

# Eastern Oregon University radio station may go silent

KEOL history dates back to 1973 when it received its FCC license

By DICK MASON  
La Grande Observer

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University's student-run FM radio station, KEOL, may go silent after the school year.

KEOL is receiving \$33,481 in 2020-21 from the university's Student Fee Committee and asked for \$33,606 for 2021-22. But the committee voted not to fund KEOL in 2021-22.

"It was a very tough decision," said Keegan Sanchez, vice chair of the Student Fee Committee and Eastern's student body president.

The Student Fee Committee, which voted to defund KEOL on Feb. 5, determines how much money from student incidental fees is to go to 20 student organizations and programs on campus. The student senate earlier this week approved the recommendations. They must next receive the approval of EOU President Tom Insko and EOU Board of Trustees.

Sanchez said the SFC had to trim the money it allots to student programs because declining enrollment is reducing the amount of inci-



Alex Wittwer/The Observer

A passerby reflects in the glass of the KEOL radio booth on Friday, March 5, 2021, at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. The university's Student Fee Committee has voted not to fund KEOL in 2021-22.

dental fee money. This forced the committee to cut funding for all but one of the programs and operations — referred to as units — of which the fees pay.

"Almost every unit took a hit," said Zachary Cahill, the chair of the Student Fee Committee and the director of financial affairs for EOU's student government.

Units that received cuts included athletics, which was trimmed \$31,000 to \$513,000,

and the Hoke Union Building, which was cut \$7,500 to \$304,000. Cahill said the committee wanted to cut more from the Hoke Union Building's budget, but could not because there are so many fixed operational costs, such as heating, plumbing and maintenance staff. The building is the home site of about 50 EOU clubs.

The SFC received requests for \$1.4 million in funding for 2021-22, but could allot only

\$1.2 million because of the projected decline in incidental fee revenue.

A big portion of KEOL's budget covers the cost of paying its two student employees, who will receive a combined total of about \$20,000 in the 2020-21 school year, said Cahill. The station also has about four student disc jockeys, who work as volunteers.

Cahill said KEOL, based in the Hoke Union Building,

was defunded in part because studies indicate radio is a fading industry with a dim future.

"Radio may be obsolete in 10 years," he said.

It thus does not make sense for KEOL to continue operating because the students working there would not be developing skills that would help them as they pursue careers after college.

Cahill wants Eastern to develop a class or club that would help students develop disc jockey-related skills that will be in demand, such as those needed to produce a podcast.

Sanchez said it is not known how many students tune in to KEOL.

"There is no metric for tracking how many listen," he said.

Eastern's Student Fee Committee also made its allocations based on how many students a program attracts.

"We looked at participation rates," Sanchez said, noting that KEOL's is low.

The committee also initially did not approve funding for Eastern's student newspaper, *The Voice*. The SFC changed gears after representatives of *The Voice* appealed the decision. The SFC then voted to provide the newspaper \$7,500, which is \$10,500 short of the amount

*The Voice* initially requested.

Funding for *The Voice* was cut because of low productivity. Sanchez said that Eastern published just two editions in 2020.

"That is not sufficient," Sanchez said.

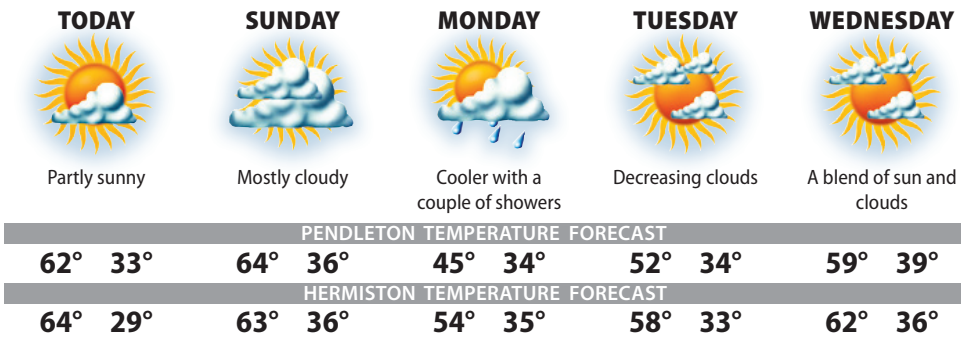
One of the editions was a paper one and the other was online. Cahill said the paper edition could not be distributed because of COVID-19 concerns. He added *The Voice's* future editions will be published online.

