

Bridge: Pedestrian span closed after collapse

Continued from Page A1

trespass charges. Stockdale said the bridge is “unusable and unsafe.”

“Go ahead and be curious — from a distance,” he said. “If nature is taking out a structure like that, it’s definitely lethal to humans.”

The Umatilla City Council plans to make an emergency declaration regarding the bridge during their meeting at 8 p.m. Tuesday evening at city hall, following a budget work session at 6 p.m.

On Saturday the Umatilla River continued to run high elsewhere, including the rapids formed along Umatilla River Road and the flooding that continued through Riverfront Park in Hermiston.



A portion of the pedestrian bridge over the Umatilla River near Umatilla High School collapsed Sunday.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Wyden: Discusses fears about pharmaceutical costs

Continued from Page A1

from Heppner, who he said he has worked with at the local level.

“They’re the face of rural health care,” he said. “Without rural health care, you don’t have rural life.”

John Murray, who owns Murray Drug, said that he hopes to see Wyden’s continued support in holding pharmaceutical companies accountable.

“Anything you can do to rein them in this session would be fantastic,” he said. “Anything to shine a light on where the money is going.”

Wyden said keeping pharmaceutical costs down and dealing with rural health care needs are some of his biggest priorities.

“Senator Grassley (R-Iowa) and I are talking among our staffs about the possibility of a rural health care bill in this Congress,” Wyden said. “I see it as my job to try and make sure there are policies to give them the opportunity to keep the doors open.”

Representatives of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation were at the meeting to talk to Wyden about health and nutrition efforts among tribal members.

Rosenda Shippentower said the tribe has been working to reduce diabetes rates, which she said disproportionately affects Native Americans. She thanked Wyden for his support of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.

Shippentower said they



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Sen. Ron Wyden answers a question Sunday at a town hall at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Room in Boardman.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Heppner pharmacist John Murray, of Heppner, talks to Sen. Ron Wyden about pharmaceutical pricing and regulations Sunday at a town hall at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Room in Boardman.

have used the special funding for education, to purchase equipment and for eye screenings.

“We’re very proud of that,” she said. “But we’re concerned that funding will expire in 2019.”

Wyden said he would do anything he could do to maintain funding for

the program. He said while Medicare used to focus more on acute issues, that’s not the case anymore.

“Today, it’s about chronic illness,” he said. “Cancer, diabetes, strokes, chronic pulmonary disease — and the latest estimate is that 80 percent of Medicare will involve treating people who have two or more of those conditions.”

He said in light of those changes, preventative measures and programs like the diabetes education program become even more important.

A Boardman resident told Wyden she wanted some assurance that Medicare and Social Security funds would not be raided to pay for President Donald Trump’s proposed border wall.

“I’m more concerned they’ll be raided to pay for that \$1.5 billion tax cut,” Wyden said.

Constituents also asked

Wyden about international trade as well as development projects at the Port of Morrow.

Morrow County Commissioner Don Russell thanked Wyden for his support of the Wheatridge project, which will become a site for solar, wind and battery storage in Morrow County.

“It will be the first one in Oregon without the flashing red lights at night (on the wind turbines),” Russell said. “The lights will be off unless something flies into their RADAR space.”

Russell said he’d like to see that practice replicated nationally — an idea Wyden said he liked.

Kevin Gray of Morrow County Grain Growers told Wyden about a major grain storage project going on at the port, and the opportunities to ship grain from the Midwest. The grain will end up in Portland, he said, and eventually head to Asia. He asked Wyden to consider the importance of export markets.

“Trade has huge stakes for Morrow County and for the whole state,” Wyden said. “One of five jobs in Oregon revolve around international trade.”

He said he agrees with some of President Trump’s trade philosophies.

“Especially with China ripping off our technologies,” he said. “But I think if you have a tariff that hits your allies, and hits people who want to spend money in Oregon, that doesn’t seem like a winner.”

Flooding: City emergency

Continued from Page A1

of Umatilla plans to declare an emergency as well Tuesday night following its budget workshop. The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners made the declaration last week.

The discharge from McKay Reservoir into the creek peaked Saturday, topping 2,800 cubic feet per second, according to city sources. The Bureau of Reclamation operates the reservoir and its dam south of Pendleton. Bureau spokesperson Michael Coffey said McKay can hold 73,800 acre-feet of water and Saturday at about 7:30 p.m. was almost 95 percent full.

The flood forced the assisted living facility Willowbrook Terrace to evacuate its 35 residents to a sister facility, Elizabethan Manor.

