

# Forest officials caution visitors ahead of holiday weekend

Some roads, trails and campgrounds remain closed or impassable due to snowfall

By **BRYCE DOLE**  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — As outdoor enthusiasts prepare to head to the mountains this Memorial Day weekend, Umatilla National Forest officials are cautioning that some roads, trails and campgrounds remain closed or impassable due to late-season snowfall.

A press release from the Umatilla National Forest reported some shaded areas and cutbanks on mountain roads still may have dense snow drifts that vehicles cannot pass, and most trails for hiking and cars have yet to be maintained. And some



Umatilla National Forest/Contributed Photo

**Umatilla National Forest officials now are working to prepare campsites and recreational areas at lower elevations for holiday weekend visitors.**

roads damaged during flooding events in February and May 2020 remain closed.

Officials now are working to prepare campsites and recreational areas at lower

elevations for holiday weekend visitors, the press release said.

“Our first focus is to address hazard tree removal and other safety issues before our campgrounds can open to the public,” Forest Recreation Program Manager Shane Dittlinger said in the press release.

Some campgrounds will be open during the holiday weekend with “clean-up and start-up” and other services limited, the press release said.

“Our seasonal workforce is still coming on so we’re working really hard with the limited number of employees we do have on staff,” added Dittlinger.

The Umatilla National Forest reported the following campgrounds will be open for the holiday weekend: Alder Thicket, Bear Wallow, Big Creek Meadows, Big Springs, Bull Prairie Lake, Coal-

mine Hill, Drift Fence, Driftwood, Divide Well, Fairview, Frazier, Forest Boundary, Gold Dredge, Ladybug, Lane Creek, Panjab, North Fork John Day, Oriental, Pataha, Penland Lake, Tollbridge, Tucannon, Welch Creek and Winom.

And these campgrounds remain closed: Godman, Jubilee Lake, Mottet, Midway, Misery, Olive Lake, Target Meadows, Teal Spring, Umatilla Forks, Wickiup, Woodward and Woodland.

Forest officials are urging visitors to contact their local ranger district before heading to the mountains to confirm where they plan to travel is open and accessible. Officials also are warning visitors to refrain from driving on wet or unstable ground and to keep an eye out for “pull-offs in rocky, well-drained areas,” the press release stated.

Visitors should be

cautious while maintaining a campfire and never leave one unattended. They also should pack extra food, water, clothing and emergency supplies and let people know where they are going and when they hope to be back because cellphone service in the mountains is limited, the press release said.

Motorists should obtain a Motorized Vehicle Use Map before heading to the mountains to ride all-terrain vehicles, the press release said.

Visitors are required to pay a nightly fee of between \$8 to \$24, with fees added for additional vehicles at a given campsite.

Reservations now can be made for campsites Bull Prairie Lake, Jubilee Lake, North Fork John Day and Olive Lake. All other campsites in the Umatilla National Forest, according to the press release, are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

## LOCAL BRIEFING



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

**A sign advertises the site of the new Radisson Hotel at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport in Pendleton on Wednesday, May 26, 2021.**

### Radisson attaches itself to airport hotel project

PENDLETON — The Minnesota-based Radisson Hotel Group Americas announced its affiliation with the 75-room hotel project in development at the Pendleton airport, according to a Tuesday, May 25, press release.

In the statement, Radisson called Pendleton a “quaint town” with a “booming tourism industry,” before highlighting the region’s outdoor recreation opportunities and the Pendleton Round-Up. “We are very excited to continue our momentum growing our exceptional portfolio of hotels in the West Coast, while building an amazing relationship with Makad Corp.,” Phil Hugh, Radisson chief development officer, said in a statement. “The international development expertise brought by Makad Corp. will make this hotel a true destination in Pendleton that is guaranteed to bring guests back time and again.”

Makad Corp., a Vancouver, Washington-based business, has been considering developing a hotel at the airport since 2015, but the project didn’t break ground until several weeks ago. When the city of Pendleton agreed to lease a former section of the airport parking lot to Makad Corp. for the hotel in 2018, local officials said the company had an agreement with a “global hotel franchise provider,” but the franchise wasn’t revealed at the time.

In the press release, Radisson stated the hotel will include a restaurant, bar, lounge, fitness center and meeting space.

