

# Hermiston sets sights on new east-west corridor

## Gettman Road/Railway Alternative Transportation Enhancement Project cost totals \$8.6 million

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The city of Hermiston is hoping to leverage some of its American Rescue Plan dollars to push the timeline up for a road project that would create a new east-west corridor through town.

Dubbed GRATE, which stands for Gettman Road/Railway Alternative Transportation Enhancement, the project is divided into four phases totaling \$8.6 million.

The first phase would pave the existing portion of Gettman Road, which runs along the southwestern edge of town near Armand Larive Middle School. The second phase would extend Gettman to Highway 395, creating a new connection between 395 and Highway 207. The third phase would replace and widen a bridge on Southeast 10th Street, and the fourth would rebuild and widen Northeast 10th Street, creating a better route from Gettman Road north to Highway 730.

The GRATE project has been listed in the city's capital improvement plan as a wish list item without a defined timeline, but Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said the city is seeing an opportunity to tap into several new funding sources, including American Rescue Plan stimulus funding from the state and the Community Project Funding that will allow members of Congress to earmark funds for local projects.

Congressional delegates and state legislators have been reaching out to cities in their districts, Morgan said, and "this is one we've been pressing as our top priority."

The Umatilla County

Board of Commissioners, Hermiston School District leaders and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have written letters of support for the project, noting it will relieve congestion in town. The CTUIR wrote that extending Gettman Road would make it easier to plan efficient routes for the HART bus system run by Kayak Public Transit in Hermiston.

For the school district, Armand Larive Middle School and Desert View Elementary School are right off Gettman Road. But a provision of building Armand Larive was that the district could not send school buses

down Gettman Road until it is paved, which sends buses on a long detour that increases traffic near Hermiston High School at its busiest times of day.

"Not only does this additional mileage increase greenhouse gas emissions, but the crossing which they must utilize routes them through the heavily congested intersection of (South First Street and Highland Avenue)," Superintendent Tricia Mooney wrote.

Paving and extending Gettman would create a straight shot from the Mid Columbia Bus company barn on Airport Road to the two schools.

Morgan said the south-east area where Gettman Road is located continues to grow, and has capacity for 300 to 400 more single-family homes, without counting a large acreage off Highway 207 and Feedville Road that developers through the years have expressed interest in turning into a subdivision of up to 1,000 homes.

"There's a pretty significant potential for housing growth there," he said.

The GRATE project could help support that growth, he said, and relieve congestion on Highland Avenue and Elm Avenue, the city's other east-west corridors that run the length of town.

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### IMESD cancels Children's Rodeo

PENDLETON — The Round-Up is back on for 2021, but at least one of its associated events is taking a second year off.

In a press release, the InterMountain Education Service District announced it was canceling the Children's Rodeo in 2021, the year after the entire Round-Up was canceled due the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the state is lifting COVID-19 restrictions as vaccinations continue to rise, many of the children brought to the Children's Rodeo are medically fragile and all are too young to be eligible for the vaccine.

"We regret having to cancel this event again, but know this is the right decision for our medically fragile students," IMESD Superintendent Mark Mulvihill said in a statement. "Although our lives are returning to a regular schedule after the pandemic, we are proceeding cautiously and methodically in order to be safe."

Founded in 1984, the Children's Rodeo typically takes place on the Thursday of Round-Up week on the arena grass. Special needs children from ages 5-10 get to play the role of cowboy or cowgirl for a day as they participate in activities like horseback riding and roping.

Mulvihill anticipates the Children's Rodeo returning in 2022.

### Umatilla County announces 87th COVID-19 death

PENDLETON — Umatilla County Public Health in a press release Wednesday, June 16, announced the county's 87th COVID-19-related death.

The victim is a 91-year-old man who tested positive on June 10 and died four days later at Juniper House Assisted Living Community, Pendleton. The health department did not report if the man had underlying conditions.

The disclosure comes as the health department reported 13 new COVID-19 cases, raising the county's total case count to 8,543 since the pandemic began.

### Pendleton fire chief elected to statewide board

PENDLETON — The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association elected Pendleton Fire Chief Jim Critchley to its board of directors, according to a Monday, June 14, press release from the city of Pendleton.



Critchley

The association is a group dedicated to the education, organization and engagement for fire departments and emergency services across the state.

