



Image courtesy of LKV Architects
A rendering of the new Pendleton Round-Up “commercial center” illustrates the front plaza of the building that will face the Round-Up Grounds.

Round-Up Association applies for \$100K grant

Funds would come from urban renewal district’s Fresh Start program

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Round-Up Association only broke ground on its new administrative and retail facility a couple weeks ago, but it’s already looking for a “Fresh Start.”

The advisory committee for the Pendleton Development Commission will meet to discuss the association’s \$100,000 Fresh Start grant application to help fund the \$3.5 million project.

According to the Round-Up’s application, the grant would go toward interior furnishings, exterior landscaping and beautification.

The association has already secured financing from Banner Bank to build the facility, and Round-Up Office Director Kevin Jordan said a denial wouldn’t prevent the facility from opening ahead of the 2020 rodeo.

“It would still be a viable, open building, but it wouldn’t look as nice,” he said.

The Round-Up bought the old Albertsons property in early 2018 with the express purpose of expanding the association’s footprint past the rodeo grounds. The Round-Up Board of Directors ultimately decided to demolish the vacant supermarket and build a new facil-

ity on the northeast corner of the lot.

Following years of sustained growth for the association, the new structure is intended to consolidate much of the Round-Up’s administrative, ticketing and retail operations under one roof.

In its application, the Round-Up emphasized that the new building will add to Pendleton’s “beauty and attractiveness.”

The facility will also include an 895-square-foot lease space for a third-party company. The application states the company is expected to bring in four to five full-time jobs and up to 40 part-time jobs available to high school and college students.

Jordan said the Round-Up is in talks with a particular company, but the association has signed a non-disclosure agreement and can’t talk about it publicly. But even if negotiations with the company don’t pan out, Jordan said the Round-Up will bring in some sort of business that will benefit the community.

The grant program the Round-Up is trying to take advantage of is a relatively new one for the Pendleton Development Commission and the urban renewal district.

When the Pendleton Veterinary Clinic sought out a \$100,000 grant from the development commission to build a brand new facility at 625 S.W. Emigrant Ave., the commission created Fresh Start to fund new buildings

from the ground up. Most of the urban renewal district’s other programs focus on upgrades and renovations to existing structures.

The Round-Up is seeking \$100,000 for its new building, the maximum amount allowed under the program.

If the development commission approves the Round-Up’s application, the money will come from the urban renewal district, a special taxing area that encompasses downtown Pendleton and some of the surrounding area. Most money from the urban renewal district is used for private improvement projects, although commissioners recently allocated \$3 million for road repair.

Even though most urban renewal projects focus on the downtown area, the district boundaries extend all the way to the Westgate overpass to the west.

Surrounding businesses like Mac’s Bar and Grill and Dairy Queen have already received urban renewal grants.

Charles Denight, the associate director of the development commission, said the commission’s advisory committee will get the first look at the application. If the committee approves it, the application will be forwarded to the development commission for final approval.

The advisory committee meeting will be held Wednesday at 4 p.m. at the council chambers annex in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

Quilt warms veteran’s heart

Pilot Rock veteran receives a quilt from Quilts of Valor of Eastern Oregon

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

PILOT ROCK — Like many combat veterans, Raymond Slabik talks little of his war experiences.

The Pilot Rock veteran rarely speaks of the battle of Heartbreak Ridge in Korea, where United Nations allies and North Korean forces fought fiercely for two weeks in 1951 in an intense, bloody, back-and-forth battle. Slabik, the recipient of two Bronze Stars, also experienced battles at Bloody Ridge and Pork Chop Hill.

“It’s hard for him to talk about it,” said Mary Lue Slabik, Ray’s wife of 68 years. “He told us when he got back that ‘there are some things I’m never going to talk about.’ We were just happy to get him home in one piece.”

Mary Lue watched Saturday morning as her 91-year-old husband received a quilt from Quilts of Valor of Eastern Oregon. The presentation, at an all-you-can-eat Veterans Day breakfast at the White Eagle Grange, was the first of multiple quilt presentations around the area that day. Group leader and quilter Anita Zimmerly gently draped the quilt around Slabik’s shoulders as he stood leaning on his cane. Then she enveloped him in a hug.

“This is how much we appreciate you,” she said.

