

Heights: Pendleton developer violates deal with city

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working on a solution,” he said.

Corbett added that he spoke with Jivanjee’s bank to confirm that the developer’s circumstances were true.

“I’m very comfortable with where we’re at right now,” he said.

Reached by phone, Jivanjee said he was busy and would not be able to comment until Tuesday.

The latest twist adds another wrinkle to Pendleton Heights’ convoluted development history.

The city originally partnered with Jivanjee in 2012, agreeing to donate the

Tutuilla Road land to him and front the money for necessary infrastructure improvements.

But Jivanjee kept returning to city hall with plans that altered the concept and incentive deal behind the development, which was originally pitched as a 72-townhouse subdivision.

Jivanjee eventually built 32 townhouses, and in 2016, the city signed off when Jivanjee said he wanted to finish the project with 100 apartment units instead of 40 townhouses like he originally proposed.

In the ensuing years, Jivanjee would enter into several rounds of renegoti-



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Construction is underway on the next phase of the Pendleton Heights housing project, just off Tutuilla Creek Road. The developer of the project started the construction before repaying a required \$150,000 loan to the city as agreed.

tions with the city council to change the terms of his incentive deal, usually involving more money from the city for infrastructure or moving around the debt owed to the city to make it more palatable to the project’s private financiers.

The council initially approved Jivanjee’s proposals, but seemed to grow

warier with each successive pitch.

In September, the council unanimously voted down a new debt repayment plan for Pendleton Heights and didn’t even consider a last-minute amendment offered by Jivanjee.

The two sides eventually came to a compromise in February, with the city

agreeing to take on more of the infrastructure costs and Jivanjee committing to pay \$150,000 to the city before starting the project, which was reduced from the \$200,000 set in a prior deal.

Pendleton Heights has played an important symbolic role in the city’s campaign for more housing.

City officials have said that the subdivision was meant as a signal to housing developers that there was a demand for new homes in the city, and city leaders have highlighted the issue by staging tours at Pendleton Heights with Gov. Kate Brown and former First Lady Cylvia Hayes.

Hermiston: Farmers Market returns

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“I thought it was time to take my hobby to the next level,” she said.

She just started selling her “handcrafted, sustainable, plant-based” scented soap at Sassafras Flowers and sells on Instagram at @mothandmoon.apothecary. She wanted to join the farmers market as well, however, to be involved in a community event.

“It’s quite a crowd here,” she said. “I love the setup.”

Julie Holbrook of Jdholbrook Farms outside of Boardman was new to selling her product. She had a table of farm fresh eggs and said she was “very, very impressed” with the market and how supportive people were being. She said farm-

ers markets are important to small farms like hers.

“It gets the public aware of what farmers have and where they’re located,” she said.

Other new vendors this year were selling honey, jam, bread, crafts and leather items. There were also plenty of returning vendors, such as Rolling Stone Bakery and Walchli Farms.

3rd Generation Farms returned with broccoli, spinach, radishes, kohlrabi, kale, strawberries and a spring mix of lettuces — all pesticide-free.

Chris Finley said they were excited to return and looking forward to the season. Jade Mueller, working alongside her at the booth, said she loved the new pavilion.

“It’s beautiful,” she said. “It’s really nice. You couldn’t

ask for a better setting. And there is great access for the vendors when they’re setting up.”

Imelda Alanco didn’t have a booth at the market, but was browsing the items for sale. She said she hadn’t heard of the farmers market before, but her sister called and told her that there was a caramel corn booth and it smelled delicious.

“That’s the first thing that brought us here, but we’re looking at what else they have,” she said.

Looming over the market is a steel bell tower added just last week.

Mitch Myers, whose company owns the pavilion and runs the market, said it is a replica of the one that stood there in 1900, when the property housed Hermiston’s first fire department. A picture from the time period shows the bell in the foreground and Hermiston’s first bank in the background — a picture Myers was able to replicate with the still-standing stone bank building on the corner of Highway 395 and Main Street.

He said the original bell was taken down during World War II so that the bronze could be repurposed to help the war effort.

The Maxwell Farmers Market will run all summer each Thursday from 4-8 p.m. at 255 S. First Place.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A little girl enjoys a strawberry during the first Maxwell Farmers Market on Thursday at the Maxwell Siding Pavillion.

PERS: Senate approves cut to public employee retirement benefits

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voted against the measure but said in a statement that it was the “first step to remedying the unfunded liability that has been a detriment to our state.”

The plan garnered fierce opposition from unions, who have bashed the idea of cutting benefits since the plan was publicly released a few weeks ago.

“The Oregon Senate has voted to reduce the retire-

ment security and compensation for educators, firefighters and all public employees,” said John Larson, President of the Oregon Education Association, the state’s largest teacher’s union. “These unfair and illegal reductions are a betrayal of Oregon values.”

Some Democrats against the measure echoed those comments on the floor, saying that PERS employees — which include teachers, firefighters and child welfare

workers — don’t have a large enough salary to weather more cuts.

Sen. Sara Gelsler, a Democrat from Corvallis, said refinancing the debt only “kicks the can down the road” and that all residents of the state should be responsible for this problem since everyone benefits from public services.

“We should not put that debt on a small group of people,” said Gelsler. “It’s not a fair solution, it’s not a real solution.”

Dancers: When Aurora broke her foot

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The loss of Madison had a domino effect.

“We had to rehearse three main roles with understudies, as well as rehearsing them in their own roles, all the time understanding that they wouldn’t know which role they were dancing until several weeks before the show,” Sneden-Carlson said. “They had to work really hard.”

