

KEOL alumni reflect on value of college radio

By DICK MASON
La Grande Observer

LA GRANDE — Joe Garner of Ontario admitted the news hit him hard. Garner was jolted recently when he found out KEOL FM, Eastern Oregon University's student-run radio station since 1973, likely will be shut down in June at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

"I was heartbroken. I don't like it," said Garner, who served as KEOL's station manager and program director during portions of the time he worked at the radio station between 1985 and 1989.

The shutdown appears imminent after EOU's Student Fees Committee voted to defund KEOL, which is receiving \$33,481 from student incidental fees this school year to operate.

The committee, composed of EOU students, voted on Feb. 5 to take the step primarily due to a budget shortfall from declining enrollment. Other reasons the committee cited were low student participation and the belief that traditional broadcast radio is a fading industry in today's digital age.

Garner disagreed, saying, "There is still room for radio."

He said radio is going in a different direction today but it



Alex Wittwer/La Grande Observer

Eastern Oregon University reflects through the windows of the KEOL radio station room March 5, 2021. Several alumni have contacted EOU about how to keep the radio station alive following the announcement that it would be defunded at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

has a future, one he believes KEOL should be helping train students for.

"Radio needs good people, and Eastern can provide them," Garner said.

He said \$33,481 is a small price to pay for Eastern to give students a chance to be introduced to radio.

"When you go to college you want to be exposed to as many things as possible, to get a well-rounded education," Garner said. "It is important to get out of your comfort zone."

Lack of student partici-

partation was another factor in the Student Fee Committee's decision to defund the station, which EOU's student senate supported on March 5. The station has about four student disc jockeys, plus two paid student staff members. This is a far cry from the 1980s and 1990s when KEOL had enough disc jockeys to fill almost every three-hour time slot almost around the clock.

"We had about 100 DJs and they were on the air day and night," said Jack Kemp of Corvallis, a station manager at KEOL in the 1990s.

Garner has fond memories of what KEOL was like about 35 years ago.

"We rocked," he said.

He said there was an energy and excitement from students who had freedom to play all types of music during their three-hour shows.

"At any time you could hear something totally different," Garner said.

Garner himself had three shows on KEOL, and on each he played a different genre of music. He said at the time La Grande had significantly fewer radio stations than it

does today, which means listenership likely was higher. "We were entertaining the whole town," he said.

Leonard Hermens, who helped run KEOL in the early and mid-1980s, also said the station had a distinctive mix.

"It had its own variety and style, a variety not found on commercial stations," said Hermens, who now lives in Puyallup, Washington.

KEOL, which has been on the air since 1973, now runs out of the Hoke Union Building, but its earlier locations included the top floor of Eastern's library and an old cottage-type building just west of the library.

The station's locale was a popular meeting place for Eastern students from all parts of the United States and the world, said Kemp, now an online education media producer at the University of Oregon who earlier was the media engineer for Oregon State University's radio and television stations for 13 years.

"A radio station can bring students together like no other activity group can," he said.

Eastern's Student Fee Committee received requests for \$1.4 million in funding in 2021-22, but could allot only \$1.2 million because of the projected decline in incident-

tal fee revenue. This meant virtually all of the 20 organizations requesting money from the committee had their funding cut.

Kemp said despite the defunding, KEOL, which also is available via the internet, still has a future, either as an online student-run station or as a community station.

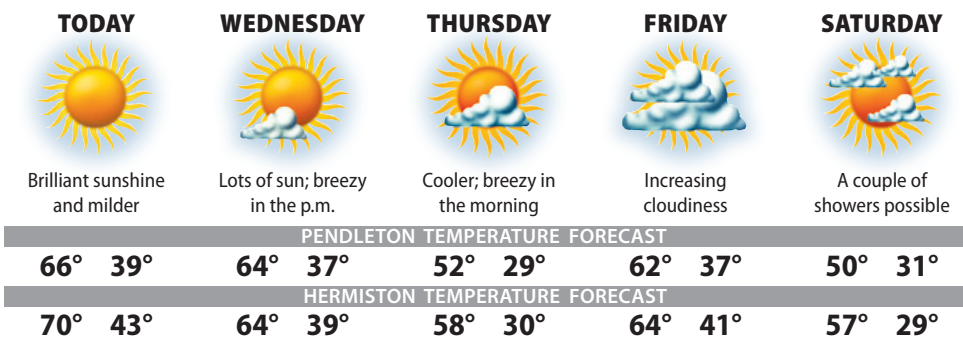
He said KEOL could continue operating online for significantly less money while adding vibrancy to the campus. It would have to do more than just play music, he said, and add local news and information about upcoming activities on campus.

