

Work begins on Blue Mountain Scenic Byway

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Contractors have begun prep work to chip seal 33.6 miles of the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway on the North Fork John Day Ranger District. This project is one of two projects on the Umatilla National Forest that was funded this year through the Great American Outdoors Act.

Work will be ongoing for approximately four weeks and includes cleaning the road surface, sealing cracks in the road and patching potholes, according to a press release from the Umatilla National Forest. Contractors then will chip seal the entire road. Construction crews are moving equipment on-site this week and stockpiling gravel. The chip seal is anticipated to begin Monday, Aug. 16.

The construction work will require periodic delays along the full length of the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway with flaggers and



U.S. Forest Service staff in 2013 discovered the Burnt Cabin Creek Trail Bridge was deteriorating in the Umatilla National Forest's Walla Walla Ranger District. The forest is receiving funds to replace the bridge.

U.S. Forest Service/Contributed Photo

complete. Construction signs will be posted at each end of the project and as needed in work zones.

The Blue Mountain Scenic Byway is a popular 145-mile route that travels from near Arlington to Gran-

ite. This road also is a major portal to the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests, offering opportunities for scenic views and recreation.

“The deferred maintenance on this portion of the road will reduce risk to public safety and extend the life of this scenic route for 10-20 years,” according to the Umatilla National Forest.

This project is part of the investment of up to \$40 million in 2021 for 29 projects on national forests in Oregon and Washington through the Great American Outdoors Act, intended to address critical deferred maintenance and improve transportation and recreation infrastructure. Nationally, the funds 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.

In addition to the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway chip seal project, the Umatilla National Forest received funding to replace the Burnt Cabin Trail Bridge on the Walla Walla Ranger District. Implementing both projects this year will provide safe and enhanced visitor access through these areas of the Umatilla National Forest. The projects also will support local employment opportunities and strengthen shared stewardship of national forests and grasslands by expanding the Forest Service work with public and private partners.

Additional projects may be implemented on the Umatilla National Forest and will be announced as funding is allocated. The forest also will continue to share updates on these GAOA projects as construction begins.

For more information on these projects in the Pacific Northwest Region, visit the regional GAOA website.

Additional information about the Umatilla National Forest is available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla>.



Marvin Hamilton/Contributed Photo

Rogers Toyota of Hermiston recently made a donation to area foster families through the Department of Human Services Child Welfare program. Pictured, from left, are Erica Baker, TJ Valdez, Jose Camarena, Luis Camarena, Marvin Hamilton, Glenn Silaski, Raymond Aguilar, A.J. Garcia, Stevan Coon and Irydiana Zapata.

Not just cars, but cares

Rogers Toyota makes donation to area foster families

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Rogers Toyota of Hermiston recently made a \$2,000 donation to help area foster families.

The money was recently presented to Marvin Hamilton, a recruitment and retention champion for District 9 and 12 (which includes Umatilla and Morrow counties) of the Department of Human Services Child Welfare program. The donation, Hamilton said, will go to the foster parent and child welfare fund. It will be used for the retention of resource homes, event funding and other needs of resource families.

“These funds is what district 12 ODHS office relies on when it comes to purchases of items that are not part of state approved funding but helps the reten-

tion and welfare of resource families,” he said.

For example, Hamilton said, every year there is a Umatilla and Morrow county resource parent appreciation dinner. The special dinner is held to recognize the resource families. He said the event expenses add up with renting the hall, catering and entertainment.

“The funds to have such a dinner is a result of community donations and fundraising within the department,” Hamilton said.

Rogers Toyota is no stranger to helping the children of Umatilla and Morrow counties, Hamilton said. In addition to donations, they have hosted past fundraisers.

In early April, Hamilton approached Glenn Silaski, the dealership’s general manager, about a donation to the child welfare program to provide community support for the children and families in the area. Hamilton said Silaski saw an opportunity to do more than just a simple in-house fundraiser.

In a November 2019

interview, Silaski said the company encourages a spirit of community and giving.

“They’re our kids too,” Silaski said about area foster children. “We just believe strongly in helping kids’ programs to help them grow up to be a part of the community.”

Silaski rallied his professional sales team and with every car that was sold, a percentage was earmarked for child welfare. The sales staff energetically sold vehicles but with the lingering impacts of COVID-19, there weren’t as many people interested in buying a car.

Pressing toward their goal to help area foster families, the Rogers Toyota sales team raised \$1,000. Silaski and his crew didn’t stop there, they asked their corporate office to match what they had raised to double the amount donated, which brought the total to \$2,000.

Contact community writer Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4532.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Fundraiser to benefit Hermiston police lieutenant

HERMISTON — A fundraiser to benefit Lt. Randy Studebaker of the Hermiston Police Department will feature dinner, an auction and live music.

In May, Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston shared that Studebaker had undergone a procedure to remove two brain tumors after he sought medical attention because of vision problems. Both Studebaker and his wife, Shelly, who works for the Pendleton Police Department, are off work for an undetermined amount of time. In addition, medical equipment and alterations to their home are needed to accommodate Studebaker’s current mobility issues. Event organizers hope to help ease financial stress so Studebaker can focus on his health and recovery.

The 21-and-older benefit event is Saturday, Aug. 21, beginning at 6 p.m. at Chute 8 at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo Arena at Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston. A tri-tip dinner is being catered by Tom Spoo and Tim Mears.



Studebaker



Hermiston Chamber of Commerce/Contributed Photo
CMG Financial won the Farm-City Pro Rodeo billboard contest, which is in the parking lot at Desert Lanes Family Fun Center, Hermiston.

Beer and wine will be served by Neighbor Dudes Tap House. The event also features a silent auction and a live auction with Ford Auctions. Zac Grooms & Friends are the featured entertainment.

For tickets, which are \$30, visit www.teamstudebaker.com. They must be purchased by Aug. 15.

In addition, donations are being accepted at Banner Bank and can also be made via venmo. For questions, call 541-720-5415 or email marci.studebaker@gmail.com.

Local businesses lasso wins with Farm-City contest

HERMISTON — The winners of the Farm-City Pro Rodeo “2021 We’re Back” window painting and billboard/banner contest have been announced. Local

businesses were invited to participate in the contest by submitting a photo of their entry.

Banner Bank won the window painting contest and will receive a full box seat for Friday night’s rodeo performance. The decoration can be viewed on the bank’s windows along the 100 block of East Main Street, in Hermiston.

And CMG Financial won the billboard contest and will receive a full box for Thursday’s rodeo. The billboard is in the parking lot at Desert Lanes Family Fun Center, 1545 N. First St., Hermiston.

The Farm-City Pro Rodeo runs Wednesday through Saturday, Aug. 11-14, at 7:45 p.m. at the arena at Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center. For tickets, which are \$17-\$20, visit www.farm-cityprorodeo.com or call 541-564-8500.

—EO Media Group

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