Pendleton hired Critchley in 2018 after a 29-year-career with the fire department in Tucson, Arizona, the last six years spent as its fire chief.

### Irrigon plans to pave new paths

IRRIGON — The city of Irrigon plans to use state and grant funding to improve two biking and walking paths this summer, according to a press release.

The first project, called the Division Street Multi-Modal Path Project, began on Tuesday, June 15, according to the press release. The city plans to pave a 10-foot path on the west side of Division between U.S. Highway 730 and Southeast Wyoming Avenue for bicyclists, walkers and students to travel safely along the west side of Division Road.

Funding for the project is coming from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, the Oregon Department of Transportation's capital improvement plan, the press release said.

A Small City Allotment grant from ODOT is funding

the second project, which will begin in August, the press release said. The city plans to pave a biking and walking path along Southeast Idaho Avenue from Southeast Division Street down to Southeast Fourth Street and up to Highway 730.

According to the press release, the second project also will be "in preparation for the future U.S. 730 Sidewalk project in 2022."

### BEO says farewell to Gary Prophter

HEPPNER — Gary Prophter recently retired from the Bank of Eastern Oregon, after a nearly 50-year career in banking.

Prophter joined the bank in September 2006, as EVP and chief operations officer, according to Jeff Bailey, president and CEO of Bank of Eastern Oregon.

"Gary has been instrumental in the growth of our bank from 11 branches and one loan production office, in 2006, to our current structure of 20 branches and five loan offices in three different states," Bailey said. "Gary has made sure that we have remained up to date on technological resources, not only for our customers, but also for our employees."

On behalf of the employees and directors of the bank, Bailey thanked Prophter for his years of service and wishes him well in retirement. Prophter said it's been particularly rewarding to spend the final chapter of his banking career with a truly community-based bank.

"The culture that our employees have created and their support of the local communities where we do business has been a highlight of my career," he said. "I have truly enjoyed my time with the bank and look forward to watching its continued success for years to come."

For more about the Bank of Eastern Oregon, visit [www.beobank.com](http://www.beobank.com) or contact [dwagner@beobank.com](mailto:dwagner@beobank.com).

—EO Media Group

# Happy Canyon, Round-Up announce kickoff concert act

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Happy Canyon and Round-Up have found an act for their reopening kickoff.

In a press release, the two organizations announced they were hiring Grammy-nominated country singer Billy Currington to take the stage at Happy Canyon Arena on Sept. 11.

The press release touted his 11 No. 1 singles, including "Don't Hurt Like It Used To," "That's How Country Boys Roll" and "Pretty Good at Drinkin' Beer." A Georgia native, Currington grew up listening to Waylon Jennings, Kenny Rogers and Willie Nelson.

In a statement, both Happy Canyon President Tanner Hawkins and Round-Up President Randy Bracher expressed excitement at booking Currington.

"Billy Currington has a great combination of high-energy crowd pleasers and relatable ballads that will



Jack Plunkett/The Associated Press, File

**Billy Currington performs at the iHeartCountry Festival at the Frank Erwin Center on May 5, 2018, in Austin, Texas. Currington will take the stage at Happy Canyon Arena Sept. 11, 2021, for the kickoff concert to the Pendleton Round-Up.**

connect with so many different people," Bracher said. "He's a great fit to kick off the week after such a crazy year."

The Round-Up, Happy Canyon and all of their associated events were canceled last year during the COVID-19 pandemic, the first time Pendleton didn't host its signature rodeo since World War II.

The Round-Up spent 2020 raising money for businesses and organizations affected

by the rodeo's cancellation and quickly committed to a comeback event in 2021. With COVID-19 restrictions beginning to ease across the state, Gov. Kate Brown has repeatedly expressed confidence that the Round-Up will meet its goal.

Tickets will go on sale June 24 at 10 a.m., with prices ranging from \$46 to \$150. Tickets can be purchased at [www.pendletonroundup.com](http://www.pendletonroundup.com) or by calling 541-612-3421.



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## PENDLETON HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1970

Come celebrate our 50th-51st reunion on August 20th & 21st!

