

EOTEC manager seeking more weekday bookings

Facility still aiming at self-sufficiency in two or three years

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center was booked for a total of 210 events in 2018.

Al Davis, general manager of EOTEC for the past year, told the Hermiston City Council during its Monday meeting that if they take into account the 40 or so days EOTEC is out of circulation for the Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo, “we’re pretty busy.”

Last year’s events included 53 public events, 74 corporate bookings and 84 private events. The event center already has more than 100 events booked for 2019.

“If you’re looking for a weekend, you will be hard-pressed to find one,” he said.

Weekdays are more of a challenge to fill, Davis said, and he’s working on recruiting more business conferences, corporate train-

ings and other events to fill those days.

EOTEC is a good location for companies that want to do a training on the east side of the state, he said, but they have to know it exists. The venue offers some unique options — for example, Davis said RDO Equipment likes having training sessions in the main room of the event center because the large garage door on the side allows them to bring farm equipment right inside the building.

The city is working on plans for an RV park that will give EOTEC a more stable source of revenue year-round. Davis said the original goal when VenuWorks was brought on board in January 2018 to manage EOTEC was that the venue would become self-sustaining between years three and four, and that’s still the goal.

The RV park was stalled from breaking ground in February after the city planning commission banned all new construction at EOTEC until an overflow parking plan was submitted and approved.



Al Davis

Councilor John Kirwan said city staff presented the draft parking plan to the EOTEC advisory committee Thursday and plans to present it to the planning commission Feb. 27.

Kirwan said Travis Lundquist, who runs two RV parks in the area, came and answered questions about RV parks and “brought a lot of enlightenment” to the committee. Mayor David Drotzmann said the discussion with Lundquist and with advisory committee members was helpful.

“There were some great ideas coming out of there and I think we’re going to have a better project as a result,” he said.

During Monday’s city council meeting, the council also approved a franchise agreement with the city of Umatilla.

Vadata — a subsidiary of Amazon — plans to use water from the Regional Water System, which uses the Port of Umatilla’s water right and is administered by the city of Hermiston, for new developments off Lind Road and West-

land Road outside of Hermiston.

City Manager Byron Smith said the Lind Road development has since been annexed into the city of Umatilla, and Umatilla requested that Hermiston pay a franchise fee for the privilege of running water infrastructure through Umatilla’s rights of way. Smith reminded the council that Hermiston charges franchise fees to electrical utilities, telecommunications companies and others who use Hermiston’s rights of way.

The agreement the council directed Smith to sign gives Umatilla 5 percent of the revenue generated from the water system within Umatilla city limits. Smith said Vadata would pay the fee to Hermiston, which will turn the money over to Umatilla.

Kirwan made the motion to approve the agreement, but also pointed out that it would cost the city to collect and send the fees. He asked that the city’s administrative costs for the Regional Water System be considered in future discussions about rates for the system.

The council also approved a hangar lease with Gorge Aviation

Services on Monday. The aviation company has been managing the Hermiston Municipal Airport for a few months.

The airport did not previously have a shop with mechanics to fix and inspect airplanes in Hermiston, but Gorge Aviation provides that service. Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said fuel sales at the airport are up by 33 percent, or about \$62,000 since Gorge Aviation Services took over.

The mechanics have been housed in a private hangar, but Ross Brandt Electric has recently moved out of a larger city-owned hangar and Gorge Aviation’s shop will move into that hangar.

About \$80,000 worth of renovations are needed, and Morgan said the agreement before the city council Monday reduced the rent by about \$10,000 per year for five years in acknowledgment of the money Gorge Aviation Services would be spending to upgrade the city’s hangar. Morgan said the money would be more than made up to the city through increased fuel sales from planes coming in for repairs.

Columbia River Treaty flows with change

East Oregonian

The public is invited to learn more about the importance of water as Craig Reeder discusses renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty.

The event is part of a dinner meeting hosted by the Echo Kiwanis. People are invited to hear the presentation and may choose to purchase a lasagna dinner. The event is Wednesday, Feb. 20 at the Echo VFW Hall, 210 W. Bridge St. The meal, which costs \$5, will be served at 6 p.m. and the presentation is at 6:45 p.m. People do not have to eat in order to attend.

Reeder is currently CFO of Madison Ranches and operates the Reeder family farm with his wife, Tina. In addition, Reeder is the chairman of the Northeast Oregon Water Association.

Much has changed since 1961 when the Columbia River Treaty was drafted. New politics, technology, environmental and agricultural uses for water and many more concerns have made the original treaty somewhat obsolete. This May, Canada and the United States have arranged to meet in Washington D.C. to renegotiate the Columbia River Treaty.

To assist with planning, those who are interested in attending are asked to RSVP by texting 541-379-6992. For more information, contact Joe Ramos at 509-366-3980.

