

Hermiston, Pendleton don't meet rent burdened criteria

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

The state has placed new requirements on cities considered “severely rent burdened,” but Hermiston and Pendleton don’t fit that criteria.

The state defines severely rent burdened cities as those where more than 25 percent of rental households are spending more than half of their income on rent.

Hermiston, in particular, is a good place to be a renter according to data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and used by the state. Of all the cities in Oregon with a population over 10,000, Hermiston has the second-lowest percentage of

severely rent burdened households, at 15.5 percent.

Pendleton comes in at 18.7 percent, with only eight of the cities coming in lower. Overall, 27 of the 49 cities in Oregon with a population over 10,000 are considered severely rent burdened.

The data is being tracked by Oregon Housing and Community Services, a government agency that promotes affordable housing through measures ranging from downpayment assistance programs to housing choice vouchers.

Ariel Nelson, communications liaison for the agency, said OHCS published the list of severely rent burdened cities as part

of House Bill 4006, which passed during the 2018 legislative session. The data concerning households spending more than 50 percent of their income on rent is gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau as part of its annual American Community Survey.

“That’s a data point we often use at the agency,” she said of the 50 percent statistic.

Each year, cities that meet the criteria of “severely rent burdened” will have to complete a survey about housing affordability and conduct at least one public meeting to discuss the causes and consequences of rent burdens and possible solutions to reduce the num-

ber of rent burdened households in the community.

Since Hermiston and Pendleton fall below the 25 percent mark, they don’t qualify as “severely” rent burdened.

Hermiston assistant city manager Mark Morgan said he couldn’t say for sure exactly why Hermiston had a relatively low number of rent burdened households, but Hermiston is “obviously a totally different market than some of the metro areas.”

The cost of purchasing a home, for example, is much lower than Oregon’s largest cities, leading some residents to make the jump to home ownership rather than pay prices on the higher

end of Hermiston’s rental market.

“More people here who want to own, have the ability to own,” he said.

Morgan also said he hears from landlords in the area that if rents in Hermiston get too high people often decide they can pay just as much in the Tri-Cities while living closer to amenities such as Costco.

Hermiston has 2,537 renter households, many of which contain multiple people, according to the survey data. The city hasn’t had luck in recruiting a new apartment complex in several years, although Morgan said it’s “not for lack of trying.”

“Their response is that

they can’t get the rents they need,” he said.

There have been some smaller rentals such as duplexes built in the past few years, as well as the new Cimmarron Terrace town homes off Theater Lane. He said there are some larger rental complexes in the works.

According to the rent burden data put out by the state at the beginning of the month, Pendleton has 2,660 renter households, with 497 of them considered severely rent burdened. The city has experienced a recent housing boom and in November approved the sale of property on Westgate for a 200-unit housing complex by I&E Construction.



Contributed photo

Annette Frye, of Pendleton, created a quilt for the 2019 EOD Warrior Foundation Auction in Florida. The quilt is on display at Thimbles Fabric-N-More in Pendleton.

Pendleton woman’s quilt will help children of fallen warriors

Annette Frye’s son, who is in the Air Force, asked her to make it

East Oregonian

Not long ago Annette Frye found herself scratching her head as to why anyone would take a perfectly good piece of fabric, cut it up and sew it back together.

Then, four years ago, her son, Air Force EOD Master Sgt. Ronnie “Bo” Brickey, asked her to design a quilt memorializing 20 explosive ordnance disposal technicians who lost their lives in the line of duty.

“Since the completion of that first quilt, I fell in love with the process of cutting up fabric and sewing it back together,” said the Pendleton woman.

This past fall, Frye’s son

sent the words “Prepare to meet thy God” and asked her to create another quilt.

The biblical words from Amos 4:12 have particular meaning to those who work closely with improvised explosive devices.

EOD Tech. Sgt. Lee Cundiff said that the phrase also refers to an iconic 1970s photograph of a British Army bomb technician approaching a suspect vehicle containing an improvised explosive device (IED) in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The words, Cundiff explained, could possibly be the most discouraging thing to read when approaching a device designed to kill you.

“However, EOD Technicians have learned to live with a dissonant, yet paramount dichotomy,” Cundiff said, “living in a terminal state of calmness; knowing

instinctively that we must survive to achieve full mission success, while accepting the fact that we have chosen to serve a greater calling — to give our life in lieu of others.”

