

Downtown bank building redevelopment concept resurfaces

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The city of Pendleton is revisiting a redevelopment proposal for the old bank building on South Main Street with Oregon real estate scion Jordan Schnitzer.

Entitled “P Trailhead Building 7-15-21,” the digital document obtained by the East Oregonian sketches out a concept for the building at 256 S. Main St. that would turn it into a mixed-use crafting and display space for artists and artisans.

“Often, the Indians and cowboys come from such different backgrounds and cultures, but they bonded by the art of creation,” an undated memo states. “In some instances, they are the last of their kind, keeping alive a dying art, and far too often high commercial rents and limited space availability keep them hidden in their homes and inside street workshops, unable to share their amazing work with the masses. The Guild Building would strive to cure that problem, carrying their creative gifts out of their garage workshops and backroom studios, and onto Pendleton’s Historic Main Street, so each year tens of thousands can see them work and purchase their creations.”

Alternatively referred to as “The Trailhead Building” and the “Jordan Schnitzer Western Guild Building,” the concept includes a “local makers incubator,” a bistro,



The East Oregonian obtained this digital rendering of the “Jordan Schnitzer Western Guild Building” that shows possible renovations to the former Wells Fargo bank building at 256 S. Main St., Pendleton.

Seder Architecture + Urban Design/Contributed image

outdoor parklets for dining and vacation rental spaces. Rental costs for the artists and craftspeople would be set only to cover the cost of utilities and maintenance, and they would be allowed to keep all the proceeds from a sale of their work while also agreeing to

work in the building for a certain number of hours.

The document also includes renderings, dated December 2020, from Seder Architecture + Urban Design, a Portland architecture firm that also wrote zoning plans for the concept. The document

didn’t include a cost estimate for the project or whether the city would acquire the property from Schnitzer as a part of the plan. City Manager Robb Corbett declined to comment, citing active negotiations, and Harsch Investment Properties, Schnitzer’s real estate

company, didn’t provide comment as of press time.

A former Wells Fargo, the building had gone mostly unused for years before Schnitzer bought the property for \$152,000 in 2016. An art collector and philanthropist, Schnitzer has supported local art organizations like the Pendleton Center for the Arts and Crow’s Shadow Institute of the Arts on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Upon purchasing the building, Schnitzer also told the East Oregonian he was a longtime fan of the Round-Up who attended the rodeo frequently.

Schnitzer promised to fill the space with something that would benefit the community, but save for some pop-up galleries and shops, the space has remained empty. A public working space for artists and artisans was floated previously in 2019 by Jeff Lorton, the owner of a local advertising firm. Referred to as the “Western Arts Gallery” at the time, Lorton shared the concept at a Pendleton City Council meeting.

“It’s a gallery space dedicated to the celebration, and the perpetuation, or the continuation of the Western traditional arts manufacturing in downtown Pendleton and its surrounding areas,” he told the council. “This would be a gallery that would celebrate silver artists, bit and spur engravers, leather workers of all kinds.”

At the time, Harsch did not directly comment on Lorton’s pitch.

Umatilla County: 100th COVID-19 death

County last week reported highest weekly case count since the start of pandemic

By BRYCE DOLE
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Umatilla County reached a grim pandemic milestone this week — 100 reported COVID-19 deaths.

The county so far reported four COVID-19 deaths this week. One of the victims was just 29 years old, the county reported Tuesday, Aug. 17.

Joe Fiumara, the county’s public health director, said the victim had underlying health conditions.

The disclosure comes as the county reported 85 new COVID-19 cases on Aug. 18. The county continues to report pandemic-high case counts and hospitalizations amid the delta crisis sweeping Oregon.

“COVID continues to wreak havoc in Umatilla County, in Oregon, and across the nation as the Delta variant and perhaps other

new strains pick up steam to demonstrate just how aggressive they are,” Commissioner George Murdock said in an Aug. 17 email. “At the same time, citizens are demonstrating COVID fatigue and are drawing a line in the sand over vaccinations.”

The county last week reported 512 cases, its highest weekly total since the pandemic started in March 2020, according to the Oregon Health Authority. As of Aug. 16, the county averaged nearly 77 cases per day over the past week, also a pandemic record, state data show, and the county’s case rate and positive test rate are more than double the state average.

The 29-year-old woman tested COVID-19-positive July 29 and died Aug. 10 at Mid Columbia Medical Center, The Dalles. She is one of the youngest deaths the county has reported since the pandemic began. Public health and hospital officials, locally and nationally, say young people are developing severe cases of COVID-19 more often because of the delta variant, and some have

few to no underlying health conditions.

“It something we’re seeing here, and something we’re hearing happen across the county,” Fiumara said.

Last week, the state reported a 35-year-old Morrow County woman and a 19-year-old Union County woman died with COVID-19. The 19-year-old was Oregon’s fourth resident younger than 20 to die with COVID-19 since the pandemic began.

The second victim reported Aug. 17 is an 82-year-old woman who tested positive Aug. 3 and died Aug. 14 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston. She had unspecified underlying health conditions, the county reported.

The third is an 87-year-old woman who tested positive July 29 and died Aug. 8 at Willowbrook Terrace, a nursing home in Pendleton. She had unspecified underlying health conditions, the county reported.

The county’s 100th reported COVID-19 death is an 82-year-old woman who tested positive Aug. 12 and

died two days later at Good Shepherd. The county has yet to determine if she had underlying health conditions.

