

New 48-unit apartment complex set to open in Hermiston in 2020

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

A new apartment complex is coming to Hermiston in the spring of 2020. Northwest Housing Alternatives has broken ground on a 48-unit complex at 605 S.E. Sixth St. and 605 S.E. Seventh St. across from Cottonwood Apartments. Construction is expected to last for about a year.

The new complex, known as Hermiston Family Housing, will be affordable housing available to residents making 60% of the area's median income.

Hermiston's housing market has been tight in recent years as growth outpaces development, and the city has made several efforts to remove barriers to development through initiatives, such as adjustments to zoning and setback requirements.

City planner Clint Spencer said the NHA project has been "in the pipeline" for about three years now, so he couldn't credit those new initiatives. But the new complex will benefit Hermiston nonetheless.

"It's definitely going to help add some options for families," he said.

He said the Hermiston Family Housing project had been slow to get off the ground due to problems working out the financing. One thing that has kept developers from adding apart-



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Construction is underway for Hermiston Family Housing, a new 48-unit apartment complex on Southeast Sixth Street.

ment complexes to Hermiston in recent years, he said, is that single-family housing has remained affordable enough that developers find they would need to charge rents that would compare to the cost of a mortgage.

In order to make the Hermiston Family Housing complex pencil out, NHA is building the project in conjunction with a new complex in Portland to create greater economies of scale and open up better financing options for the Hermiston project. Both projects are being designed and built by MWA Architects and Walsh Construction.

"Northwest Housing Alternatives is thrilled to pilot this innovative project that will allow rural communities to access new funding models by pairing it with an urban project for scale," NHA executive director Trell Anderson said in a statement. "We hope this effort will pave the way for more projects like this that are desperately needed in Oregon's rural communities."

According to an NHA news release, funding for the Portland and Hermiston projects came from Oregon Housing and Community Service's LIFT program

and the Multifamily Energy Program, Metro's Transit Oriented Development Program, and private funding from Chase Bank and Raymond James Tax Credits Funds.

Northwest Housing Alternatives already owns and operates the Cottonwood Apartments in Hermiston, located adjacent to the construction site. The nonprofit, which works to increase affordable housing options around the state, will have the managers of Cottonwood manage the Hermiston Family Housing project once they open.

HPD arrests suspect in 2018 homicide

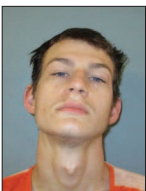
by JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Hermiston Police have arrested a man in a June 2018 murder, and may make more arrests related to the homicide in coming days.

David Edgar Sommerville, 19, of Hermiston, has been charged with aggravated murder, felony murder, two counts of unlawful use of a weapon and robbery in the first degree. He is accused of murdering 26-year-old Erik Navarrete, who was found on June 4 of last

year with a gunshot wound to the head, at a residence in the 500 block of West Hartley Avenue. Navarrete was unconscious and was flown to Kadlec Medical Center in Richland, where he was taken off life support several days later.

Hermiston Police identified Sommerville as a suspect after following leads for several months. On March 26, they arrested him for resisting arrest, unlawful possession of methamphetamine, interfering with a peace offi-



Sommerville

cer and carrying a concealed weapon. Those charges were not related to the homicide, but he has been in the Umatilla County Jail since then. On April 10, the Navarrete homicide case was presented to the Umatilla County Grand Jury, who charged Sommerville with murder.

According to the indictment, Sommerville attempted to commit robbery and, while trying to leave the scene, fired a gun at Navarrete, who, according

to the document, was not a participant in the crime.

Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus said he was aware of what Sommerville was trying to steal, but was not comfortable releasing the information. He said if others are arrested in the case, they will likely face similar charges. Primus would not say whether Sommerville and Navarrete knew each other.

Sommerville is being held in the Umatilla County Jail without bail, and has a preliminary hearing on April 30.

BRIEFLY

Echo hires new city administrator

The city of Echo will have a new administrator for the first time in nearly 40 years, starting on May 1. The city hired David Slaght, who will take the reins from longtime city manager Diane Berry when she retires at the end of April.

Slaght is from Culver, and has worked for the Oregon State Parks department.