Lead male dancer Austin Ford adjusted to lifting a partner of a different height. Madison stands six feet, several inches taller than Cori Jo Lindsay.

Cori Jo, Madison’s understudy, would start rehearsing Madison’s part even more diligently, knowing she might perform Princess Aurora for real. Alli Sauer took on Cori Jo’s part and Erin Picken picked up Alli’s role. Madison transformed from lead dancer to coach.

“The minute she was in a boot, she was in the studio with a big cup of water, sitting in a chair coaching Cori Jo,” the director said.

Madison performed from the waist up as Cori Jo mirrored her movements. Sneden-Carlson marveled at their commitment.

“Madison came to every single rehearsal and lovingly coached another girl in the part of her dreams. She didn’t hold back in any way,” Sneden-Carlson said. “Cori Jo was so gentle and careful. She didn’t freak out and bulldoze herself through a big, scary role.”

When not at rehearsal, Madison spent time doing physical therapy with Sneden-Carlson’s husband, Bob Carlson, a physical therapist for St. Anthony Hospital.

On April 23, Madison, Madison’s mom, Shannon Gruenhagen, and Sneden-Carlson sat in the doctor’s office nervously awaiting the verdict. Would Madison dance in the show



Photo by Rachael Owen

When dancer Madison Gruenhagen (left) broke her foot, understudy Cori Jo Lindsay doubled her rehearsal time to learn Gruenhagen’s lead role in “Sleeping Beauty.” Gruenhagen assisted by demonstrating arm movements from a chair.

or not? Cori Jo waited for a text. The entire dance school braced to hear the news.

When the doctor said the bone was healed, “We all hugged and cried,” said Madison. Then Madison texted Cori Jo, who reacted with relief.

“I wasn’t torn at all,” she said. “I was very happy.”

Madison’s muscles were weakened and she was banned from pointe shoes until after the show, but she embraced the opportunity of getting back to work. On opening night (Thursday, May 23), she took the stage and will perform again at 7 p.m. Friday, and 2 p.m. Saturday, in the Bob Clapp Theatre at Blue Mountain Community College.

To be sure, this is an all-ends-well tale of overcoming adversity. For Sneden-Carlson, however, the story has an interesting twist.

The veteran ballet teacher once danced in a professional ballet

company. At age 22, she herself rehearsed to play the role of Princess Aurora in “Sleeping Beauty.” During a rehearsal, a male dancer lifted her into the air and somehow lost his grip. She went down hard, breaking most of the ribs on her right side. The injury sidelined Sneden-Carlson for six months. When the doctor said she’d never be pain-free if she continued, she decided to teach ballet instead. She dances vicariously now through her students and when they come through with such grace and courage, it is sweet.

Madison still can’t believe the support.

“They were so kind,” she said.

Of the opportunity to dance the role of Princess Aurora, she said, “I’m ecstatic. I feel amazing that I even get to be onstage.”

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Senators reintroduce legislation to provide long-term stability for SRS program

East Oregonian

WASHINGTON — Senators from Oregon and Idaho reintroduced legislation Thursday to provide much-needed financial certainty for rural counties to ensure they have the long-term funding needed for schools, road maintenance, law enforcement and other essential services.

Democratic Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley joined with Republican Idaho Sens. Mike Crapo and Jim Risch to reintroduce the Forest Management for Rural Stability Act, which the senators first introduced in December 2018.

The legislation makes the Secure Rural Schools

program — which expired at the end of fiscal year 2018 — permanent by creating an endowment fund to provide stable, increasing and reliable funding for county services.

“This is a matter of making sure Oregonians living and working in rural counties have the financial certainty they need and deserve,” Wyden said. “It’s time to put an end to the financial roller coaster in forested counties in Oregon and permanently invest in our teachers, law enforcement officers, bridges and roads.”

The SRS — originally co-authored by Wyden — was enacted in 2000 to financially assist counties with public, tax-ex-



Merkley



Risch



Wyden



Crapo

empt forestlands. Since then, Wyden, Crapo, Merkley and Risch have worked to give SRS a more permanent role in assisting rural counties with large tracts of federal lands.

“One of Oregon’s many treasures is our vast swaths of public lands,” Merkley said. “Since they’re not part of the local tax base, the counties that contain those lands deserve permanent, consistent support from

the federal government to fund basic necessities like schools, law enforcement, and infrastructure.

I’m urging my colleagues to fulfill this essential commitment to every family in our rural communities without delay.”

Critical services at the county level have historically been funded in part with a 25 percent share of timber receipts from federal U.S. Forest Service

lands and a 50% share of timber receipts from federal Oregon and California Grant Lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. As those revenues have fallen or fluctuated due to reduced timber harvest and market forces, SRS payments helped bridge the gap to keep rural schools open, provide road maintenance, support search and rescue efforts and other essential county services. Since enacted in 2000, SRS has provided a total of \$7 billion in payments to more than 700 counties and 4,400 school districts in more than 40 states to fund schools and essential services like roads and public safety.

“I am thankful to

Wyden and Crapo for working to stabilize funding for schools in Eastern Oregon with their Forest Management for Rural Stability Act, Umatilla School District Superintendent Heidi Sipe said. “The permanent endowment created by their bill will help rural students and their families by allowing school districts to make long-term plans that avoid the ups and downs of uncertain revenues. That’s a winning equation for rural communities operating often on narrow budget margins, and I am excited for a future of consistent, reliable, funding mechanisms that create the best opportunity for good student outcomes.”