Umatilla County health officials are expecting to report more COVID-19 deaths — as typically happens after a surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations — but “we just don’t know how many yet,” Fiumara said.

The newly reported deaths come as hospitals across the state and county fill will COVID-19 patients. Officials have voiced concerns that local hospitals could be overrun with patients if the latest pandemic surge does not diminish soon.

Some hospitals are finding it difficult or nearly impossible to transfer patients to other hospitals for a higher level of care due to the latest surge because regional hospitals are at, or near, capacity. As of Aug. 18, only four intensive care unit beds were available for hospitals across Region 9, an area that encompasses Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Baker and Malheur counties, according to the state.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Woman injured in crash; swerved to avoid elk near Weston

WESTON — A woman suffered minor injuries after her vehicle rolled off a highway near Weston recently while trying to avoid hitting an elk, Oregon State Police reported.

According to a crash report from OSP, Darien L. Wise, 23, whose city of residence was not provided, was driving early Thursday, Aug. 12, on Highway 204 on the Weston Mountain grade about 3 miles east of Weston when an elk entered the roadway.

Wise swerved to avoid the animal and her Toyota Camry left the pavement and rolled onto its top.

According to the report, Wise suffered minor injuries and her vehicle was damaged and had to be towed by Taylor Towing of Pendleton.

Additional mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus in Morrow County

MORROW COUNTY — West Nile virus, which is spread by mosquitoes, has been detected in six additional mosquito pools captured Wednesday, Aug. 11, from various testing sites in the rural areas of Boardman and Irrigon, according to a press release from Oregon State University’s Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

The new cases brings the total number of West Nile positive pools to 13, the release said.

“All affected areas were treated with our truck mounted aerosol units and retrapped to collect mosquito pools,” Greg Barron, manager of control district, said in a press release. “Mosquito pools will be shipped for testing at the Oregon State University Diagnostic Laboratory on Aug. 18. The district is preparing for an aerial spray mission on the night of Aug. 22.”

The West Nile virus was first detected in seven mosquito pools collected on the night of Aug. 3. The pools were collected in the east rural Boardman area.

“We are advising people in Morrow County to take precautions against mosquitoes to avoid the risk of infection, including preventing mosquito bites,” Barron said. “West Nile virus is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.”

— EO Media Group and Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

Morrow County SD hires new leaders

East Oregonian

HEPPNER — The Morrow County School District has a trio of new administrators for the 2021-22 school year.

The district in a press release on Tuesday, Aug. 17, announced the hires.

Erin Stocker, executive director of human resources, said the leadership and skill set within the district continues to be a source of amazement.

“These new administrators bring with them proven track records of being student-first educators, as well as the willingness to take on new challenges,” Stocker said in the press release. “I look forward to the upcoming school year for Morrow County School District with the addition of these leaders to our team.”

Vice principal, Sam Boardman Elementary

Jami Carbray is the new vice principal at Sam Boardman Elementary School. Carbray has an extensive background in education, which spans more than 25 years. Her teaching background includes 20 years in primary grades as a classroom teacher and as a literacy intervention specialist for five years. A Boise State

University graduate, Carbray has two master’s degrees, one with an emphasis in math and reading from Walden University and an education specialist degree in building leadership and administration from Northwest Nazarene University.

She recently relocated from Nampa, Idaho, to Boardman. “I am eager to learn all about Morrow County School District and the community of Boardman,” Carbray said.

Vice principal, Riverside Jr./Sr. High School

Steve Sheller is the new vice principal at Riverside. He has 20 years of teaching experience in math, science and photography, and previously worked in the Hermiston and Morrow County school districts as a teacher.

Sheller received his master’s in educational administration from Grand Canyon University. For the last three years, he was the principal at Stanfield Secondary School. During that time, Sheller and staff focused on

improving graduation rates and implementing highly effective teaching strategies. As a result, Stanfield’s graduation rate exceeded 94%, which was an improvement of more than 10%.

“I am excited to work with the students, administrative team and staff at Riverside Jr./Sr. High School,” Sheller said. “Go Pirates!”

Special education coordinator and vice principal, Morrow

Education Center

Marissa Turner, a long-time MCS D special education teacher, will be stepping into the role of special education coordinator and vice principal at the Morrow Education Center. Turner has 10 years of teaching experience at MCS D, all in special education and encompassing kindergarten through 12th grade, including life skills and alternative school. In addition to her K-12 special education experience, she has a strong background in behavior protocols and working with classroom



Turner



Sheller



Carbray

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1:50p 5:10p 8:30p

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The CTUIR Needs YOU to provide input on its Strategic Energy Plan

Help shape the Energy Vision and future of energy management for the CTUIR by completing this anonymous 10-minute survey by **Monday, Aug. 23:** <https://bit.ly/CTUIREnergy>

Background Information
The CTUIR is developing a Strategic Energy Plan. The plan will serve as a tool for the CTUIR to use in achieving energy goals in both the near- and long-term by integrating energy, environmental, economic development, and community interests in the same way that a business might create a vision and a business model around sustainability. As a starting point, this survey asks for your feedback on energy priorities.

For more information about the CTUIR Strategic Energy Plan, please visit: <https://ctuir.org/news/CTUIR-Strategic-Energy-Plan-Survey/>