

Developer moving forward with airport hotel

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — A hotel project at the Pendleton airport is moving forward, but neither the city nor the company behind the development want to say anymore about it.

City Manager Robb Corbett confirmed that developer Makad Corp. started work on the 74-room hotel through its subsidiary Horse Valley LLC, but declined to comment further because the company had been displeased with previous media reporting and directed questions to the Vancouver, Washington-based company.

The *East Oregonian* emailed a list of questions to Makad Corp. general counsel Allan Fulsher and Tawni Camarillo, the company's executive vice president, about when its lease with the city started, a timeline for the project, its potential partnership with a "global hotel franchise provider," and the status of its other Pendleton project, a data center.

Fulsher sent back a

short response.

"Thank you for your interest," he wrote. "When Horse Valley LLC is prepared to release information about the hotel project to the public, we will provide a copy of the press release to the *East Oregonian*."

A contentious history

Makad Corp. has received varying levels of scrutiny from the Pendleton City Council over the years.

In 2015, the council unanimously approved a 30-year ground lease and incentive package for a proposed data center at the airport industrial park before breaking out into applause.

Three years later, it took four meetings and multiple revisions to the lease agreement to get the council to approve a 50-year land lease for the airport hotel, but not before the council stripped away the deal's incentives.

As a part of the deal, Makad Corp. committed to starting construction on the hotel within a year of



Contributed photo
A conceptual drawing of the proposed hotel at the Pendleton airport.

starting the lease.

When asked when the company began its lease with the city, Corbett said Makad Corp. is fulfilling the terms of the lease but otherwise declined to comment.

The pitch from Makad Corp. to the city council usually includes their development history in Eastern Oregon, and specifically, The River Lodge and Grill.

The Boardman hotel is still in operation today, but Makad Corp.'s local develop-

suit where the co-developer alleged a Makad Corp. subsidiary owed it \$25 million for building the facility and other debts.

The matter was eventually settled out of court, and the property was sold.

The website

While Makad Corp. proceeds with its hotel, Pendleton is still awaiting the results of its first project: a data center.

When the city agreed to lease Makad Corp. property on the Airport Road extension, incentives included spending \$300,000 to extend a sewer line out to the site.

In 2018, Fulsher wrote in an email that Makad Corp. and its subsidiary, CyDat Industries, were trying to identify an electrical source, end users, and financing for the project.

Fulsher didn't directly respond to a request for an update, but a website set up for the "CyDat Data Center" provides some previously unreported details.

The website states that

CyDat has hired LRS Architects of Portland to design the data center and Deacon Construction, a firm with an office in Portland, to be its general contractor. CyDat has "engaged" with Makad Corp. to be the project developer.

The company envisions the data center providing digital storage services for businesses that need them.

"New technologies are expanding daily, from healthcare, to augmented and virtual reality, to the newest social media, to machine learning and automation," the website states amidst renderings of the data center. "The use of technology and need for data storage is rapidly growing in virtually every industry."

Makad Corp. plans to power the facility with a "power island," a group of natural gas-fired turbines.

Although the website includes several paragraphs about the data center's capabilities and specifications, the one thing it doesn't have is an expected completion date for the project.

Two candidates seek vacant council seat

Council also set to vote on sending gas tax to ballot
By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton City Council will choose between short-term stewardship and long-term ambition for the Ward 2 seat left vacant by the late Scott Fairley.

The council will meet early on Tuesday to interview two candidates for the position: Ward 2 candidate Melissa Shumake and former councilor Chuck Wood. If one of the candidates can get at least five votes from the council, they could take their seat later that evening.

A city councilor from 2013-16, Wood wrote in his letter of interest that he expected many on the council to have "first-hand knowledge of his experience."

"I trust you will have several well qualified applicants to consider, and do not expect to be considered solely because I served in this role in the recent past," he wrote. "I know you will select a candidate who will best serve the citizens

of Ward 2 and the city in general."

A retiree who used to work at Blue Mountain Recovery Center, Wood has also served on the boards for Oregon East Symphony, the Pendleton Rotary Club, and the Main Street Cowboys.

Despite his familiarity with the council, Wood wrote that he has no intention of filing for another term past his appointment.

Additionally, Wood may not even be able to serve the entirety of his appointed term because of his housing situation. He and his wife are downsizing from their North Hill home and intend to put it on the market for a second time this spring, and there's a possibility he may move out of Pendleton once the house sells.

If the house is sold before Wood's term ends, he wrote that he would be willing to step aside for the winner of the May primary if they wanted to get a head start on their council career.

Shumake is applying to get that head start, having already filed to run for Ward 2 election on May 19.

She doesn't have prior experience on the council, but Shumake has spent the

past five years working in municipal government as a planner for the city of Walla Walla, Washington.

She wrote that her priority as a city councilor would be affordable housing, increased transparency and accountability in city government, and creating an equitable community.

Later in the letter, she returned to the theme of transparency.

"It seems as though many Pendleton residents do not trust Pendleton's government to fulfill its mission to seek efficiency in the use of resources," she wrote. "I propose that the City use a statistically valid survey, year over year, to solicit input from residents about their priorities, then use those priorities to set yearly agendas."

Shumake is the only filed candidate for Ward 2 to date. The other filed candidates for the other races — Mayor John Turner, Ward 1 candidate Kevin Martin, Ward 3 Councilor Dale Primmer, and at-large Councilor Paul Chalmers — don't have opponents yet either. The filing deadline is March 10.

Whoever the council picks, they could be

immediately thrown into the fray of the city's most contentious issue: street maintenance.