Echo mayor Eujeana Hampton said they had posted the job for about 30 days, and got nine applicants for the job. They interviewed three in person before extending the offer to Slaght. She said Slaght is already living in Echo, and has been working on a friend's farm. While he has not been a city manager before, Hampton said Slaght's work with parks and forestry jobs has given him some background

in budgeting and supervising other people.

Pendleton School District to host annual art show

Pendleton's students will display their artwork at the district's annual art show next week at the Pendleton Convention Center, and the public can view the show for free.

Each student, from kindergarten through 12th grade, will have one piece of artwork featured at the show. The show will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on April 16, 17 and 18. On April 16, there will be a kickoff event from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., with a performance by the Pendleton High School swing choir, root beer floats from the Education Foundation of Pendleton, and free books from Altrusa.

"Our annual art show is



Contributed photo

The annual Pendleton School District art show will feature art from every student in the district, from kindergarten through 12th grade.

a great opportunity for the entire Pendleton community to enjoy some of the creative spirit of our students," said Anne Sokoloski, the art show coordinator.

WILDHORSE
RESORT & CASINO
4/12-14
Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie
4/17 • 12PM
HARVEY

Hellboy (PG13)
1:10* 4:00 6:40 9:20

Missing Link (PG)
12:00* 4:30 6:50
ED 2:20* 9:10

Shazam! (PG13)
1:20* 7:00
ED 4:10 9:50

Pet Sematary (R)
12:10* 2:30* 4:50 7:20 10:00

Dumbo (PG)
11:40* 2:10* 4:40 7:10 9:40

Avengers: Endgame (PG13)
Thursday, April 25th
2D 6:00 3D 9:40

* Matinee Pricing
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PENDLETON CENTER for the ARTS

Portland Piano International Rising Stars Recital Series
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Jonathan Ferrucci

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Umatilla County looks to stay afloat in the next budget

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Umatilla County officials anticipate a 3.2% bump in value in the coming fiscal year, but don't expect to see new programs.

The county's 2018-19 budget totaled \$78.7 million and runs out June 30. County Commissioner George Murdock said preparing the budget means dealing with the "bow wave" of annual increases for personnel, services and pensions. The Public Employee Retirement System alone, he said, cost the county about \$1 million a year.

The increase in the valuation is not enough for the county to add any programs, he said, but will keep the county's head above water.

"That's a good thing," he said. "A lot of counties would love to be in our position."

One chunk of change will come from the Strategic Investment Program deal the county has with Vadata, Inc., big data centers that are part of Amazon.

The program gives Vadata a 15-year break on property taxes as an incentive to build. The county gets to tax the first \$25 million in real market value of the project, and Vadata pays a community service fee of \$500,000 per year. Taxing districts divvy up the revenues.

County assessor Paul

Chalmers said his office won't know for a few months just how much money the increase in value will bring. He said the state handles that assessment and provides the figures to the county in late summer.

The county also continues to seek state funds for two major capital improvement projects: \$550,000 for security enhancements to the front of the courthouse and \$1.6 million to renovate the jail to accommodate inmates suffering from a mental health or drug addiction crisis.

Outside of that, Murdock said, the county is maintaining the buildings it has and does not see a need for new construction. The county last spring paid off the debt on the Stafford Hansell Government Building in Hermiston and has no outstanding bond debt.

The county starts budget work in October. Murdock said that lead time helps to get a good sense of what the fiscal scene looks like. But the ongoing work of the county's Charter Review Committee could play some role in budget preparations. The committee continues to meet and could decide to recommend a new leadership structure, such as a full-time county manager and part-time commissioners.

Until then, the steps in the process are the public budget hearings April 24 and 25 at the courthouse in Pendleton.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The Bureau of Reclamation is increasing the outflow from the McKay Reservoir into McKay Creek from 1,200 cubic feet per second to 1,400 cubic feet per second. The increased flow may cause some minor backyard flooding.

McKay reservoir increases discharge

PENDLETON — The release from McKay reservoir south of Pendleton is increasing from 1,200 cubic feet per second to 1,400 cfs, which could result in minor flooding.

Pendleton City Manager Robb Corbett reported the Bureau of Reclamation,

which operates the dam, increased the discharge on Thursday at 2:30 p.m.

"In 2005, we determined we could go as high as 1,500 cfs and remain in the creek bed," Corbett said, but city staff is talking about the possibility of setting up sand bag stations.

St. Anthony Provider Spotlight

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