Willowbrook’s back property rests on the banks of McKay Creek. The fast-rising water flooded the facility’s basement, overwhelmed the pumps and backed up the sewer. Willowbrook director Corey Crismon said the center followed its evacuation plan. All available staff came in and the Pendleton Fire Department handled coordination. Local bus companies and others volunteered to transport the residents. He praised the community action.

Crismon said this was the first flood he has dealt with. Crismon said staff placed sandbags around the bottom of buildings, but the muddy water covered all of those. Willowbrook has emergency generators and a second floor, but Crismon said relocating the residents to another site was the safer action.

Pacific Power spokesman Drew Hanson said five customers were without power in the McKay area. That situation could last several days.

Hanson said the ground-mount transformer that helps supply customers with electricity is inundated with water, and crews can’t make repairs until the flooding recedes. He added Pacific Power is in regular contact with Umatilla County dispatch to determine any power issues.

Hanson urged residents to stay away from downed power lines and to report loss of power by phone at 1-877-508-5088 or by texting OUT 722797.

While residents toiled to keep the water at bay, volunteers were busy up the street, filling sandbags and delivering them to McKay Creek residents.

Some of them started the work on Friday, when city workers and community volunteers shoveled gravel into sandbags at McKay Park on Southwest 44th Street.

County: Many affected

Continued from Page A1

emergency declaration will help the city garner attention for a channel in need of repairs.

He said the channel was built in the 1960s after a high-water event and would divert creek overflow from Ukiah and some of the surrounding properties if it was fully functional.

But the channel is filled with gravel, and Barber said he’s reached out to agencies like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Oregon Water Resources Department for 15-20 years to get help clearing it to no avail.

“We just want it gone,” he said.

Barber said it’s getting to the point where it’s starting to threaten a county bridge that crosses the creek to the south of town.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation also called a state of emergency when its Board of Trustees passed a resolution Monday.

CTUIR spokesman Chuck Sams said most of the flooding occurred along Wildhorse Creek, Meacham Creek, and the Umatilla River in the Cayuse area.

Sams said the flood affected some tribal fisheries and homes, and advised residents who draw their water from wells near these rivers to either boil their water or use bottled water.

Between Ukiah and Pendleton, flooding along McKay Creek also affected residents in the Pilot Rock area.

The flooding eroded 30-40 feet of riverbank, said Mike Morehead, who lives near Pilot Rock with his wife Barbara.

The flooding was strong enough to tear down a power pole on the couple’s property, Morehead said, leaving them without power for 14 hours before Pacific Power restored service.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners on Wednesday declared an emergency because of flooding.

Umatilla Electric Cooperative

ANNUAL MEETING

& MEMBERSHIP DINNER

This year we are honoring our high-wire heroes and the people who are
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SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2019

5P.M. - 7P.M.

Free to all UEC members and a guest. Join us for dinner, door prizes and the hear the result of the Board of Directors election for Districts 1 and 2.

The evening includes a performance by mentalist Hart Keene. Keene specialize in highly sophisticated, interactive sleight-of-hand, illusion, and mentalism (psychological illusions). He has been featured on TV programs including, America’s Got Talent and is sure to thrill our guests!

NEW LOCATION:

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A SENSE OF PLACE - NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP

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Susan Bower is the owner of Eastern Oregon Business Source. She is a professional in organizational leadership, management and development.



Selene Torres-Medrano is a former city councillor for the city of Umatilla, and is now a substitute teacher for the Umatilla School District. Selene is passionate about advocating for her community, and has organized events like immigration forums and a mental health awareness fair.



George Murdock is a Umatilla County Commissioner, rancher and former K12 administrator. He was named Pendleton’s Man of the Year in January 2019 for his commitment to community volunteerism and civic engagement. He is a 40-year Rotarian, member of the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association, a member of the Board of Trustees of the WSU Foundation, and a member of the First Christian Church in Pendleton.



Casey White-Zollman is the Vice President of Public Relations for Blue Mountain Community College. In addition to serving in leadership roles for several professional organizations, Casey also currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Pendleton Round-Up & Happy Canyon Hall of Fame, and is Co-Chair of the Pendleton Round-Up Tough Enough To Wear Pink breast cancer campaign.

NO COST FOR THIS FORUM - FREE TO EVERYONE

For more information about the EO Forum, please contact: Karen Parker at 541-966-3177.

The EO Forum is a collaborative effort among leaders from Blue Mountain Community College, InterMountain Education Service District, the East Oregonian, American Association of University Women, and Harriet Isom, a former United States ambassador who also serves on the committee. This EO Forum program is offered as part of Blue Mountain Community College’s annual Arts and Culture Festival. For more information on the festival go to www.bluecc.edu.