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

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Symphony to host chamber music festival Saturday

Event features world premiere of Raven Chacon’s new work

East Oregonian

The focal point of the Oregon East Symphony’s Winter Chamber Music Festival is Saturday at 6:30 p.m. in the Vert Clubroom, 345 S.W. Fourth St., Pendleton.

In addition to a collection of chamber ensembles performing works in an intimate atmosphere, wine and hearty hors d’oeuvres prepared by the symphony board of directors will be served.

prised of musicians from the Oregon East Symphony and student percussionists from Nixyaawii Community School.

The Winter Chamber Music Festival is Saturday at 6:30 p.m. in the Vert Clubroom, 345 S.W. Fourth St., Pendleton.

Commissioned by the symphony and Crow’s Shadow Institute of the Arts, the piece features a chamber ensemble com-



Chacon

Advance tickets are highly recommended for the popular event.

Also, while in Eastern Oregon coaching musicians on the performance of his commissioned work, Chacon is working with Crow’s Shadow to produce a series of lithographic prints to be incorporated into the commission score. An artist’s reception and reprisal performance will take place Sunday at 1 p.m. at Crow’s Shadow, 48004 St Andrews Road, Mission.

Hailing from the Navajo Nation, Chacon is a composer, performer and installation artist.

Each year, he teaches 20 students to write string quartets for the Native American Composer Apprenticeship Project. Also, Chacon is a part of the American Indian arts collective Postcommodity, with work displayed internationally.

Additional performances during the evening festival include Brahms’s “Piano Quintet, Op 34” featuring pianist James Cook, the Donizetti aria “Oh Mio

Fernando!” sung by mezzo-soprano Alexis McCarthy, Devienne’s “Suite No. 1 in G major” featuring symphony principal flutist Cathy Muller, and an appearance by the Pendleton Brass Quintet.

Advance tickets are \$25 per person and are available at the symphony office, 345 S.W. Fourth St., Pendleton Art + Frame, 36 S.W. Court Ave., and via www.oregoneastsymphony.org.

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

BRIEFLY

For more information, call the cafe at 541-567-6329, or visit www.chuckwagoncafe.net.

Rep. Walden to hold Morrow County town hall

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden announced plans to hold a town hall meeting Monday in Boardman. The Republican from Hood River stated he is excited about continuing the series of public events he started in January.

The public meeting is Monday starting at 9:15 a.m. at the Sage Center Theater, 101 Olson Road, Boardman. The date and time, however, are subject to change due to weather and scheduling in the U.S. House.

Monday’s town hall meeting will represent Walden’s 158th town hall meeting and seventh town hall in Morrow County since 2012.

Buttercreek Boys postpone February rehearsal

HERMISTON — The February rehearsal meeting of the Buttercreek Boys has been postponed.

The group of seasoned musicians strum up old-time music the second Wednesday of each month from 6-7:30 p.m. at Chuckwagon Cafe, 81027 Highway 395 North, Hermiston. There is no cover charge. However, due to inclement weather, this month’s event is on hold. The cafe will close at its regular time of 2 p.m.

BMCC puts off exhibit reception

PENDLETON — Due to weather conditions, the Betty Feves Memorial Gallery is postponing the reception for Marie Noorani’s “How it Looks on Paper.”

The exhibit runs Feb. 18 through March 14 at the gallery, in Pioneer Hall at Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. A reception will be held Thursday, March 14 from 4:30-6:30 p.m., on the exhibit’s closing day. The gallery is open Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and by appointment by calling 541-278-5952.

For more information, contact gallery director Lori Sams at 541-278-5952, lsams@bluecc.edu or visit www.bluecc.edu/community/feves-art-gallery. For more about the Richland, Washington artist, go to www.marienoorani.com.

EO Forum feels the beat

PENDLETON — The upcoming Eastern Oregon Forum presents Our Music featuring J.D. Kindle and Friends.

The event is Tuesday, Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. in

ST-200 (Science and Technology building) at Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Tickets are \$5 at the door and free for students.

In addition to his role as frontman of James Dean Kindle & the Eastern Oregon Playboys, the 2001 Pendleton High School graduate is in his fourth season as executive director of the Oregon East Symphony. A member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Fred Hill Sr. works as the cultural historian at Nixyaawii Community School.

The Eastern Oregon Forum is a collaborative effort between BMCC, InterMountain Education Service District, the East Oregonian, American Association of University Women and Harriet Isom, a former United States ambassador. For more information, contact Karen Parker at 541-966-3177 or karen.parker@imesd.k12.or.us.

Weston library announces change in hours

WESTON — The Weston Public Library has slightly changed its hours. The library is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1:30-5 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30-6 p.m.

For more information, contact wcolibrary@wquestoffice.net or 541-566-2378.

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