"It would have to be a scene, one that is event-centered," Kemp said.

Tim Seydel, Eastern's vice president for university advancement, said since the reporting on KEOL defunding, many alumni have contacted EOU. Seydel said they have asked how they can help keep student radio alive at the university. He said a meeting of these individuals will be conducted to see what might be done. Seydel said many possibilities will be explored, including community radio, podcasts and livestreaming.

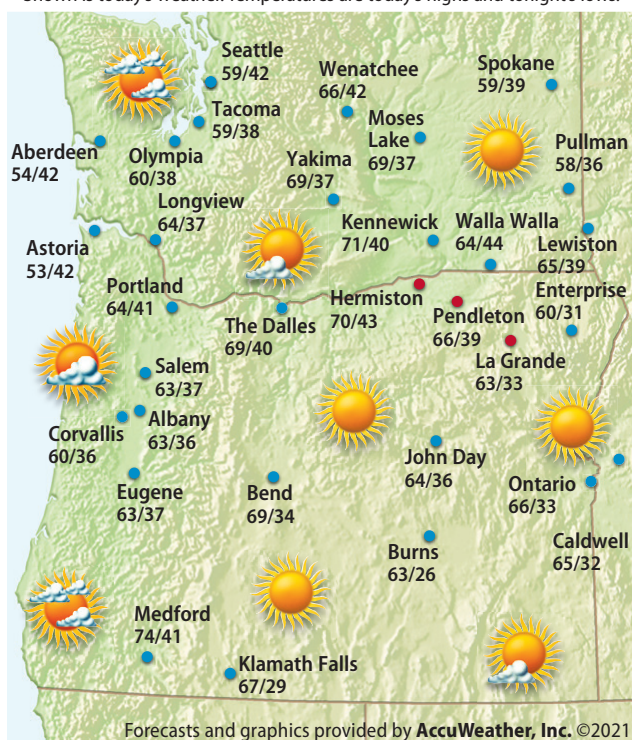
The EOU's Board of Trustees at its May 20 meeting considers approving the incidental fee budget.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



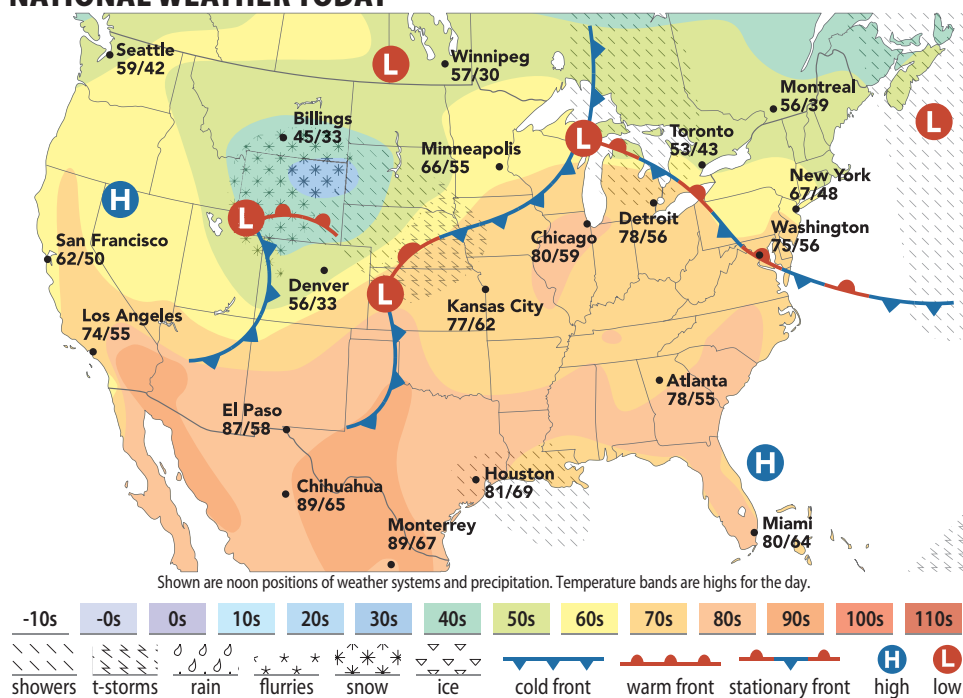
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	54°	30°	
Normals	59°	38°	
Records	81° (1952)	24° (1975)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace		
Month to date	Trace		
Normal month to date	0.22"		
Year to date	3.34"		
Last year to date	4.98"		
Normal year to date	4.18"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	59°	35°	
Normals	62°	38°	
Records	82° (1960)	21° (1975)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace		
Month to date	Trace		
Normal month to date	0.11"		
Year to date	1.20"		
Last year to date	0.48"		
Normal year to date	3.22"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	SW 6-12	WSW 10-20	
Pendleton	W 4-8	W 8-16	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	6:26 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	7:30 p.m.		
Moonrise today	4:35 a.m.		
Moonset today	1:51 p.m.		
New	First	Full	Last
Apr 11	Apr 19	Apr 26	May 3

