

# Umatilla council wants its own enterprise zone

## Shared zone with Stanfield, Echo limits room for growth

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

The Umatilla City Council covered a wide range of topics during a three-hour work session on Tuesday, including raises for city employees, funding to improve Lind Road and whether the city should be on Facebook.

The city also discussed its enterprise zone, which allows Umatilla to give three- to five-year property tax breaks to new developments in the zone. Vadata, a subsidiary of Amazon, has received tax breaks for data centers in the zone, the first of which is coming onto the tax rolls during the current fiscal year.

Umatilla's enterprise zone currently includes land in Stanfield and Echo, because when it was created in 1997 the state had a cap on the number of enterprise zones in the state. City manager David Stockdale said now that there is no limit, it made more sense for Stanfield and Echo to apply for their own.

Community development director Tamra Mabbott said Stanfield is looking to start marketing its industrial land more aggressively, and having Umatilla administrate the enterprise zone put it in an awkward position of being inserted into negotiations between Stanfield and interested companies.

"It would be better for them to regulate it directly rather than to involve Umatilla," she said.

There is also a limit on the amount of land that can be included in an enterprise zone, and removing land in Stanfield and Echo would allow Umatilla to apply to add more of its own land.

City councilors seemed amenable to the idea, and Stockdale said he would sit down with Stanfield and Echo administrators to discuss the concept.

On Tuesday, the council also discussed adding wage increases and new positions to the budget this spring. Stockdale said that the city would like to add three new positions: an administrative services manager, a recreation/development director and a building official. Umatilla currently contracts with the city of Hermiston for building inspections, but Stockdale said recent exponential growth in construction has brought the city to a point where it would save money bringing those services back in house.

In light of creating those new positions the city conducted a wage study, which Stockdale said showed that many city staff, particularly department heads, were being paid below market rate. To compensate, he shared a draft plan that would add an additional class of wage and additional step to each wage scale to help wages increase more quickly.

Councilors also said they were in favor of bringing the police chief, lieutenant and sergeant up to the next wage scale. When mayor Mary Dedrick suggested Stockdale might also need a raise to be more competitive, Stockdale said while his salary was "drastically under market" it was the one he had agreed

to when he was hired a few months ago and he wasn't looking to renegotiate it now.

The council also discussed its social media policy. Stockdale said he would like to see the city of Umatilla and departments, such as the library, have accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in order to better communicate with the public "where the people are." He presented a draft policy that discussed the need to treat those social media accounts as a public record and save communications with the public via those accounts.

Councilor Roak Ten Eyck, however, wasn't a fan of the idea of an official city social media accounts.

"I see the potential for things to go upside down," he said.

He questioned how the city would effectively monitor the accounts 24 hours a day and said staff were already "up to their eyebrows" in other job duties. Stockdale said he planned to have one staff member, perhaps the new administrative services director, become the public information officer for the city and they would be ultimately responsible for what was posted on accounts, and for monitoring comments by the public. In response to a request from Ten Eyck he agreed to bring back a more detailed proposal.

Other items discussed Tuesday include:

- The council discussed an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation that serves as one piece of the puzzle for a reuse project. Data centers pipe water through their buildings to keep servers cool, and the city is working on a project with Vadata that will reroute the relatively clean "wastewater" coming out of data centers from the city's recycled water treatment plant into irrigation ditches for agricultural use. Mabbott said it represented about one million gallons of water per day during summer months that the city would otherwise have to process.

- Staff shared that the city was pursuing funding from the state's Immediate Opportunity Fund to improve Lind Road before Vadata completes its new development there.

- Staff let the council know of new transportation options coming to Umatilla. Recently Hermiston included the city of Umatilla in its taxi program, which gives senior and disabled residents \$2 vouchers for taxi rides. Hermiston also plans to include Umatilla in a second initiative that would give half-price taxi rides to residents traveling to their workplace.

- Mabbott shared that the city's community development department, including code enforcement, has been discussing options for reducing the number of abandoned buildings in Umatilla.

- She also shared that the city will be approaching the Oregon Department of Transportation about acquiring a triangle-shaped right-of-way surrounding the intersection of Umatilla River Road and Highway 730. The intersection is "another gateway to Umatilla," she said, and the city would like to have more options when it comes to landscaping and traffic safety at the location.



Photo contributed by the office of Bill Hansell  
**Skeeter Amstad, left, Sen. Bill Hansell and Senate President Peter Courtney stand in front of a truckload of potatoes donated to the Oregon Food Bank by Amstad Farms.**

# Amstad Farms donates 65,000 pounds of potatoes to the Oregon Food Bank

East Oregonian

Eastern Oregon isn't slacking when it comes to participating in the governor's annual state employee food drive.

On Wednesday, Amstad Farms brought a 65,000-pound truckload of potatoes to the Oregon Capitol. The company grows most of its potatoes around Hermiston and Echo.

Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Ath-

ena) and Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem) were there to welcome the donation, which will go to the Oregon Food Bank to be handed out to families in need across Oregon. Hansell said in a statement that the potatoes will feed "hundreds" of people and demonstrates District 29's position as one of the leading agricultural-producing regions in Oregon.

"I am proud and grate-

ful to see such a generous donation from District 29 to the Governor's Food Drive," he said, thanking Skeeter Amstad, JR Cook, Jeff Urbach and Bill Brewer, president of the Oregon Potato Commission, for making the donation possible.

It wasn't the first time Amstad Farms has donated to the Oregon Food Bank — the company is a regular contributor to Farmers

Ending Hunger, a nonprofit started in Hermiston with the aim of channeling fresh produce and other farm products into food banks.

