



Staff photo by Phil Wright

Pilot Rock Mayor Virginia Carnes, right, gets ready to enjoy a piece of cake Thursday in celebration of breaking ground on the town's new sewer lagoon project. Brad Baird, center, president of the engineering firm Anderson Perry & Associates, estimated the majority of the project could wrap up as soon as next May.

Pilot Rock breaks ground on new sewer

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

PILOT ROCK — Pilot Rock broke ground Thursday morning on its new sewer lagoons. Mayor Virginia Carnes said getting started has been a long time coming.

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality warned the city five years ago when its aging sewer lagoons leaked into nearby Birch Creek. The city

embarked on a strategy to build new lagoons away from the creek. Since then, the city raised sewer rates and secured a long-term, low-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to cover the cost of the \$6 million project.

City Councilor Bob Deno said the lagoons are going on land Pilot Rock already owned, and that helped keep down costs.

The city contracted with

the engineering firm Anderson Perry & Associates, La Grande, to help put together the whole picture. Company president Brad Baird was among the local and state officials who attended Thursday's ground breaking ceremony. He said the project was impressive for a community the size of Pilot Rock.

"The city is to be commended on thinking long term," he said to the gathering, "and coming up with the

best solution."

Baird added the new lagoons are away from the creek and should serve the city for decades. He also said the majority of construction should wrap up in May or June 2020.

The weather turned rainy as the gold shovels came out for obligatory photos. Afterward, officials and guests huddled beneath large tents to stay dry, have a cup of coffee and enjoy carrot cake.

Andrade defense moves to DQ judge

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — Defense attorney Dan Stephens seeks to keep one circuit judge off the manslaughter case against Veronica Andrade.

Stephens, of Hermiston, filed the motion Tuesday with Morrow County Circuit Court to disqualify Judge Jon Lieuallen from presiding over the case. Stephens explained on the request he did not feel the defense would receive "a fair and impartial hearing and trial" from Lieuallen.

Stephens did not respond to a request for comment before deadline Thursday.

But Roy Blaine explained how disqualifying a judge works. He is the trial court administrator for the 6th Judicial District encompassing the circuit courts in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

"The supplemental local rules to Oregon Uniform Trial Court Rules allows for an attorney in any case to disqualify two judges," Blaine said. "They can disqualify one and disqualify another."

Attorneys have a fairly short period from the start of a case to seek a disqualification, and the request has to come before the particular judge issued any significant rulings in the case. Attorneys also have

to declare a reason, Blaine said, "but it can be fairly generic."

Blaine said he has not noticed a pattern of Stephens filing disqualifications.

"My impression would be, without digging any deeper, this is a one-time thing," Blaine said.

The Umatilla County District Attorney's Office, meanwhile, continues to disqualify Circuit Judge Eva Temple of Hermiston from presiding over its cases. Blaine said the court staff will take care not to schedule proceedings for Andrade on days Lieuallen has the gavel.

Andrade, 39, of Boardman, faces charges of first-degree manslaughter, driving under the influence of intoxicants, recklessly endangering another person and reckless driving. Oregon State Police arrested her Sunday morning in the wake of a crash on Interstate 84 about 10 miles east of Boardman that injured a 3-year-old child and ejected and killed a 7-month-old infant. Andrade remains in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, in lieu of \$500,000 bail.

The next proceeding in the case is Monday. The Morrow County District Attorney's Office plans to present its evidence in the case to a grand jury before then.

Pendleton School District set to adopt 'status quo' budget

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton School District's budget may tick up a few million in 2019-20, but district officials are otherwise calling the \$49.9 million budget "status quo."

District budget officer Michelle Jones said the 2019-20 budget will mostly follow the same service and staffing levels as the previous budget.

Jones said there is a small shift among the full-time positions to make way for dean of students positions at Sherwood Heights and Washington elementary schools.

Classified as "teachers on special assignment" positions, Jones said the deans of students will assist in administrative duties at Pendleton's two largest elementary schools.

The two elementary schools shared an assistant principal for a short time, but the position was eliminated in 2017 during a round of layoffs.

In his budget message, Superintendent Chris Fritsch warned that the district may have trouble maintaining the status quo in future years.

