

'Cooking Matters' expands culinary classes to seniors

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Seniors make pasta with beans and greens during a Cooking Matters class at the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center in Hermiston on Wednesday.

It's never too late to learn how to cook.

On Wednesday at the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center in Hermiston, 16 senior citizens were steaming asparagus and being quizzed about saturated fats at a Cooking Matters class.

Kathy Burns said she was there because she wanted to move beyond heating things up in a microwave and learn recipes that fit diet restrictions her doctor had given her.

"I'm the worst cook in the world," she said.

The free, six-week class sends participants home with a free cookbook and ingredients for the week's recipes at the end of each two-hour session.

Burns said she was glad the senior center was willing to host the classes so that seniors can learn new skills. She said she wished more men were taking advantage of the opportunity (there was only one present Wednesday) because sometimes seniors find them-

selves in a tough spot when the spouse who does all the cooking passes away.

Angie Treadwell, the class' instructor, usually teaches Cooking Matters classes to parents and children as part of a partnership

between Umatilla Morrow County Head Start, Oregon State University Extension and area school districts.

She said OSU plans to expand the Cooking Matters program to seniors over the next few years, and seniors

in Hermiston are helping to pilot the idea thanks to a generous grant from Lamb Weston. Each week she gets feedback from class members — portion sizes are too large, there aren't enough lactose-free options — and

passes it on to the university. "We're trying to find out what seniors want," she said.

Treadwell said there are many health issues seniors face that are preventable with the right diet. Often as people age they start feeling like it's not worth cooking for just themselves, or they suddenly find themselves with special dietary needs they don't know how to cook for.

"Nutrition is so important in older adults," she said. "It can make a huge difference in medical costs."

Cooking classes provide a social outlet too. Lupe Housden said she ended up in the class because a friend signed her up.

"It's always nice to have a group to cook with," she said.

Housden said she has also learned a lot about how to read labels on food, and the importance of whole grains.

On Wednesday Treadwell started off by asking participants if their cooking habits had changed after their first two classes. One woman said she had made

the previous week's recipe and had so many leftovers she shared with her neighbors. Another said she made one of the recipes but it didn't turn out well. A third said she had put her own spin on it with ingredients she had at home.

One recipe — a south-west-style Cowboy Salad — was so popular that the senior center is adding it to their lunch menu.

After discussing recipes Treadwell taught the group about different types of fats and how to look for healthier ones. She answered a variety of questions about the health of different foods and summed up her advice as eating food "as close to the form nature gave you as possible and using moderation in all things."

During the hands-on portion of the class, the group worked together to make pasta with beans and greens, and ginger asparagus using fresh local asparagus from Walchli Farms. Ingredients for both recipes were waiting for them in a take-home bag at the end of class.

Blue Mountain Wildlife hits its \$50,000 fundraising goal

East Oregonian

Blue Mountain Wildlife's capital fundraising campaign is called "Soar Higher," but the wild bird rehabilitation center ended up soaring higher than anticipated.

Beginning in February, the nonprofit asked people to donate money to help improve Blue Mountain Wildlife's facilities south of Pendleton. Member Linda Wolcott would match each dollar donated up to \$25,000.

But Blue Mountain Wild-

life announced in a newsletter Sunday that it had exceeded its goal, raising \$27,937. Including Wolcott's match, that means the rehab center has raised nearly \$53,000.

Blue Mountain Wildlife will continue raising money through Saturday, but the organization is already turning its mind toward celebrating its success. Fittingly, the nonprofit will celebrate by releasing a red-tailed hawk at Wild Birds Unlimited in Richland, Washington, on Saturday.

The newsletter states that

the proceeds from the fundraiser will go toward new display pens for its "ambassador birds," permanent residents at the rehab center who are used for educational purposes, a move that will open up four flight pens for birds on the mend.

Ultimately, Blue Mountain Wildlife hopes that "Soar Higher" will be a part of a larger fundraising drive that will help the nonprofit add a new wildlife hospital, indoor and outdoor classrooms, caretaker housing, and intern housing.