KEOL's leaders, unlike those at *The Voice*, did not appeal the SFC's decision to withdraw funding. One reason may have been that KEOL's faculty adviser, Michael Williams, died in late 2020. Williams was the director of the TRiO Student Support Services program.

*The Observer* tried repeatedly to get a comment about the SFC's defunding decision from a KEOL representative, but no one returned phone calls.

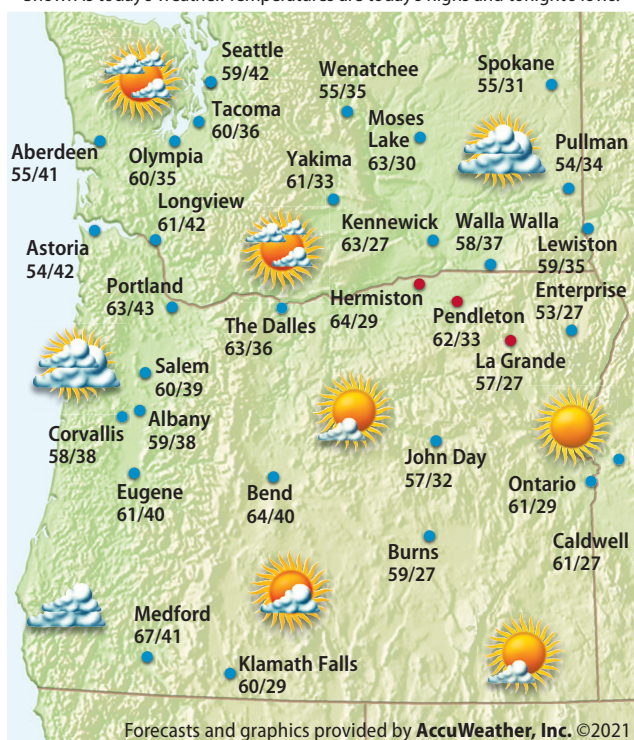
KEOL's history dates back to at least 1973 when it received its FCC license to operate, according to its website. The station was based in Eastern's library from 1976 to 1991. It was then relocated into a small building north of the library. The station was moved into the Hoke Union Building in 2015.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



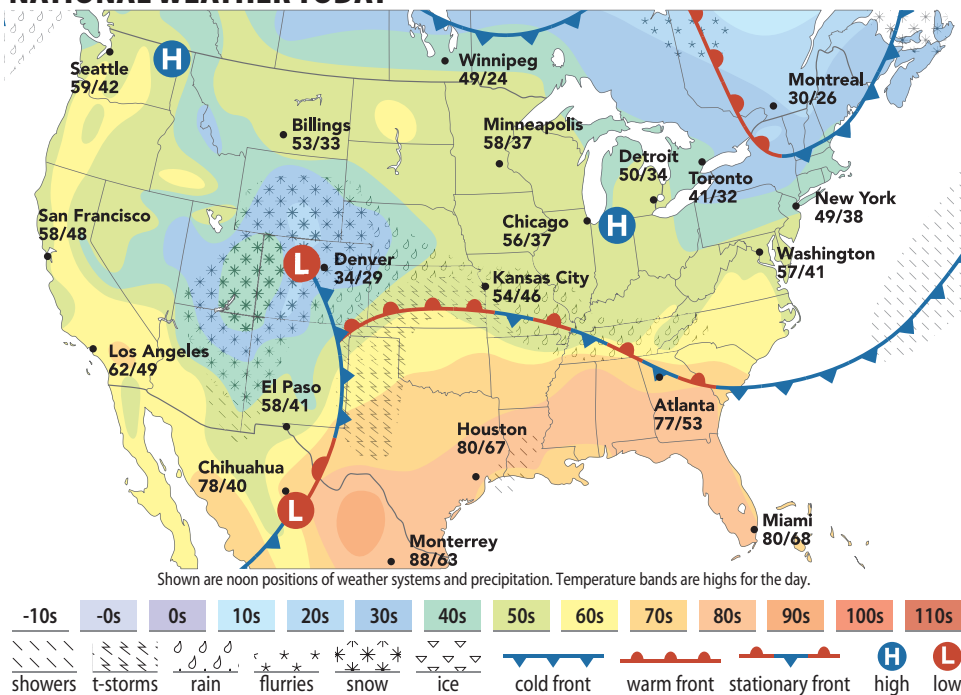
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	57°	31°
Normals	54°	34°
Records	78° (1934)	14° (1906)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.04"	
Normal month to date	0.46"	
Year to date	3.06"	
Last year to date	4.32"	
Normal year to date	2.97"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	59°	26°
Normals	57°	33°
Records	77° (2003)	11° (2009)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.04"	
Normal month to date	0.38"	
Year to date	1.12"	
Last year to date	0.38"	
Normal year to date	2.62"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Boardman	ENE 3-6	Sun. NE 4-8
Pendleton	N 4-8	NNE 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	6:11 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	5:58 p.m.	
Moonrise today	6:47 a.m.	
Moonset today	6:24 p.m.	

