

EOU's president sees windfall as pandemic degrades enrollment

Tom Insko awarded two bonuses by board of trustees

By KALEB LAY
La Grande Observer

LA GRANDE — As 2020 closed out on a year of declining enrollment and tuition revenue for many of Oregon's public universities, Eastern Oregon University in La Grande opted to increase President Tom Insko's salary and to award him \$22,500 in year-end bonuses.

The EOU Board of Trustees on Nov. 12, 2020, approved two bonuses for Insko: a \$7,500 "goal attainment award" and a \$15,000 "meritorious achievement award." The trustees also awarded Insko a 2.6% increase to his roughly \$250,000 salary.

The move came even as year-over-year enrollment declined at EOU in 2020 — a trend universities across the state and the country have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to fact sheets from the university's website, on-campus enrollment from fall 2019 to fall 2020 fell by 10.8%, from 1,508 to 1,345 students. Off-campus enrollment also fell from 1,246 to 1,153 students — a drop of more than 7%.



Insko



Kaleb Lay/La Grande Observer

A bench sits unoccupied on the campus of Eastern Oregon University on the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021. Despite declining enrollment due to the pandemic, EOU recently granted its president, Tom Insko, \$22,500 in bonuses and a 2.6% increase to his roughly \$250,000 salary.

Eastern also recorded declines in overall enrollment for both full- and part-time students from fall 2019 to fall 2020 terms. Enrollment for the coming semester was

expected to be flat from fall 2020 as well, according to EOU's vice president for university advancement, Tim Seydel.

EOU Board of Trustees Chair-

man Richard Chaves credited Insko's leadership, saying he'd been instrumental in minimizing damage from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as shoring up the university's financial position during recent years.

"Today, even having gone through the pandemic this last year, EOU is in the strongest financial position in the history of EOU," Chaves said.

He went on to say EOU has fared far better than other universities through the pandemic, many of which have had to cut programs or lay off employees due to decreased revenue.

"If you look at EOU, we have not had to take those kind of drastic measures," Chaves said. "In fact, we haven't had any permanent layoffs, except one, which was due to the closure of our copy center, and that was planned before the pandemic hit."

Chaves said while he couldn't speak on the full board's behalf, its members generally "felt that president Insko was performing beyond what he was being paid, especially in comparison with most other universities in the state."

To illustrate that point, Chaves pointed out Insko had turned down bonuses offered to him by the board in prior years. He also noted Eastern's faculty and administrative professionals had received raises of more than 3%, and workers with the Service Employees International Union, which represents public sector employees, received

a 6.85% bonus.

But that did not stop the union's local are of SEIU 503 from voicing its displeasure with Insko's windfall in a recent press release.

"Part of the reason that the universities were unable to maintain full staffing was a lack of revenue in the form of tuition," SEIU 503 said. "That is why it was so frustrating to see Eastern Oregon University announce that it will be giving its President, Tom Insko, a \$22,500 end of the year bonus, which is on top of his \$250,351 salary. That is more than five times the average salary of a Classified employee."

In fact, Insko's \$22,500 in bonuses represent more than a significant portion of people in La Grande earn in a year, coming in at more than half the city's median annual income.

According to the city of La Grande's 2019 housing needs analysis, median local income in 2017 was just \$40,750, which was nearly \$16,000 below the statewide average.

The analysis also found nearly two in five people in La Grande earned less than \$30,000 per year in 2017, before the economic hardship of the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

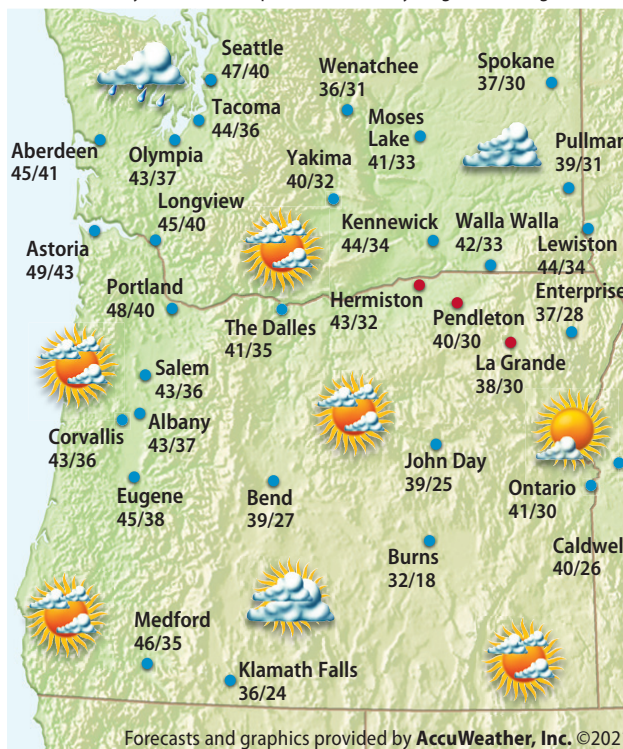
Eastern Oregon University's presidential annual salary of \$250,351 is more than six times the median income in La Grande and 29% more than the median price of a home in the city in 2019, as listed by the housing needs report.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Some sun	Cloudy and seasonably cool	Cloudy	Cloudy, a shower in the p.m.	Cloudy
40° 30°	44° 32°	45° 35°	52° 44°	55° 41°
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
43° 32°	43° 30°	43° 37°	49° 42°	56° 37°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				

OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	37°	30°
Normals	41°	27°
Records	65° (1933)	-14° (1937)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.09"
Month to date	0.35"
Normal month to date	0.46"
Year to date	0.35"
Last year to date	0.15"
Normal year to date	0.46"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	41°	29°
Normals	40°	28°
Records	65° (2002)	-20° (1937)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.15"
Month to date	0.30"
Normal month to date	0.32"
Year to date	0.30"
Last year to date	Trace
Normal year to date	0.32"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	NNE 4-8	ESE 3-6
Pendleton	NNE 4-8	SE 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:35 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:30 p.m.
Moonrise today	3:54 a.m.
Moonset today	1:25 p.m.