The council is set to vote on a resolution that would begin the process of putting a 4-cent gas tax for street maintenance on the May ballot.

The gas tax is a part of a multi-pronged fundraising plan that includes a hotel room tax and increased street utility fee.

While city staff continue to research the hotel room tax concept, it's moving ahead with a \$3 increase to the street utility fee.

The council will hold a first reading of the fee-raising ordinance on Tuesday, which means the council could pass it at the following meeting on Feb. 18.

Council members will also consider awarding crack seal and slurry seal contracts for more immediate street maintenance projects.

The public council candidate interviews will be held at 6 p.m., and the council meeting at 7 p.m. Both meetings will be held inside council chambers at city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

BRIEFLY

Second suspect in custody for M-F armed robberies

MILTON-FREEWATER — The second suspect in a string of crimes in Milton-Freewater has been arrested and arraigned on 10 felony charges, Milton-Freewater Police Chief Doug Boedigheimer announced in a press release Thursday.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office initially arrested Jonathan Lee McDonald, 31, on Jan. 19 for a parole violation. A grand jury later indicted him on Jan. 22 on three counts of first-degree robbery, four counts of second-degree robbery, and one count each of second-degree burglary, second-degree arson and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.

Court documents show McDonald was arraigned in the Umatilla County Circuit Court on Jan. 23. He entered a not guilty plea to all charges.

Of the 10 charges, eight are for McDonald's alleged role in robbing the First Stop Mart on Highway 11 near Milton-Freewater on the morning of Jan. 3. One count of first-degree robbery and another of second-degree burglary stem from separate incidents on Jan. 5.

Court records show McDonald is a convicted felon with a long criminal history dating back to 2006 when he pleaded guilty to first-degree burglary.

Michael James Metcalfe, 19, was arrested earlier this month and pleaded not guilty to 10 felony charges last week for his own connection to the three robberies. Court records revealed Metcalfe was already in custody but had been released from jail "due to overpopulation"

less than 24 hours before allegedly robbing the store with McDonald.

In the First Stop Mart incident, the two are accused of stealing a woman's car, working together to rob the store at gunpoint, fleeing in the vehicle and leaving it torched in an orchard about a mile from the scene.

The sheriff's office led the investigation into the First Stop Mart robbery, Boedigheimer wrote in the press release, while the additional charges against Metcalfe and McDonald were "the result of a complex investigation by MFPD."

In a second release sent Friday morning, Boedigheimer noted that robberies at Milton-Freewater's Green Tea Garden Chinese Restaurant on Dec. 14, 2019, and Sam's Corner Market on Jan. 13 remain under investigation.

"The crimes that are ongoing investigations do not necessarily involve Metcalfe or McDonald," Boedigheimer wrote on Friday. "But one or the other, or both, could be persons of interest in those ongoing investigations."

Both Metcalfe and McDonald are lodged at the Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton. Metcalfe is being held on \$500,000 bail, while McDonald's bail is set at \$750,000.

As a Measure 11 crime, first-degree robbery carries a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years and six months.

The release asks that anyone with information regarding these robberies, or other local area robberies, to contact Det. Morgan Dunlap with the Milton-Freewater Police Department at 541-938-8236.

— EO Media Group

Community corrections employee arrested

By **ALEX CASTLE**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — A Umatilla County Corrections employee was arrested in Pendleton earlier this month for allegedly firing a weapon within city limits and endangering another person.

Pendleton police arrested Codella Marie Beers, 47, at 1113 S.W. Goodwin Lane on Jan. 18. Beers is charged with felony unlawful use of a weapon and reckless endangerment.

Records show Beers started in law enforcement as a deputy with the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office in 2001 before transferring to

community corrections in 2006. She served there as a community service coordinator, though it is unclear what her current employment status is with the county.

County officials deferred all comments and questions about Beers to Umatilla County Counsel Doug Olsen, who didn't return multiple phone calls on Thursday.

Beers is no longer listed on the community corrections' online contact list, however, an organizational



Beers

chart linked to the website still lists Beers among the county's community service coordinators.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said officers arrived on the scene at about 9:15 p.m. on Jan. 18 after there were multiple reports of shots fired along with screaming and yelling on Southwest Goodwin Lane.

Police identified Beers upon arrival because of her employment with the county, Roberts said, and noted she was in a "modified state of mind." He said it's unknown if it was induced by drugs or alcohol.

Roberts said police seized two firearms from Beers

during the arrest, one rifle and one handgun. He said it wasn't known whether they were registered to Beers.

Beers was originally booked in the Umatilla County Jail on the night of Jan. 18 and Judge Jon Lieualen set her bail at \$20,000 last week.

Court documents show Beers was issued an emergency conditional release last Friday due to medical reasons.

Beers was scheduled to appear in court for a pre-trial hearing on Tuesday, but Lieualen granted a continuance due to her medical release that pushed her next appearance to Feb. 14.

WILDHORSE
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1/31-2/2
Cineplex Show Times

\$5 Classic Movie
Showing Wednesday @ 12p
Christmas in Connecticut
Gretel & Hansel (PG13)
12:10p* 2:30p*
4:50p 7:20p 9:40p

The Rhythm Section (R)
1:20p* 4:00p 6:40p 9:10p

Bad Boys for Life (R)
1:10p* 4:20p 7:10p 9:50p

1917 (R)
1:30p* 4:10p 6:50p 9:30p

Dolittle (PG)
12:00p* 2:20p*
4:40p 7:00p 9:20p

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2/3-2/4
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