



EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 2019

143rd Year, No. 54

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PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Portland electrical contractor Lance Leonnig bought the 24,000-square-foot building at 14 S.E. Third St. for \$225,000.

Elks Lodge sold to Portland contractor

Owner with Pendleton roots envisions bar with hometown theme

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The former Pendleton Elks Lodge has a new owner.

Portland electrical contractor Lance Leonnig bought the 24,000-square-foot building at 14 S.E. Third St. for \$225,000 and plans to turn it into a bar and entertainment space.

Leonnig, 45, said his family has been in Pendleton since the late 1800s and his great-grandfather built churches here. The Elks building drew his inter-

est years ago.

"Every time I come to town I looked at the building and I wanted it," he said. "It came up for sale and I managed to get it."

Leonnig said his business in Portland, 84 Electric, is a one-man show, but he has done electrical work and lighting in some of Portland's newer top-end bars, including Capitol and Hey Love.

"The bars I do look like doll houses," he said, and he aims to bring that movie set-like aesthetic to the old Elks building.

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Lodge No. 288 has been in Pendleton since 1895. Larry Blanc, one of the trustee chairmen for the club, said the group's first seal remains above the Security Apartments, 130 S.W. Court Ave.

The organization at its height claimed more than 3,000 members and built and moved into the Third Street building in the mid-1950s.

But the Elks by 2017 had about 250 members. That March the group surrendered its charter to the national organization and put the building up for sale. Blanc said closing the deal is a bitter-sweet relief and sign of the times.

"That building was just much too big for us," Blanc said. "We didn't have the membership to support it."

Keeping the building going ate into the Elks' ability to do charity work, Blanc said, but the sale allows the group to refocus. He said in late spring or early

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Pendleton man struck, killed by train

Murillo a cowboy, leatherworker

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pendleton resident Angel Murillo died early Tuesday when a train struck him. He was 24. Pendleton police are calling the death an accident.

Murillo was from White Salmon, Washington, and moved to Pendleton several years ago. He attended Blue Mountain Community College, where he made honor roll in 2015 and in 2016 was the vice president of the new FFA collegiate chapter.

Murillo was a cowboy and worked at the Hamley Western Store as a hat shaper and more recently as a saddle maker. He won first place in the novice class for saddle making at the 2018 Pendleton Leather Show as well as the people's choice award. He also spent many an evening in the weight room at Pendleton's Club 24. People who knew Murillo posted comments celebrating his life on Facebook page.

They described Murillo as a good, kind person. Pendleton business owner Kristine Taylor stated Murillo "became known as one of the best hat shapers around," and "at such a young age he touched so many people's lives."

Penny French, manager of the Hamley Western Store, said this was a difficult time for her and the staff, and the store at some point plans to hold a memorial for their co-worker and friend.

The store's Facebook page contained a post stating Murillo "was one of the nicest and most honest young men around and we are going to miss him terribly." The post also provided a link to donate to a memorial fund for Murillo.

Some people who knew Murillo also said he had a drinking problem. Pendleton police Lt. Tony Nelson said Murillo was "unresponsive" in public areas on three occasions since May

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Technology connects father, mother and baby daughter

Hermiston couple delivers Umatilla County's first baby

By KATHY ANEY AND JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

When Umatilla County's first baby breathed her first breath on New Year's Day at St. Anthony Hospital, her father watched from thousands of miles away at his base in Iraq.

Mila Marie McDonough came into the world at 9:56 a.m., weighing six pounds, four ounces. Her mom, Brandi McDonough, held her daughter in her arms as Ryan McDonough watched

from Brandi's iPhone screen.

This is the first baby for the Hermiston couple. Brandi learned she was pregnant a week before Ryan deployed.

Ryan is with the Navy Seabees, the military's elite construction unit. He was working when he got the word his wife had gone into labor just after midnight and had headed to the hospital about 4 a.m. He retired to his room at the base and launched a FaceTime session with Brandi. Part of the time, he used up nervous energy by folding laundry or saying comforting words to his wife. Neither knew whether the baby was a boy or girl.

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Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Brandi McDonough gazes at her newborn daughter, Mila. The baby came into the world at 9:56 a.m. on New Year's Day as her father watched remotely from Iraq.



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