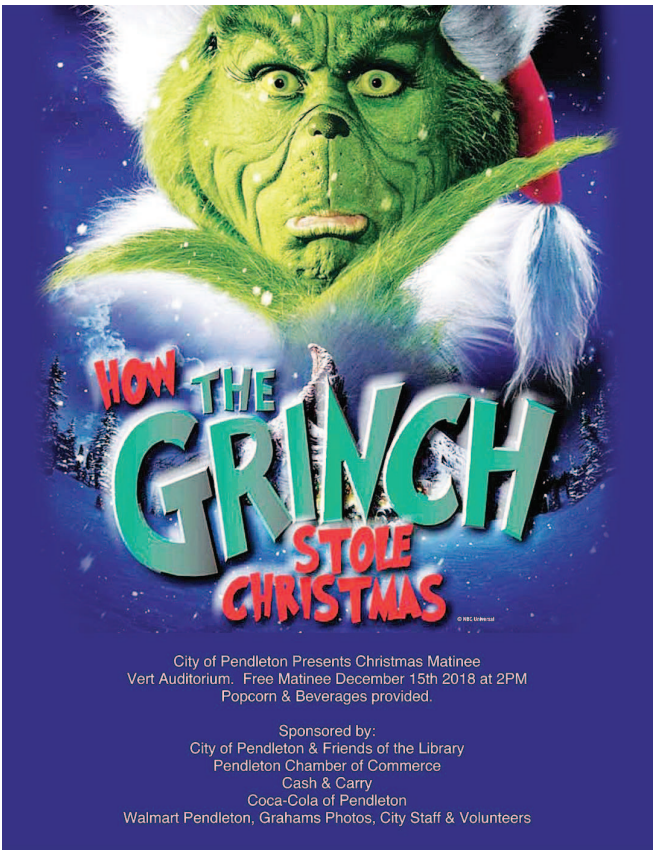
Holiday films provide Christmas spirit

The Vert features free Grinch screening

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

The Grinch is making appearances in the area — just in time for the holidays. A free Christmas matinee of “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” is available Saturday at 2 p.m. at the Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. To make the viewing experience even better, free popcorn and beverages will be provided. The event is sponsored by the city of Pendleton, Friends of the Pendleton Public Library, the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce, Cash & Carry, Coca-Cola of Pendleton, Pendleton Walmart, Grams Photos and city staff and volunteers.

“This is totally a free venture by sponsors, local merchants, volunteers and city of Pendleton,” said Glenn Graham, city of Pendleton facilities & technology manager. Kids, their parents and young adults are encouraged to come out and enjoy the free event. Graham said it’s the fourth year of pro-



Contributed
Annual Christmas matinee features free Saturday screening of ‘How the Grinch Stole Christmas’ at the Vert Auditorium in Pendleton.

viding the annual Christmas matinee. For more information, contact 541-966-0370 or glenn.graham@ci.pendleton.or.us. The film, which stars Jim Carrey, shares the tale of how the Grinch tries to ruin the holiday. However, residents of Whoville won’t be

denied Christmas, thanks to Cindy Lou Who, who reaches out to the grumpy Grinch. Based on the Dr. Seuss book, the film is rated PG. Another pair of screenings of the film will be offered later in the month in Boardman. During those

viewings, the Grinch will even make appearances 30 minutes before showtimes. The SAGE Movie Event is Friday, Dec. 21 at 7:15 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 22 at 2:15 p.m. The SAGE Center is located at 101 Olson Road, Boardman. The admission charge for the SAGE Center showings is \$3 per person, which includes free popcorn. Also, bottled water and concessions are available with cash purchases. For more information, call 541-481-7243 or visit www.visitsage.com. Also, holiday-themed movies are planned during the upcoming Reel Classic Matinee Movies. They are Wednesdays at noon at the Wildhorse Cineplex at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, located off Interstate 84 Exit 216. Upcoming films are: Dec 12: “It’s a Wonderful Life” with James Stewart; and Dec 19: “A Christmas Story” featuring Peter Billingsley. Tickets are \$5 and include a small fountain drink and a small popcorn. For more information, visit www.wildhorseresort.com/cineplex.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