She said Slabik is one of more than 233,183 veterans who have received quilts worldwide. This particular quilt was made locally by LaVonne Stevens, of Pendleton, who did the quilting and bind-



Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Korean War veteran Raymond Slabik with the Quilt of Valor presented to him on Saturday during an all-you-can-eat breakfast at the White Eagle Grange.

ing, and Debbie Mulder, of Pilot Rock, who made the quilt top.

After the presentation, Slabik grinned at well-wishers who shook his hand or slapped him on the back. Later, the veteran even agreed to talk a little about his experience.

The North Dakota native was drafted at age 23 along with four of his hometown friends. The young men completed Army basic training together in Missouri and headed overseas in 1951.

“We got a free ride to Korea and back,” Slabik said.

They found themselves engaged in combat operations against North Korea in the bone-chilling cold. Slabik’s job was in communications, getting word to and from artillery forces. Communicating was more difficult in those days.

“We ran a cable,” he said. “We spooled it out on

the ground.”

He didn’t elaborate on the battles, but admitted, “I was scared as hell.”

Slabik and all four of his friends made it back home in 1953, albeit with scars. Slabik is the only one still living.

Slabik went on with his life as a telephone lineman, first on the Oregon coast and then in Corvallis. In 1956, he started working in Pilot Rock.

Half a century later at the White Eagle Grange, Mary Lue smiled as she watched Ray soak in all the praise. Her husband, she said, is part of an esteemed group of warriors and defenders of freedom.

“We owe all our veterans a lot,” she said.

The quilt, she said, will go in an honored spot at the foot of their bed.

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0810.

BRIEFLY

Motorcyclist injured in crash on Saturday

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — A 49-year-old Hermiston man was injured Saturday afternoon when his motorcycle was struck by a Buick SUV on South Ninth Avenue.

Police responded at 2 p.m. near the McDonald’s at 814 S. Ninth Ave., where Troy L. Peck was injured, Walla Walla police Sgt. Eric Knudson said.

Janice F. Ellenberger, 79, of Walla Walla, was turning left onto Malcolm Street in her 2019 SUV from northbound Ninth Avenue and struck Peck in his 2006 Victory, Knudson said. He had been traveling southbound.

Ellenberger may receive an infraction, Knudson said.

Hospital staff said there was “no information” regarding Peck’s condition.

Man pleads guilty in WW arson, assault case

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — A Milton-Freewater man

pleaded guilty Thursday in Walla Walla County Superior Court to second-degree arson, and third- and fourth-degree assault.

Joshua A. McNeil, 37, originally was charged in July 2018 with first-degree arson, violating a domestic protection order, and third-degree theft.

More charges were added in August 2018, however, and he made a plea bargain with prosecutors to receive the lesser charges, according to court documents.

His sentencing was scheduled for Nov. 18.

Walla Walla police responded at 2:35 a.m. on July 15, 2018, to the 100 block of West Maple Street for a no-contact order violation. An officer saw McNeil just outside a camper, where a fire was starting at the doorstep.

McNeil ran from the flames, but returned and the officer ordered him to get on the ground as “he danced around the front of the flames saying, ‘What you going to do now? Tase me! Shoot me!’,” records stated.

He then ran into the flames and sat in the middle of them, asking the officer to kill him, then jumped out as

the fire grew hot.

“McNeil danced and tumbled around the yard, screaming and ripping his clothes off,” records stated.

McNeil then jumped into an above-ground pool, which put out the fire, and stayed there while begging arriving officers to shoot him. An officer extinguished the fire on the camper.

McNeil also tried strangling himself with his belt in the pool, refusing to come out unless given a cigarette, records stated. Officers gave him one. He then was assessed by medics and taken into custody.

McNeil admitted starting the fire because he was depressed and wanted to kill himself because his wife told him she wanted a divorce, records stated.

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Meet & Greet

David Collins, PA-C
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Morrow County Health District is pleased to welcome David Collins, PA-C, his wife Stephanie and their four children to our growing family of caregivers. We invite you to join us for a special Meet & Greet, where you can learn more about David and his plans for helping patients achieve their health and wellness goals, and how he intends to join us in our mission to make Morrow County a healthier community.

Join us
Join us for refreshments and to meet David Collins, PA-C and everyone caring for you at Irrigon Medical Clinic.

Tuesday
November 19, 2019
3:30p.m. - 6:00p.m.

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