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 93° in Zapata, Texas Low -29° in Yellowstone N.P., Wyo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Walla Walla River South Fork bridge to be rebuilt

By SHEILA HAGAR  
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — The Burnt Cabin Trail bridge in Umatilla County is one of 29 projects that will benefit from a U.S. Forest Service grant.

About \$40 million will go to national forests in Oregon and Washington, under the Great American Outdoors Act, to address critical deferred maintenance issues and improve transportation and recreation infrastructure, said Darcy Weseman, spokesperson with the Umatilla National Forest.

The projects will provide more safety and better access for park visitors, she said.

The Burnt Cabin Trail Bridge is in the Walla Walla Ranger District. The 17-mile trail begins approximately 6 miles outside of Milton-Freewater, up the South Fork Walla Walla Trail. It provides access to hunting, fishing, camping and backpacking, and is used by hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers and motorcyclists.



U.S. Forest Service/Contributed Photo

The Burnt Cabin Creek Trail Bridge, closed in 2017, provides access to popular areas used by motorcyclists, hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers.

The bridge to get to the trail was built about 25 years ago with native log stringers that have deteriorated, Weseman said.

Concerns with the structure's stability forced officials to close access across the bridge in 2017. The spring trail begins approximately 6 miles outside of Milton-Freewater, up the South Fork Walla Walla Trail. It provides access to hunting, fishing, camping and backpacking, and is used by hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers and motorcyclists.

With the new funding, the bridge will be replaced this year to meet the original design specifications, restoring access to the popular trail, she said.

The funding is part of a \$285 million investment on national forests made possible by the newly created National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund, established in 2020 by the Great American Outdoors Act.

Nationally, the act will allow the Forest Service to implement more than 500 infrastructure improvement projects essential to the continued use and enjoyment of national forests lands this year, Weseman said.

## IN BRIEF

### Baker City man gets 15-year prison term for child porn

BAKER CITY — A former guard at the Powder River Correctional Facility, who has spent nearly a year behind bars at the Baker County Jail, will spend the next 15 years in prison after pleading guilty to child pornography charges on Tuesday, March 9, in Baker County Circuit Court.



Cernazanu

Judge Matt Shirtcliff sided with District Attorney Greg Baxter in taking the harsher end of a plea agreement that ranged from five years to 15 years in prison in sentencing David Leon Cernazanu.

As part of the agreement, Cernazanu, 49, pleaded guilty to three counts of second-degree encouraging child sexual abuse, a Class C felony.

Cernazanu will be given credit for time served and the ability to earn good time toward

earlier release while in prison.

A total of 62 other counts against Cernazanu were dismissed, including more serious charges of second-degree encouraging child sexual abuse, first-degree encouraging child sexual abuse, first-degree invasion of personal privacy, and using a child in sexually explicit conduct.

Cernazanu was ordered to complete three years of post-prison supervision upon release. Shirtcliff also ordered Cernazanu to complete sex offender treatment upon release and to register as a sex offender.

Baxter and Robert Moon, a Baker City attorney who was appointed to represent Cernazanu, each called witnesses to bolster their case. Baxter argued for the 15-year sentence. Moon called for a shorter prison term.

An audience of about 30 people, including law enforcement and mental health professionals, and victims and their family members, were in the courtroom during the two-hour hearing.

Cernazanu was arrested on April 24, 2020, at his Baker City home after an investigation.

—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.

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