HERMISTON

City council votes to raise electric rates

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Hermiston City Council voted Monday to raise electric rates for Hermiston Energy Services by \$2 per month. The changes take effect Dec. 31. Usage rates per kilowatt hour will stay the same, but base rates for residential customers will jump from \$14 to \$16. Small commercial users will see their rates go from \$35 to \$37, and demand charges for peak usage for all types of commercial customers will go from \$5.75 to \$6. HES does not currently have any industrial customers, but if one does arrive they will now pay a base charge of \$250 instead of \$200. The council had postponed its vote on the issue from the Nov. 26 meeting, asking HES general manager Nate Rivera to return with more detailed information about the utility’s finances. Rivera said 52 percent of HES’s spending is for wholesale power from

Bonneville Power Administration, 17 percent is for its contract with Umatilla Electric Cooperative, 11 percent is for debt service, 9 percent is for materials and services, 8 percent is for capital outlay and 3 percent is for personnel. Increasing costs for wholesale power and maintenance would have put HES as a \$1.2 million deficit during the current fiscal year, but Rivera said savings from a bond refinance and on construction spending last year have helped bring that down to a \$163,102 deficit. Rivera said the rate increase would bring in about \$157,000. “That still leaves us with about a \$6,000 deficit, and I think I can get that from other areas of my department,” he said. Rivera said when BPA raises rates again in Oct. 2019 there is a strong possibility he will be back before the council asking for another rate adjustment, but he said he didn’t want to have to raise rates on cus-

tomers any more than necessary. After a 10.95 percent increase in 2015, the council asked that HES try to break increases into smaller amounts over time to help customers transition. He said the change will put the average residential bill for HES at \$111, compared with \$155 statewide and \$186 nationally. On Monday, Rivera also shared information with the council about upcoming 5G technology, which will enable faster data speeds for cell phones. Currently, 4G and below operates on a system of cell towers that are 75 to 400 feet tall and cover up to 20 miles. Cell service providers are preparing to begin the jump to 5G, he said, which operates on 30- to 60-foot towers that cover up to 750 feet. Instead of building their own towers, providers will mostly use utility poles, street lights and other existing items to place their technology. The industry successfully lobbied the FCC to

greatly restrict cities’ ability to regulate that practice, he said, including limits on how much a city can charge the companies to place their equipment in the public right-of-way. “They took away a big area of local control,” Rivera said. While revenue was one concern, Rivera said he was more concerned about safety. He worried about telecommunications employees without proper safety training accessing equipment so close to live wires, and asked what would happen if a vehicle hit a pole and there wasn’t anyone local who was able to service the 5G equipment. Without local agreements in place, Rivera said, a company might be able to abandon broken or outdated equipment on the city’s poles. Mayor David Drotzmann said the League of Oregon Cities was aware of the problem and is working with other states to lobby for more local control of public rights-of-way.

BRIEFLY

NARFE meeting includes Salvation Army update

PENDLETON — Capt. Ricky Scruggs of the Pendleton Corps of The Salvation Army is the guest speaker for the upcoming National Association of Retired Federal Employees meeting. The no-host gathering is Thursday at 11:30 a.m. at Shari’s Cafe & Pies, 319 S.E. Nye Ave., Pendleton. Scruggs will provide an update on programs and pass the Red Kettle for donations. Founded in 1921,

NARFE is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the interests of federal employees, retirees and their survivors. For more information, call Janet Lambert at 541-980-3268.

Bird club gets tropical

PENDLETON — Local photographer Bill Peal will share images of birds he encountered during a trip to Mexico’s Baja California peninsula. The “Birds of Cabo San Lucas” presentation is during the upcoming Pendleton Bird Club meeting. The public is invited to

attend Thursday at 7 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 215 N. Main St., Pendleton. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Lorna Waltz at lornawaltz@gmail.com.

Health district hosts donation drive

HEPPNER — Families in need in Morrow County can benefit from donations collected through the Morrow County Health District. The hospital as well as clinic, home health and Murray’s Drug locations are accepting items during

the donation drive. Everything from non-perishable food items, new or gently used clothing and blankets to personal care and household items, board games, and school and art supplies are being accepted. In addition, used electronics and cell phones that work can be donated. Ask for a raffle ticket when dropping off donations for a chance to win a gift basket, coffee shop gift card and more. For more information, call 541-676-2930.

