

Umatilla celebrates new Wanapa Road, six years in the making

Road funded by \$3.5M in lottery bond money

By JESSICA POLLARD
East Oregonian

UMATILLA — On June 4, the city celebrated the opening of the new mile-long Wanapa Road with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The road was funded by a \$3.5 million in lottery bond money in a legislative effort spearheaded by Rep. Greg Smith in 2013, and opens up access to 500 acres of industrial land to governmental entities.

“If you look at the government to government appropriation, the number of parties involved, and the challenging geology we had here, this still happened in a timely fashion,” said Kim Puzey, general manager of the Port of Umatilla.

“When I was first elected to Umatilla City Council several years ago, the city was hard pressed to maintain existing city streets,” Mayor Mary Dedrick told the crowd gathered at the entry of the road on Tuesday. Dedrick thanked the landholding entities for their collaboration.

The city of Umatilla will own and maintain the road, which heads east from Beach Access Road and ends at a 120-acre industrial land site owned by the CTUIR. The Port of Umatilla will now have access to 300 acres of land.

The Department of Corrections provided the land to construct Wanapa Road, and will gain access to 150 acres of land just east of Two Rivers Correctional Institution.

The industrial parcel could



Umatilla Mayor Mary Dedrick receives assistance at the ribbon ceremony on Wanapa Road.

Staff photo by Jessica Pollard

be used for future growth of the prison, according to a recent press release. Two Rivers Correctional Institution is the largest employer in Umatilla, according to the city's website.

The land is eligible for enterprise zone benefits — tax credits for capital investments — and other benefits as well, according to Ryan DeGroff, economic planner with the CTUIR.

Duane Dyer worked on the water line along the road for the project and looks forward to the possibility of job growth in Umatilla thanks to the new industrial land.

“It's all growing,” he said. Dyer says that one of the trickiest parts of constructing the road was blasting the thick layer of basalt beneath the few inches of topsoil on the land.

Holes were drilled every 18 inches along the road and explosives were used to excavate utility trenches for the project, according to DeGroff.

“It's really stable ground that's good for some industries, but it sure makes construction expensive and time-consuming,” DeGroff said.

Many thanks were passed

around during the ceremony, including to the CTUIR.

“I especially want to thank our tribal partners for my education into who each of you are and what your values are,” Puzey said.

For Umatilla City Manager Dave Stockdale, Wanapa Road is more than two lanes stretching a mile.

“This road symbolizes the collaboration of Tribal, State, Port and City governments working together to enhance community and economic development,” Stockdale said in a press release.

“It's incredible what we are seeing today,” Puzey said.

After-school program to trade suds for scholarships

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — As a new Pendleton after-school program comes into focus, so too does a beer festival that will help fund it.

As a part of a fundraising effort for an elementary school program that is set to debut in the fall, the department is holding the inaugural Wild West Beerfest at Roy Raley Park on June 22.

Featuring live music and a DJ, Beerfest has already announced participation from breweries around the northwest in addition to local favorites like Prodigal Son.

Parks and Recreation Director Liam Hughes said organizing has gone well and the Beerfest's following on social media is growing.

“It's going really great,” he said.

Although unlikely to hit its \$40,000 goal, Hughes said he expects the event to turn a profit this year, a benchmark that isn't always reached in an event's first year.

Eventually, Hughes sees Beerfest as being a larger

source of revenue for the after-school program as the event grows larger and grant funding starts to fall off.

A partnership between Pendleton Parks and Rec, the Pendleton School District, and the InterMountain Education Service District, the trio began discussing the need for a program shortly after Hughes came to Pendleton in early 2018.

The need was made more apparent when the city issued a parks and recreation survey and 86 percent of respondents said an after-school program for elementary school students was either “very important” or “somewhat important.”

As the after-school program launch gets closer, more details are emerging.

The program will be based out of McKay Creek, Sherwood Heights, and Washington elementary schools in addition to the Pendleton Early Learning Center.