World's largest plant for nuclear waste cleanup at Hanford ready for startup

By ANNETTE CARY
Tri-City Herald

RICHLAND, Wash. — After more than 18 years, construction is finished on the key parts of the \$17 billion Hanford vitrification plant that will be needed for initial treatment of radioactive waste.

Building the world's largest plant to treat radioactive waste is "truly a scientific and engineering feat," said Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., in taped remarks played at a Wednesday, Jan. 6, ceremony announcing the accomplishment.

"This is an unprecedented step toward cleaning up the most toxic site in the United States ... and restoring the Hanford site to return it to the community," she said.

Mark Menezes, deputy secretary for energy, was at Hanford for the announce-

ment and said it "marks a tremendous leap forward for the Hanford workforce and the Tri-Cities community."

"Hanford is on the precipice of actual tank waste treatment," he said. "Decades of hard work are paying off."

The Department of Energy and its contractor Bechtel National now will spend the next three years starting up all the systems needed to treat low activity radioactive waste, and then practice operating the plant with a nonradioactive waste simulant.

The vitrification plant, or Waste Treatment Plant, is planned to treat much of the 56 million gallons of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste in underground tanks at the Hanford nuclear reservation in Eastern Washington.

The Hanford site was used

from World War II through the Cold War to produce two-thirds of the plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Construction started at the plant in 2002, with a deadline set by the federal court in 2016 requiring DOE to start treating radioactive waste at the plant by the end of 2023. The court recently agreed to give DOE at least eight more months to start treating waste because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All but about 10% of the workers at the nuclear reservation were sent home in late April 2020, with work done by telecommuting when possible, to help contain the spread of the coronavirus. Workers area returning to on-site work in phases.

But Brian Vance, the DOE Hanford manager, said he believes waste treatment still will start in 2023.

IN BRIEF

Anthony Lakes offers free opportunity to older grade-schoolers

NORTH POWDER — Learn to ski or snowboard for free.

An opportunity for fifth- and sixth-graders will be given at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort starting Sunday, Jan. 10.

Free ski and snowboard lessons will be given to all fifth- and sixth-graders every Sunday starting Jan. 10 and running through Feb. 28. Children will be given free ski and snowboard rentals to be used for skiing and snowboarding throughout the day.

After receiving a free lesson each Sunday, children will be given a free ski lift pass they can use for the rest of that day.

Students must register each Sunday at the Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort's ticket

booth between 8:30 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. before receiving their free lesson. Children should bring identification from their school or their report card, according to an Anthony Lakes press release.

Later in the year, there is a possibility that students will be able to register online rather than at the ticket booth.

Adults who want to accompany the fifth- and sixth-graders on the ski slope after their lessons will be sold lift tickets for \$25, which is less than what is normally charged.

The families of the children who attend at least seven of the eight free instructional sessions will have a chance to purchase a ski lift pass for their children for the remainder of the ski season for \$150, a price discounted significantly. The Anthony Lakes ski season normally runs well into March.

—EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

Follow us on Facebook!

EAST OREGONIAN
— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com
In the App Store:

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.
Copyright © 2021, EO Media Group

Circulation Dept.
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 800-781-3214

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$9.75/month	50 percent
52 weeks	\$135	42 percent
26 weeks	\$71	39 percent
13 weeks	\$37	36 percent

*EZ Pay = one-year rate with a monthly credit or debit card/check charge

Single copy price:
\$1.50 Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

ADVERTISING
Regional Sales Director (Eastside) EO Media Group:
• Karrine Brogoitti
541-963-3161 • kbrogoitti@eomediagroup.com

Advertising Manager:
• Angela Treadwell
541-966-0827 • atreadwell@eastoregonian.com

Multimedia Consultants:
• Kelly Schwirze
541-564-4531 • kschwirze@eastoregonian.com
• Audra Workman
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com

Business Office
• Dayle Stinson
541-966-0824 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com

Classified & Legal Advertising
1-800-962-2819 or 541-278-2678
classifieds@eastoregonian.com or legals@eastoregonian.com

NEWS
• To submit news tips and press releases: call 541-966-0818 or email news@eastoregonian.com
• To submit community events, calendar items and Your EO News: email community@eastoregonian.com or call Renee Struthers at 541-966-0818.
• To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries: email rstruthers@eastoregonian.com or visit eastoregonian.com/community/announcements
• To submit sports or outdoors information or tips: 541-966-0838 • sports@eastoregonian.com

COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Commercial Print Manager: Holly Rouska
541-617-7839 • hrouska@eomediagroup.com