Groups call for ‘mega-dairy’ moratorium

By GEORGE PLAVEN
EO Media Group

A coalition of groups is asking Oregon leaders to put a moratorium on large, commercial dairies, claiming inadequate oversight by state regulators and insufficient laws to protect the environment, animal welfare and small farms. The request comes after the highly publicized breakdown of Lost Valley Farm near Boardman, which was permitted in March 2017 for up to 30,000 cows, making it the second-largest dairy in Oregon.

A dozen groups are now seeking to halt new or expanded “mega-dairies.” The coalition includes Columbia Riverkeeper, Environment Oregon, Friends of Family Farmers, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Human Voters Oregon, Oregon Rural Action, WaterWatch of Oregon, Animal Legal Defense Fund, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Factory Farm Awareness Coalition and Food & Water Watch.

Ivan Maluski, policy director for Friends of Family Farms, said the proposed moratorium would cover any dairy with more than 2,500 cows, or dairies with at least 700 cows that do not provide the animals with seasonal daily access to pasture. It would apply only to new permits, Maluski said, and not existing operations.

“We’ve always believed the real issue here is these huge operations that have thousands, if not tens of thousands, of cows,” Maluski said. Exhibit A in the argument for a moratorium is the state’s approval of the ill-fated Lost Valley Farm over the objections of critics who submitted more than 4,200 comments against the facility. Lost Valley began racking up violations of its wastewater management permit almost immediately after opening, with offenses ranging from overflows at open-air lagoons to improperly applying manure as fertilizer.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture and Department of Environmental Quality jointly oversee the state’s Confined Animal Feeding Operation, or CAFO, program, and moved to revoke Lost Valley’s permit earlier this year. The dairy’s owner, Greg te Velde, meanwhile filed for bankruptcy. Court documents revealed he owed \$162 million to creditors.

A bankruptcy judge put a trustee in charge of Lost Valley in September, finding that te Velde has continued his long-standing pattern of illegal drug use and gambling. The trustee, Randy Sugarman, announced he will shut down and sell the dairy by early 2019.

Maluski said the debacle — coupled with a “catastrophic decline” in small and mid-size dairy farms — make it clear the state should freeze new mega-dairies until lawmakers can consider stronger protections. He pointed to a report in August by the Oregon Employment Department that highlights the trend toward fewer but larger dairy farms since 1990. According to that report, the number of Grade A licensed dairies in Oregon fell from 520 in 1990 to 228 in 2017, a 56 percent decline.

“We’d like to see the state look at the economic impact of these mega-dairies on small and mid-size family dairy farms and also tighten up the environmental rules on these mega-dairies as well,” Maluski said. “There may need to be legislative action.”

Other groups cited air and water pollution as factors for a moratorium. Celeste Meiffren-Swango, state director with Environment Oregon, said vast quantities of concentrated manure release gases such as methane into the atmosphere, while contaminating surface and groundwater with nitrates, pharmaceuticals and pathogens.

“We simply cannot allow these industrial factory farms to continue polluting in Oregon — they are bad for our health, our climate and our environment,” Meiffren-Swango said.

Tami Kerr, executive director of the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association, said Oregon dairies are already subject to some of the strictest CAFO laws in the country. Every Grade A licensed dairy in Oregon is required to have a permit and wastewater plan, regardless of size, Kerr said. All dairies are inspected at least once every 10 months or more, depending on size.

“Oregon producers have met and exceeded the requirements of the state,” Kerr said. “Our producers as a whole do a good job.”

The Oregon Department of Agriculture conducted 880 inspections at 509 CAFOs in 2017, with less than 1 percent resulting in violations that led to civil penalties or injunctive relief.

The issue at Lost Valley, Kerr said, was not due to size, but rather the quality of management. The Oregon Dairy Farmers Association is now participating in a work group assembled by state Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, chairman of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, to study and propose legislation based on “lessons learned” from Lost Valley.

“The CAFO program works,” Kerr said. “We stand behind it. We support it.”



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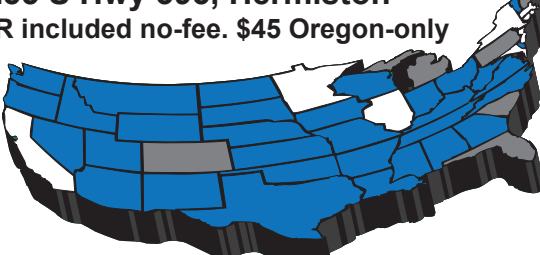
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