Wednesday's donation was part of the governor's state employee food drive, which runs through the month of February. The tradition was started in 1982 by Gov. Vic Atiyeh. Last year's food drive raked in just over 3 million pounds of food.

# Stanfield superintendent receives mostly positive evaluation

## Some question hiring her father as interim principal

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**  
East Oregonian

Stanfield Superintendent Beth Burton received performance evaluations from the community, staff, and school board last week — her first official review since stepping into the role last year.

The board took a new approach to judging the superintendent's performance this year, opening

comments up to the public, instead of limiting it to evaluations from the board.

The board reviewed the comments in an executive session last Wednesday, before presenting them to Burton on the morning of Feb. 15. The *East Oregonian* requested the documents from Burton's evaluation.

The majority of comments about Burton's leadership were positive, with several staff members saying she had a level head and gives extra effort to support staff and students. Others said they like that she is visible in the community and participates at events outside of the school.

Two comments in the staff survey were critical of Burton, citing that she had hired family members. Burton hired her father, Wayne Kostur, as the interim principal of Stanfield Secondary School to complete the 2017-18 school year, when Burton was appointed to the superintendent's position midyear.

In total, Burton received comments from only six community members, though the district office sent out 100 surveys. The staff survey saw better participation, with 41 people responding. All five board members filled out evaluations as well.

Burton said overall she felt her evaluation was positive, and that she was optimistic about the direction of the district. She had spent the last few days reflecting on her performance, and how she can address suggestions for improvement.

"I believe I can't grow without feedback, and I have been genuinely looking forward to getting information that I can use to improve as a superintendent," she wrote to the *East Oregonian* in an email. "I am working hard so that our district continues to be a great place to learn and work, and I love the community of Stanfield."

## BRIEFLY

### Health screenings coming to Hermiston

HERMISTON — Residents living in and around Hermiston can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, and other chronic, serious conditions with affordable screenings by Life Line Screening. Oasis Vineyard Church will host this community event on March 20 at 1255 S. Highway 395.

Screenings can check for the level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for heart disease, stroke and overall cardiovascular health; HDL and LDL cholesterol levels; diabetes risk; bone density as a risk for possible osteoporosis; kidney and thyroid function, and more.

Screenings are affordable, convenient and accessible for wheelchairs and those with trouble walking. Free parking is

also available.

Packages start at \$149, but consultants will work with you to create a package that is right for you based on your age and risk factors. The Wellness Gold Membership Program also allows customers to get all the screenings they need now, but pay \$19.95 a month.

Preregistration is required. Call 1-877-237-1287 or visit [www.lifelinescreening.com](http://www.lifelinescreening.com).

### Hermiston man arrested for vehicle theft, hindering prosecution

HERMISTON — A Hermiston man is in jail for possessing stolen property, and assisting with covering up a theft of several vehicles and tools last summer.

Scot Echols, 60, is charged with nine total counts: unauthorized use

of a vehicle, possession of a stolen vehicle, aggravated theft, criminal conspiracy and hindering prosecution, all felony charges, and tampering with physical evidence, a misdemeanor charge.

According to court documents, Echols stole and operated a John Deere Wheel Loader, which is valued at \$10,000 or more, without the consent of the owner, McFarlane's Bark, Inc.

Echols is also charged with several counts of assisting Zachary Bartz, who was arrested in August for theft of several vehicles. Some of the stolen vehicles were found at a property on Echols Road, where Echols lives. Echols was

also charged with helping conceal or harbor Bartz, and for concealing or removing physical evidence including stolen vehicles and tools.

Destiny Theatres Fri - Wed, Feb. 22, 2019 - Feb. 27, 2019  
Subject to change. Check times daily.

**Hermiston Stadium 8**  
Hwy 395 & Theatre Ln - 567-1556  
[MoviesInHermiston.com](http://MoviesInHermiston.com)

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON 3 (PG)

FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY (PG-13)

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC (PG-13)

ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-13)

3D ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-13)

LEGO MOVIE 2 (PG)

COLD PURSUIT (R-17)

THE UPSIDE (PG-13)

**\$5.50 Tuesdays\*\***  
\*\*ALL DAY TUESDAY, MOST MOVIES.  
Check ONLINE for more information!

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST**  
ALASKA, WASHINGTON, OREGON, IDAHO, MONTANA

REACH 3 million Pacific Northwesterners with just One Call!

PNDC CLASSIFIED - Daily Newspapers  
29 newspapers - 1,187,980 circulation  
Number of words: 25 • Extra word cost: \$10  
Cost: \$540 (Runs 3 consecutive days including wkds.)

PNND 2x2 DISPLAY - Daily Newspapers  
27 newspapers - 1,016,864 circulation  
Size: 2x2 (3.25"x2") Cost: 1x 2x: \$1,050

More info: [Cecelia@cnpa.com](http://Cecelia@cnpa.com) or call (916) 288-6011

Worker's Comp Insurance • Recruiting  
Human Resource Management  
Risk Management • Payroll Administration  
Temporary Staffing Services

**BBSI** 1055 S. Hwy 395, Ste 333 • Hermiston  
541.567.9670  
202 N. Main St. • Boardman  
541.481.2666

[WWW.BARRETTBUSINESS.COM](http://WWW.BARRETTBUSINESS.COM)

We're proud to present new work by Cory Peeke Feb. 7-29

FREE Admission made possible through the generous support of **Barhyte** SPECIALTY FOODS®

info: [pendletonarts.org](http://pendletonarts.org)

PENDELTON CENTER for the ARTS