The quilt is on display at Thimbles Fabric-N-More, 1849 Westgate Place, Pendleton.

It will be sent to the 2019 EOD Warrior Foundation Auction, which is the first weekend in May in Florida. Proceeds from the auction will go toward scholarships for children of warriors who made the ultimate sacrifice, Frye said.

“Whatever your passion or talent may be, I encourage you to use it to support causes that are near and dear to your heart,” she said.

“It can be as elaborate as creating a piece of art, or as simple as volunteering at a local event.”

BRIEFLY

Regency Hermiston hosts fundraiser

HERMISTON — A bake sale and raffle is planned to help the family of one of Regency Hermiston’s employees. The event is Friday at 7 p.m. at 970 W. Juniper Ave., Hermiston. Money raised will help support Irma Myers, whose husband, Gary, was recently diagnosed with metastatic stomach cancer.

For information, call or text Jamie at 509-759-4719.

Long-sleeved shirts needed for workers

HERMISTON — A long-sleeved shirt drive is being conducted to help in protecting farm workers.

People are encouraged to donate new or gently used long-sleeved shirts to help protect agricultural workers from pesticide exposure and heat-related illnesses. The clothing donations should be light in color and made of cotton or natural fabrics.

The effort is being launched by the Oregon Human Development Corporation on behalf of the Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs. Donations will be distributed during Farmworker Awareness Week, which runs March 24-31.

People can take donations to the Oregon Human Development Corporation, 955 S.E. Fourth St., Suite A,

Hermiston. For more information, call 541-701-0550 or visit www.ohdc.org.

Dance team storms into preview

PENDLETON — Rhythmic Mode, Pendleton High School’s competitive dance team, will provide a preview of their 2019 state routine.

The defending state championship dancers will present “I Am the Storm” on Monday, March 11 at 6 p.m. at the school, 1800 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. The public is encouraged to come support the team as they head to the 2019 OSAA Dance and Drill State Championships. There is no admission charge.

The state competition is March 15 at Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Portland. Tickets for the championships are \$15.50 to \$16.10, with \$8 to \$20 fee for parking. For tickets, call 800-745-3000 or www.rosequarter.com/2019-osaa-dance-drill.

Seed Share Expo set for March 16

HERMISTON — People are invited to get a jump start on their garden during the Seed Share Expo.

The Umatilla/Hermiston Garden Club will give away free seeds to help help people start their gardens. In addition, the event will feature door prizes, displays, demonstrations and activities for the whole family.

The free event is Saturday, March 16 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave. People also are invited to bring any seeds they might have to share with others.

For questions, contact Amanda Woodlee at amw@amandamillwoodlee.com.

Foundation Trust offers grants

PENDLETON — The application deadline for grants and scholarships through the Pendleton Foundation Trust is April 1.

Grants for worthwhile projects are awarded twice a year to civic, educational or charitable organizations to assist or promote the well-being of the citizens in the city of Pendleton.

Applications and information is available at www.pendletonfoundationtrust.com or by writing to 222 S.E. Dorion Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. For questions, contact Jerri Bealer at bealer@corey-byler.com or 541-276-3331.

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Council approves fee increases

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The Pendleton City Council unanimously voted to raise dozens of fees at a meeting Tuesday.

The fee increases — which cover things like the Pendleton Convention Center, the Pendleton Aquatic Center, the planning department, and parking tickets — are mostly minimal in amount.

Most fees were increased between 3 percent and 15 percent based on how long they had gone without an update.

Before the fees were increased, the council made a procedural change

to remove the fees from an ordinance and attach it to a resolution, which doesn’t require multiple readings and public advertising.

Although many resolutions don’t require public hearings, City Manager Robb Corbett said any resolutions that raise fees require the council pro-

vide opportunity for public input.

Mayor John Turner also announced that a lease agreement between the city and QL Investments to build a 30,800-square-foot hangar at the airport would be removed from the agenda while a “glitch” was being sorted out.

LENT

Friday Meals

Starting March 8th Dinner served from 5pm to 7pm @ the St. Anthony Blue Mountain Café

Cedar Wrapped Salmon

\$7.50 Adults

\$7.00 Seniors & Children

Served with a baked potato and vegetable of the day

Clam Chowder Bread Bowl

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