“I am very proud of our integrated development team working closely with Radisson Hotel Group Americas and the city of Pendleton,” Makad Corp. CEO Elie Makad said in a statement. “Makad Corp. is committed to technology, green and alternative energy, hospitality, logistics and data collection and this hotel fits that perfectly.”

Makad Corp.’s development history in Eastern Oregon is mixed. While the company developed the River Lodge in Boardman,

other projects at the Port of Morrow either failed to get off the ground or got tied up in a lawsuit. Another Pendleton project proposed in 2015, a data center on the Airport Road extension, has yet to break ground.

### IMESD receives grant for Outdoor School site

PENDLETON — The InterMountain Education Service District has received a grant of \$25,000 from Gray Family Foundation’s Camp Maintenance Grant Program for improvements at the Outdoor School site, according to a press release.

The purpose of the grant is to address critical maintenance needs for the facility, including installation of stand-alone heat sources, updating entries and trails for accessibility, upgrading electrical panel and replacement of bunk beds and mattresses.

“Like any older camp, our Outdoor School site can always use repairs and upgrades, and we are very pleased that this grant will make a difference at our facility. We are very appreciative of the generosity of Gray Family Foundation toward our projects,” said Bob McMillan, Outdoor School coordinator for IMESD.

Nancy Bales, executive director of Gray Family Foundation, said the foundation recognizes the critical role the Outdoor School project will play in enhancing safe and accessible access for youth to outdoor residential facilities in Oregon and is pleased to partner with the education service district in supporting this work in fulfillment of their mission.

“Gray Family Foundation recognizes this year has had significant impact on the Oregon community. We believe your organization plays a critical role in the community you serve,” she said.

The Outdoor School site is on the north fork of the Umatilla River on the Umatilla National Forest near the Bar M Ranch. IMESD leases the 654-acre property from the U.S. Forest Service for Outdoor School programs for students of area school districts.

—EO Media Group

## Hermiston council approves industrial park contract

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The city of Hermiston is on its way to making the South Hermiston Industrial Park more “shovel ready” after city councilors awarded a bid for a \$1.6 million construction project at their Monday, May 24, meeting.

The project will extend Southeast Campbell Drive down to East Penney Avenue, pave an undeveloped right of way for Southeast 10th Street connecting to Highway 395, create a new road leading into Port of Umatilla-owned property, and add water and sewer lines in the area.

The council awarded the contract to Tapani, Inc. of Richland, Washington, which was the apparent low bidder of four bids.

“All four of these bids were within \$100,000,” Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said.

The city previously formed a local improvement district to help fund the project, which affects 20 property owners, Morgan said. A federal Economic Development Administration grant will pay for half of the project, the city and Umatilla County will cover 10% and property owners in the district, allocated by frontage, will pay the remaining 40%.

The council had been planning to pass amendments to the city’s sidewalk ordinance and an ordinance renewing the city’s franchise agreement with Cascade Natural Gas. But according to the city’s charter, at least five councilors out of the eight must vote for ordinances to pass, and only four councilors were present May 24.

The council did have enough people for a simple majority vote on the bid award and approval of a proposed wayfinding sign

program in Hermiston.

According to City Planner Clint Spencer, the sign program started with discussions about downtown parking lots, which are free to use but often underutilized as people don’t know where they are or who is allowed to park there. A plan to create a system of signs pointing people to free parking grew into a full-fledged wayfinding sign program that will use a system of coordinated, decorative signs to direct visitors around the city.

The proposal includes large signs marking entrances into Hermiston and downtown, pointing the way to attractions, providing informational kiosks and maps, marking trails and displaying the names of parks. Spencer said the city wants to make it easier for drivers to find common destinations for visitors, such as the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, Kennison Field and Good Shepherd

Medical Center.

Spencer said the estimated cost for every sign location on the list of possibilities is about \$805,000, but the project is meant to take place over five or more years and the city could choose to cut back on the number of signs as well. The city has \$48,000 in urban renewal dollars set aside for the fiscal year to take care of all the parking signage downtown.

The city also is redoing one of its parking lots, at the corner of East Gladys Avenue and Northeast Second Street. City Manager Byron Smith noted some businesses surrounding the lot will have their water or sewer service shut off for a day at a time during the project.

The resulting parking lot, he said, should provide better service, featuring 11 additional spaces, better paving, new landscaping, new lighting and two electric vehicle charging stations.

# NORMAL



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