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 99° in Lake Havasu, Ariz. Low 17° in Daniel, Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



An unusual season concludes for Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

NORTH POWDER — With skiers and snowboarders carving turns in fresh powder, feathery white clouds glittering in their wake, it was almost possible to forget there's a pandemic going on.

But though symbols of the viral scourge were evident this season at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort, the ski area bucked trends that affected other types of businesses by welcoming more visitors than the previous year, rather than fewer, said Anthony Lakes Marketing Director Chelsea Judy.

She didn't have specific numbers.

"We went into it without any expectations, but I would say it was definitely a successful season," Judy said on Wednesday, March 31. "People were grateful to be able to ski through a pandemic."

The ski area in the Elkhorn Mountains, about 19 miles west of North Powder, concluded a most unusual season on

Sunday, April 4.

Among the more notable differences this winter is that the ski area's lodge, except restrooms, was closed.

Visitors were still able to buy burgers and other food and beverages, and the "ski-thru" window proved popular, Judy said.

Food and beverages were also available on weekends from Creston's Yurt at the top of the chairlift.

Kcia Fletcher of Baker City, who skied about once a week this season at Anthony Lakes with her husband, Neil, and their sons, Ethan, Dawson and Oliver, said the ski area did "a great job" with outdoor seating.

Another change prompted by the pandemic is that skiers and boarders weren't required to ride in trios on the chairlift.

Although relatives and friends could ride together if they chose, Judy said most often there were two people per chair, and in some cases only one as a skier or boarder chose to ride alone.

This inevitably led to longer lines, and longer waits, at the bottom of the

mountain than are typical for Anthony Lakes, Judy said.

Still and all, she estimated the average wait was from 7-10 minutes, with around 15 minutes on busier days.

Fletcher said the lines were noticeable — but largely because waiting to get on the chairlift has previously been a rarity.

"We've been really spoiled at Anthony Lakes," she said. "It wasn't that bad."

Fletcher said lines were longer on weekends and on Thursdays following a heavy snowfall, when conditions were optimal.

Judy said the resort staff also followed a "zero-tolerance" policy requiring all visitors to wear face masks.

She said "nearly everyone" complied with the requirement, and that many appreciated the resort's effort to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

In any case, face coverings are often a welcome accessory at 8,000 feet during winter.

"So many people do ski with a face covering as it is," Judy said.

IN BRIEF

State agency opens investigation into deadly accident near Westfall

WESTFALL — The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health agency is investigating the deaths of two men near Westfall in March.

Aaron Corvin, a spokesman for the state agency, confirmed the investigation was ongoing but could not give any further details.

"We don't discuss the details or status of ongoing investigations," he said.

The state inquiry centers on the deaths of Greg Quant, 57, of Burns, and Roger Wheeler, 47, of Westfall, on March 12.

According to the Malheur County Sheriff Brian Wolfe, the two were at work on a creek

with a John Deere 25D excavator about 2 miles west of Westfall when the accident occurred.

"Quant was the operator of the machine and had been out of the machine and he was either getting in or getting out when somehow it engaged into gear and as a result both men were struck by the machine and killed," said Wolfe.

Wolfe said Wheeler was the ranch manager for the old Becker ranch near Westfall, while Quant worked for ACW Inc., a Hines construction firm.

Wolfe said the incident was a "freak accident." Both men, said Wolfe, died at the scene.

Corvin said death investigations can "take three to four months to complete."

— Malheur Enterprise

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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