The city is in charge of staffing each site, and the parks and recreation department is currently advertising open positions for

recreational aides and site supervisors that will run the program on the ground.

The city is working with the IMESD to craft a curriculum for the after-school program, and organizers recently published a pamphlet that provides a daily itinerary for each day's programming.

From 3 p.m. to 3:20, the children will be given some free play time to “run off some of the energy they have accumulated through their school day.”

After a half-hour snack period, most of the program is centered around an activity that's connected to a daily theme, like sports, science, arts and crafts, music and theater, or world news.

Students will be provided with an elective activity from 5 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. as the program wraps up.

The program will charge \$8 per day plus an annual \$10 supply fee, but given that more than half of the Pendleton School District's students qualify for free or reduced lunch, the city wants to launch a scholarship to fund to cover tuition for students with families who wouldn't be able to afford the program otherwise.

That's where the Wild West Beerfest comes in, and Hughes is hopeful that both the after-school program and the beer festival will be around for years to come.



LOCAL BRIEFING

Foster child citizen review seeks volunteers

PENDLETON — The two foster child citizen review boards for Umatilla County seek volunteers.

The Citizen Review Board is a program under Oregon's state court system that reviews the cases of children in foster care. The boards consists of three to seven community members and meet one day a month to ensure foster children receive adequate care.

John Nichols, regional field manager for the program, said there are two boards in Umatilla County: Pendleton (east Umatilla County) and Hermiston (west Umatilla County/Morrow County).

“We need volunteers from each community,” he stressed.

The board members receive case files 10 days in advance of the meeting and review foster care cases with everyone involved in the case, including state social workers, foster parents and often the children.

For more information, contact Nichols at 541-233-8142 or at john.a.nichols@ojd.state.or.us. You also can find information about the program at <https://www.courts.oregon.gov/programs/crb/>.

Pilot Rock celebrates sewer groundbreaking

PILOT ROCK — The city of Pilot Rock is about to break ground for its new wastewater system.

Silver Creek Contracting of Heppner won the bid on the \$4.3 million project to build treatment and evaporation lagoons for the small town south of Pendleton. The work includes excavating approximately 130,000 cubic yards of earth, installing about 3,000 linear feet of 8-inch PVC pipe, and building a new wastewater lift station and standby generator building.

The city announced it is holding a groundbreaking ceremony Thursday at 11 a.m. To get there, take Highway 395 to Pilot Rock, then follow the signs and balloons to The Bike Pit, the city's off-highway vehicle park. The city promised plenty of parking.

The Pilot Rock City Council during its meeting Tuesday night will adopt the city's 2019-20 budget exceeding \$9.3 mil-

lion. The budget anticipates a 3% pay increase to the city's nine full-time equivalent employees as well as increases for medical and property insurance and the Public Employee Retirement System.

Crash near Vale injures six, kills one

VALE — A South Carolina man died Monday near Vale in a three-vehicle crash.

Oregon State Police reported the crash occurred at about 1:50 p.m. on Highway 20 near milepost 244. Timothy Eviston, 57, of Winnsboro, South Carolina, was driving a Nissan Rogue east on the two-lane highway when he attempted to pass a motor home and struck a westbound Ford F350 pickup.

The Ford then collided with a Ford Expedition pulling a travel trailer, according to state police, and both vehicles and the trailer caught fire.

Eviston died from injuries in the crash.

Jacob Price, 30, of Ontario, was driving the Ford F350, and Guillermo Fonseca, 33, of Eagle, Idaho, was driving the Expedition. Both suffered injuries and ambulances rushed them from the scene.

Amy Dancer, 40, of Eagle, Idaho, and three juveniles also were in the Expedition. Ground ambulances took Dancer and two juveniles, and an air ambulance flew the third youth.

The Malheur County Sheriff's Office and other agencies also responded to the crash.



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