

Signs of the season



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

An illuminated holiday sign welcomes drivers as they traverse Southgate just after sunset on Tuesday evening. Holiday decorations began popping up around Pendleton within the last week as residents began to prepare for the winter holidays.

Commission approves \$100K grant for Round-Up building

Pendleton may reconsider grant approval process for future projects

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Round-Up landed the \$100,000 grant it wanted from urban renewal district, but the Pendleton Development Commission may take another look at its grant approval process as a result.

The Pendleton Round-Up Association plans to put the commission's Fresh Start grant toward its \$3.6 million administrative building project on the old Albertsons property.

Although some residents perceive the Round-Up as a wealthy organization, com-

mission Associate Director Charles Denight said the commission could only evaluate the project on the set criteria, like the value of the building, the building's location in relation to the urban renewal district and the building's ability to pay property taxes.

Councilor Dale Primmer asked some rhetorical questions about the purpose of the Fresh Start program, which was started to assist with building new structures in the urban renewal district.

"Are we using Fresh Start to incentivize new growth or are we subsidizing new growth?" he said. "And would these projects be occurring with or without these funds? I don't know the answer to that, but they're playing by the rules of the game."

Councilor Scott Fairley,

the chairman of the commission's advisory committee, said he's had conversations with committee members about whether Fresh Start should change from strictly a "pass/fail" program.

Councilor Paul Chalmers, the chairman of the commission and the Umatilla County director of assessment and taxation, said the new building will pay property taxes unless the association applies for an exemption with the county.

The commission would go on to unanimously approve the Round-Up's Fresh Start application.

While the Round-Up has already secured financing for the project, the grant is intended to go toward interior furnishings and exterior beautification.

The Round-Up wants

to consolidate much of its retail, ticketing and administrative operations in the new building, which has an expected completion date of August 2020.

The commission also unanimously agreed to expand the urban renewal district to include 1910 CrossFit at 421 S.E. Sixth St.

Denight said the CrossFit gym wants to be included in the urban renewal district so it can access the façade grant program.

The district is allowed to expand by up to a total of 1% without having to go through a more intensive process, but previous expansions have the district pushing up against the limit.

Denight said the city is looking into its options, including contracting the boundaries in other areas.

Justice of the Peace appointed to Morrow County

Glen Diehl takes over on Jan. 1

East Oregonian

MORROW COUNTY — Gov. Kate Brown appointed Glen Diehl to be the new Morrow County Justice of the Peace, effective Jan. 1, the governor's office announced on Wednesday.

The Justice of the Peace position oversees cases involving misdemeanor crimes, traffic violations, game and other violations and disputes within the Morrow County Justice Court in Irrigon and Heppner, according to the Morrow County website.

"I just consider this to be an honor. I'm really looking forward to continuing with public safety and continuing to help the public," Diehl said.

Diehl currently works as

the community service work crew supervisor in the Morrow County Sheriff's Office. His appointment follows the Dec. 31 retirement of Judge Annetta Spicer. Brown's office started seeking applications for the position in August.

Diehl worked as a law enforcement officer in the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office for 25 years, and has worked at the Pilot Rock Police Department, the Umatilla Tribal Police Department and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Enforcement Department.

"Diehl brings more than three decades of public service in the area of criminal justice to the position of Justice of the Peace," Brown said in a press release. "His record

of commitment to the law, in addition to his balanced and fair-minded approach, will serve Morrow County's justice system well."

He said he doesn't have any plans for the position just yet, and looks forward to learning more about the justice system.

In 2012, Diehl ran for a seat on the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners. Current Commissioner Bill Elfering won the race.

Spicer, then-Heppner city attorney, was elected to the

Justice of the Peace position in 2010, when she won 63% of the vote in a race against former Morrow County District Attorney Earl Woods.

Prior to that, Charlotte Gray held the position for 32 years before retiring.

At the time, both Woods and Spicer, according to the *East Oregonian*, stated they thought the Justice of the Peace should be someone with a law degree because the laws were becoming more complicated, which Gray didn't hold.



Diehl

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BRIEFLY

Potential fifth candidate bids for county seat

on Nov. 3, 2020.

PENDLETON — The Pendleton City Council meeting Tuesday became an impromptu candidate forum as three candidates vying for a seat on the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners introduced themselves to the council during the public comment section.

Jonathan Lopez of Hermiston, HollyJo Beers of Milton-Freewater, and Patricia Maier of Hermiston all used their time to provide the council with some biographical information about themselves and answer the occasional question about their platforms or views on local issues.

Lopez and Maier filed to run for office earlier this year, but Umatilla County Elections Division Manager Kim Lindell said Wednesday morning that Beers had not submitted paperwork declaring her candidacy.

Beers referred to herself as a candidate at the meeting and has until March 10 to make her campaign official with the county.

The other declared candidates in the race are Dan Dorran and Mark Gomolski, both of Hermiston. The Position 3 seat is being vacated by Commissioner Bill Elfering, who is retiring from the board after two terms.

All candidates will run in the May 19 primary. Should no one take more than 50% of the vote, the top two candidates will move on to a run-off election

Christmas tree permits are now available

PENDLETON — Christmas tree permits for the Umatilla National Forest are now available to purchase at forest offices, several local businesses and online.

The Umatilla National Forest is one of 13 national forests participating in a pilot program to offer permits online through the Open Forest system. The Open Forest program allows the public to purchase a 2019 Christmas tree permit from home, or by using a mobile device, instead of traveling to a Forest Service office. Christmas tree permits purchased online will have to be printed to be valid and can only be used on Umatilla National Forest lands.

Permits cost \$5 each and are limited to one per household. Traditional Christmas tree permits will still be available at local Forest Service offices, or participating vendors. Forest Service offices are open for business Monday through Friday at the four Umatilla Ranger District offices in Ukiah, Heppner, and Walla Walla, Washington, and Pomeroy, Washington; and at the supervisor's office in Pendleton. Traditional permits are valid on National Forest System lands only and do not authorize tree cutting on private, state or other federally managed lands.

— EO Media Group

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The East Oregonian & Heritage Station Museum invites you to attend the:

UMATILLA COUNTY MEMORIES BOOK LAUNCH

Saturday, Nov. 23rd
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Heritage Station Museum

• Snacks & Beverages Provided

• Free Holiday Gift Wrap w/ Purchase

This collaboration between the East Oregonian and the Heritage Station Museum has created an opportunity for the museum to sell 100 copies with 100% of the proceeds going to the museum.

EAST OREGONIAN

The Umatilla County Historical Society Museum