"As we move beyond the 19-20 school year, it will become increas-

ingly more difficult to support negotiated increases, (Public Employees Retirement System) ongoing escalating costs, and enrollment decline to maintain our existing programs and delivery models," he wrote. "We are committed to addressing the enrollment issue to the extent possible and hope that our efforts with online learning will have positive impacts in this area."

Declining enrollment continues to be a prevailing trend year-by-year, but also month-by-month.

It's not uncommon for the Pendleton School District to end the year with less students than it started, but the district's 2,996-student enrollment in May is setting up the district to end the year with less than 3,000 students for the third year in a row.

Pendleton's May enrollment was 188 students less than it had five years ago.

The district has determined the primary driver behind the dwindling enrollment is families moving out of the Pendleton area.

Jones said the budget committee already approved the district's proposed budget, which is set for approval by the Pendleton School Board on June 10.

One dead after plane crash near Summerville

SUMMERVILLE — A plane crash in Summerville that left one person dead Tuesday evening is under investigation, according to a press release from the Union County Sheriff's Office, and the National Transportation Safety Board is leading the investigation.

The UCSO responded to the scene shortly before 8 p.m. Tuesday. The NTSB and UCSO are investigating the incident along with the Union County District Attorney's Office and the Federal Aviation Administration.

Terry Williams, a spokesman for the NTSB, told the *La Grande Observer* Wednesday afternoon the downed Tican II airplane was an "experimental aircraft."

Williams said the NTSB's investigator arrived on scene midday Wednesday, and has done a preliminary review of the aircraft and the engine. Three witnesses have also been identified and will be interviewed by the agency, he said.

"Right now we are in the very early stages of the investigation," Williams said, adding that the agency will look into everything from the weather, to the aircraft, to the individual itself in its investigation.

The UCSO press release initially called it a "single occupant, fatality plane crash."

LOCAL BRIEFING

Bowman to host open house for new apartments

PENDLETON — Following months of renovation, the Bowman Building is opening its apartment for rent.

The building and its owner, Pendleton developer Al Plute, will be holding an open house at the historic 17 S.W. Frazer Ave. structure on June 14.

Funded in part by a \$341,000 grant from the Pendleton Development Commission, Plute converted the third floor office space into 18 one-bedroom and studio apartments.

At a Pendleton City Council meeting Tuesday, Plute said 15 units have already been rented out despite some still needing to be completed.

Plute intends to wrap up the project by Aug. 1.

The open house will run from 4 p.m.-7 p.m. Refreshments will be provided.

Pendleton expands enterprise zone

PENDLETON — The Pendleton City Council unanimously voted to renew the city's enterprise zone with expanded capabilities.

In partnership with Pilot Rock, Pendleton can offer property tax abatements for 3-5 years or longer to large-scale businesses provided they create jobs in

the area.

Economic Development Director Steve Chrisman said the enterprise zone is a good recruiting tool, but the city wants to now expand it to apply to the entertainment and hospitalities industries.

According to Chrisman's presentation, the enterprise zone provides abatements to Keystone RV Co., Pendleton Woolen Mills, Colby Rocky Mountain Pipe Co., Hill Meat Co., Oregon Grain Growers Distillery, and Barhyte Specialty Foods.

Chrisman said Colby has resumed business at its Pendleton plant after going on an extended hiatus.

As the abatements expire, Chrisman said \$10.2 million will go back on the tax rolls next year.

Councilor Paul Chalmers recused himself from the vote because of his enterprise zone responsibilities that come with his day job as the Umatilla County director of assessment and taxation.

Police: Body found in home confirmed to be Mouseketeer

MEDFORD (AP) — Police have confirmed that a body found in April at an Oregon home is that of missing man Dennis Day, who was an original member of Disney's "The Mickey Mouse Club."

Oregon State Police said

Thursday that the Oregon State Medical Examiner's office identified the body although they were unable to use dental records or DNA because of the condition of the remains.

Dennis Day was reported missing in July by his husband, Ernie Caswell, who suffers from memory loss and was in the hospital when he made the report.

Day's body was found in his Phoenix home in early April.

Day was born in 1942. When he was 10, he was among the first group of children hired for the Disney show.

Day and Caswell moved to Oregon in the 1980s.

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9:10p

Godzilla: King of the Monsters (PG13)
12:50p* 3:40p* 6:30p 9:20p

Rocketman (R)
1:40p* 4:20p 7:00p 9:40p

Aladdin (PG)
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