**Friday, August 20 • 6:30-10pm**  
**no-host social at Hamley's Restaurant patio**

**Saturday, August 21st**  
**Social 5-6:30pm followed by BBQ**  
**Sundown Bar & Grill (formerly Raphael's) 233 SE 4th St.**  
BBQ beef brisket and chicken dinner with sides and sweet treats.  
No host bar, and recorded music after dinner for dancing.  
Dinner is \$35 per person. Please send a check with the names of attendees to Pendleton High School Class of 1970,  
c/o Chris Henson Woodard, 12115 SW Bowmon St., Portland, OR 97225.  
We don't have information yet about a class photo.

Please email Chris at [woodardch@comcast.net](mailto:woodardch@comcast.net) with any updates.

Please visit and JOIN our class Facebook page:  
**Pendleton High School Class of 1970.**

Reunion organizers also are looking for accurate contact information for the following classmates (\*some emails have been bouncing):

Andy Ely, Bob Blanc, Barbara Clark Hoffman, Betty Schiller Hammond, Bob Branstetter, Bob Thomas, Brent Medonich, Bruce Marker, Brenda Kuhlmann Davis, Byron Murphy, Carl Culham, Carol Allen, Carol Noel Furlong, Carolyn Sebastian, Cathy Christopher, Charles Rowell, Cheri Hall Svoboda, Cherie Smith Coonce, Cris Cesarino, Christine Brown, Cindy Dickenson, Cindee Glennie, Connie Cogan, Connie McCormack, Dale Bruner, Dale Tinhofer, Dan Foreman, Dan Swart, Dave Lemke, Dave Michael, Davis Wallis, Debbie Perkins, Debby Wohlford Reber, Deborah Gentner, Debra Toronto, Dick Vorseith, Don Hammond, Don Olsen, Donna Turner Sisk, Doug Doyle, Doug Haynie, Ed Elam, Eric Ewing, Evan Mayer, Frank Stump, Frank Reed, Gary Galenbeck, Gary Mullin, George Peck, Gloria Richardson Flint, Greg Gorham, Jim Lytton, Jamie Sands, Jan Lilly Cook, Janet Littlefield, Janette Roberts Sparhawk, Janis Foster, Jayne Clarke, Jean Hatch Donais, Jean Nooy, Jeanine Smith Hoelf, Jim Gorgor, Joan Oylear Hiaberton, Joanie Roettger, Jody Pastora Kipp, John Bullock, John Kaufman, Karen Johnson, Karen Walder Wilson, Karlene Cunningham/Bob Smith, Kathi Ruff Cresswell, Kathy Anderson Hartley, Kathy Healy Mayhew, Kathy Herndon Tucker, Kathy Lindi Simpson, Kathy Moffa O'Connor, Kathy Sutter Hare, Kay, Allen Baker, Kay Rauch Bailey, Kelly Wilson, Keith Bierman, Kiffa Page Anderson, Kris Bye Redin, Lana Fulton, Larry Hicks, Larry Spino, Linda Beck Petersen, Linda Gibbs Bullock, Linda Harrel Pickett, Linda Tester Foster, Liz Boyd, Lois Goe, Lorna Koski, Lyle Greene, Lyn Bonbright, Lynn York Graham, Madelon Johnson Barham, Margaret Palmer Westersund, Marie Bariletti Roberts, Marie Masters, Marilyn Cobb Morton, Marjorie Davis, Marlene Maloney, Meralie Weatherman Davis, Mike Tucker, Mike Watson, Nelson Billy, Nick Skillman, Pam Olsen Miller, Pat Kelly Courtney, Paul Brown, Paula Robinson Kemp, Phyllis Fuller Fisher, Randy Cummings, Randy Smith, Ric Hendricks, Richard Livingston, Rick Brown Rita Shuman Chocharne, Robert Smith, Rod Anderson, Roger Dumbbeck, Ron Meyers, Ron Simmons, Sandra Cleveland, Allen, Sandy Carlson Hatl, Sandy Schiewe Macomber, Shari Kamm, Shellie Hyatt Patterson, Sherie Hoyl Dobyns, Sherry Draper, Stan Gardner, Stan Goldsby, Steve Penner, Terri Meredith, Terry Baird, Terry James, Teresa Farrow, Tom McGill, Trudy Lay Harsin, Vicki Jones Horn Haldley, Wade McDougall, Wayne Salmon.