

# EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 2021

145th Year, No. 103

WINNER OF THE 2020 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50

## Children's museum reopens play space

Silver lining includes upcoming 25th anniversary

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — After a 444-day closure because of the global pandemic, the Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon reopened June 1. Executive Director Joanna Engle now is focused on celebrating the museum's 25th anniversary later this year.

"It was a long haul for us," she said. "We just hunkered down and really appreciate the support of the community."

Sadly, she said, the Portland Children's Museum was not as fortunate. After 75 years, it recently shuttered its doors.

Engle, board president Kim Chavez-Sierra, and at-large member Chris Garrigues all agreed one of the saving graces was keeping expenditures at a minimum. The museum helped position itself 25 years ago to make it through lean times by buying its building.

"Having the foresight to purchase this building was a big factor," Engle said. "We didn't have a mortgage or rent. I think that was a huge part of us making it through."

In addition, Chavez-Sierra and Garrigues said Engle's leadership has been integral. Engle, who started at the museum in February 2017, came with three years experience at a children's museum, as well as previously serving as a consultant for nonprofit organizations.

"We are all the better for having her steadfast leadership," Chavez-Sierra said. "Her expertise has been essential in keeping us afloat and being able to reopen after 444 days."

Garrigues agreed, saying Engle began the process of evaluating costs, programming and planning even before the pandemic hit.

### Building for the future

Debbie McBee, who was the driving force behind the creation of the children's museum, said buying the building in the spring of 1997 was an example of the power of community partnerships and support. After looking at several buildings, McBee said Amy Aldrich Bedford approached her with an offer. The children's museum initially leased the old East Oregonian building until the sale was final.

"She showed us the old EO building — the current CMEO building — and agreed to sell it to

See Museum, Page A9



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

United Pendleton Pride founders Aiden Bork, left, and Noah Wallace speak to attendees during the Saturday, June 12, 2021, Proud Together Pride Parade in Pendleton.

# 'Love is greater than hate'

## Hundreds gather in downtown Pendleton for Proud Together Pride Parade

By BRYCE DOLE  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pride flags, drag queens and hundreds of people donning multi-colored clothing filled the streets of downtown Pendleton on Saturday, June 12, at the Proud Together Pride Parade supporting the LGBTQ community as part of Pride month.

The event, led by United Pendleton Pride, a group dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusivity in Umatilla County, began in Museum Park before attendees waltzed through the streets, carrying signs, singing and dancing while dozens more bystanders cheered from the sidewalks.

For many, the event showcased how far the community has come in recent years.

"It's been amazing," said Ryelynn Melton, a transgender American Indian girl, who transitioned over the past year. "I feel like you usually don't see this aspect of the community. Not many people know there's other LGBTQ members. And here you can just see everybody."

A 15-year-old student at Nixyaawii Community School, Melton became



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Marchers fill a section of Main Street in Pendleton on Saturday, June 12, 2021, as they march in the Proud Together Pride Parade to celebrate Pride.

the school's first-ever transgender prom princess this year. She sold homemade cupcakes and cookies to purchase the flowing red dress she wore at the June 12 event, where she rode through town on a truck at the front of the parade.

"It's beautiful, and it means the world," said Melton, an enrolled member of the Seminole tribe in Oklahoma. "And it shows all the support that younger people have and how our town is changing from being so conservative."

Early in the event, a handful of protesters carrying signs denouncing homosexuality

stood across the street before approaching attendees. Eventually, dozens of people made a wall and blocked off the protesters. They left soon after.

But aside from those brief hostilities, the event was joyful.

Drag queens danced around the park, swinging around flag poles in red stiletto boots. Pendleton Mayor John Turner gave a speech asking for tolerance and acceptance after a year of political divisiveness. Art McConville, an elder from the

See Pride, Page A9

## Patients put off preventative care during the pandemic

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — As newly vaccinated patients are resuming their normal preventative health care, some are finding those appointments they skipped during the pandemic have consequences.

Dr. Greg Jones, dentist for Fourth Street Dental in Hermiston, said he is seeing some patients for the first time in a long time.

"You could tell people had put stuff off," he said. "Cavities were a little bigger, cleanings had been skipped, some broken teeth could have been fixed sooner."

He also saw signs that people had been under additional stress, including an increase in cracked teeth, jaw pain and other side effects of people grind-

ing or clenching their teeth.

Jones said dentists in big cities where people are more cautious about COVID-19 still are seeing lower patient volumes, but in rural areas, appointments mostly have rebounded after dropping off in 2020. He said it wasn't uncommon last year for people to cancel an appointment at the last minute because they had been asked by the health department to quarantine, while other people decided they weren't comfortable with the risk of going in to the office.

"It was a little like a snow day, where some people don't leave their homes and other people drive around like it's no big deal," he said.

In Oregon, health care providers were directed to only provide



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Dr. Greg Jones, dentist for Fourth Street Dental in Hermiston, speaks with a patient prior to an exam Thursday, June 10, 2021. Jones said he has seen appointments rebound after dropping off in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

See Care, Page A9