Hermiston breaks ground on new water tower

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

A small crowd turned up at the northeast edge of Hermiston on Wednesday, to see the site where a water tower will soon stand.

City councilors and county commissioners broke ground on a site at Northeast 10th Street and East Punkin Center Road, where crews will start working on a \$4.1 million water storage and system expansion project.

It's expected to accommodate more than 1,000 new homes in Hermiston in the next 10 years.

The project will be funded by a partnership between the city and Umatilla County, with the county dedicating \$2 million over four years. The city will furnish the rest of the costs.

Additionally, the Infrastructure Finance Authority will loan \$500,000 to the city and to the county each year, starting in summer of 2020, as part of the two entities' enterprise zone agreement.

City Manager Byron Smith said they hope construction on the million-gallon water tank will be done by the end of 2019. The project will include installation of about 2 miles of water main, in the neighborhoods of East Theater Lane, between Northeast Fourth and Northeast 10th



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

Hermiston city councilors and Umatilla County commissioners break ground on a site in Northeast Hermiston where a new water tower will soon be constructed.

streets, along Northeast 10th between Theater Lane and Punkin Center Road, and East Punkin Center Road between Northeast Fourth and 10th. The project is expected to be completed in mid-2020.

Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann said the new water tower will mean Hermiston can accommodate more people, and keep up with overall growth. He said the location of the water tower will make it feasible for developers to build homes on about 300 acres of residential land that previously wouldn't have had adequate access to water.

"This is about addressing one of the council's main goals," he said. "Affordable housing for the

community. It'll allow us to keep employees here in town, recruit people. When we work with our partners at the county and the school district, amazing things can happen."

Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock said the city is capitalizing on its location, and its resources.

"In terms of agriculture, we are clearly one of Oregon's most productive regions," he said. "We add further value through the kind of partnership we are celebrating here today. Umatilla County is proud to be a partner with the city of Hermiston in a \$4 million project that we mutually hope will lead to the construction of a thousand new homes."

Committee starts artist selection process for vets memorial

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

It's been more than two years since the Veterans of Foreign Wars Let 'er Buck Post 922 presented their idea for a veterans memorial to the Pendleton City Council, and it could be another year and a half before the idea comes to fruition.

The VFW in partnership with the city is making progress on the project, said Charles Denight, the chairman of the Pendleton Arts Committee.

The arts committee will meet April 25 at the Pendleton Center for the Arts to discuss putting out a request for qualifications for artists to design the installation.

Once the committee has received all submissions, Denight said it will narrow its list of qualified artists to three finalists, who will submit concept art of the memorial. He said the committee wants to involve the public in the selection process.

Although the artists will presumably put their own spin on the project, the basic idea for the memorial is set.

Located at a dormant fountain near the intersection of Highway 11 and Southeast Court Avenue, the memorial is supposed to feature five, 16-inch medallions placed on basalt columns, each medallion representing a branch of the military. The columns will be placed in a circular formation that surrounds a piece of art that is designed by the artist.

The request for qualifications includes mention of the memorial's \$123,753 price tag, but the exact breakdown of how the city is going to pay for it is an open question.

Organizers have already crossed some things off their checklist: the VFW has acquired the basalt columns while the city council agreed to buy the five bronze medallions in 2018.

But how much more money will come from the city's art fund — a fund derived from a small earmark in the lodging room tax — depends on how much money the project is able to raise in private fundraising.

Denight said the fundraising effort will start this

summer when organizers approach individuals about contributing to the project. Once the committee selects an artist and a design is approved, the fundraising campaign will be expanded to include the public.

The committee plans to collect all requests for qualifications by Sept. 20, select a finalist by March 1, 2020, and hold a dedication ceremony for the completed memorial in January 2021.

Denight said the timeline is intended to give the artist time to design, create, and install the memorial.

While the veterans memorial is still more than a year down the road, the arts committee is already looking ahead to future sites for public art.

The committee will spend part of their next meeting prioritizing various spots that members have visited for potential new art including areas around the airport, a lot near the Rotary sign on Eastgate, a field in front of the driveway leading up to Blue Mountain Community College, and an Interstate 84 overpass.

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