

Cemetery Walk brings history to life

By **BEN LONERGAN**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Olney Cemetery came alive Friday, Oct. 8 and Saturday, Oct. 9, as costumed performers portraying characters of Pendleton's early days stood beside their tombstones and welcomed guests to the Olney Cemetery Walk.

"It went so much better than I could've hoped," said library assistant Heather Culley. "It was just full and everybody had a good time."

Actors enthusiastically played Pendleton's residents of yesteryear, including Nancy Despain, Aura Goodwin Raley, Hank Vaughan, Dorothy Lampkin Engle, Frederick Lampkin and Lot Livermore.

Culley lead a group of attendees between the various characters and added information about the era and those involved. She said roughly 90 people took part in the tours over the two days they were run and she hopes to be able to expand the program even larger next year.

"I hope to do this every year," she said.

The Pendleton Public Library put on the event with help from Pendleton Parks & Recreation, Heritage Station Museum and Pendleton Underground Tours.

Next year, Culley said, she hopes to be able to add more characters, including Umatilla County Sheriff Til Taylor. She said she is seeking an actor on horseback to play the part.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Karin Power portrays Nancy Despain for a crowd Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021, at Olney Cemetery in Pendleton as part of the Historic Olney Cemetery Walk, which brings some of Pendleton's history to life.

Culley said the original idea was for a haunted cemetery event, but concerns over respecting those interred at Olney Cemetery lead herself and others at the library to get more creative and the Historic Olney Cemetery Walk was born.

"We just did colorful historical characters from Pendleton's past," said Culley. "It was a lot better than I could've even dreamed."

As former library director Mary Finney stood beside the headstone of Aura Goodwin Raley, she recited tales of the early days of Pendleton. Goodwin Raley, who lived from 1829-1913, is often regarded as the "mother of Pendleton" after she and her husband Moses Goodwin

donated land for the original town plat, a cemetery, the courthouse and college.

"I chose Aura because I know she was one of the early persons," said Finney. "I think when you study their life you realize what a hardship — what deprivations they go through and you cannot do anything but really be awed by what they went through."

Finney explained to attendees the experiences of Goodwin Raley's life including her travels on the Oregon Trail and the role she played in the early years of the town.

"It's quite an honor," she said of the experience. "I hope I've gotten most of it right"

Prescribed burns to start in Umatilla National Forest

The Observer

PENDLETON — Prescribed burns are set to begin soon in the Umatilla National Forest.

The prescribed burns may start this month depending upon weather conditions and could impact camping and hunting opportunities in several portions of the forest, according to a U.S. Forest Service press release.

All road and trail closures associated with prescribed burns will go into effect prior to their starts. Prescribed burns typically take two to five days to complete. Hunters are advised to plan ahead and avoid camping in the designated prescribed burn areas during this year's upcoming hunting seasons.

The prescribed burns will be conducted because frequent, low-intensity fire is essential for healthy forests and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire caused by excessive fuel buildup, according to the press release. Prescribed burning is an effective tool for removing excessive amounts of brush, shrubs, and trees, while also encouraging the growth of native vegetation, according to the press release.

Prescribed burning also is highly dependent on weather conditions. The weather must be within a narrow criteria before prescribed burns can be conducted. Factors such as wind speed and direction, temperatures, relative humidity and fuel moisture are all

taken into consideration prior to starting a prescribed burn operation. The current rains and moderate temperatures are creating conditions suitable for prescribed burns.

"From a restoration objective standpoint, late summer and fall provide the best opportunities for the timing of prescribed fires," said Andrew Stinchfield, deputy fire staff officer. "Fire behavior during fall weather conditions is more likely to align with how the native vegetation has adapted to fire."

Hunters should be cautious when entering a recently burned area and be aware of increased hazards, particularly snags. Dead or dying trees that remain standing after a fire are unstable, especially in high winds.

The Umatilla National Forest has developed a prescribed fire interactive map displaying planned burning activities. The map allows the user to zoom in on certain areas and click on a burn unit for more information (such as acreage, status and more). When burning operations begin, the interactive map will be updated to display which burn units are actively burning. Maps of the proposed prescribed burns also are on InciWeb at inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5808.

Additional information on prescribed burning is available on the Umatilla National Forest website at www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla, and on the Forest Facebook page at www.facebook.com/UmatillaNF.

Athena's Gem gets grant for pipe organ installation

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Two Umatilla County organizations will receive more than \$10,000 apiece in grants as part of an award from the Oregon Cultural Trust's 20th anniversary celebration.

The trust announced the awards Friday, Oct. 8.

Athena's Gem Inc., Athena, received \$18,341 and will use that money to install a 1921 Wurlitzer pipe organ/orchestral unit. The Wurlitzer, which will be a centerpiece at The Gem Theatre in Athena, will be the only one east of the Cascades, according to a press release from the Oregon Cultural Trust.

"It's very exciting," said Rob

McIntyre, the theatre's project manager and treasurer, who runs the music department for the Athena-Weston School District. "It's one more piece of the puzzle."

McIntyre said the grant funding will go toward continued efforts at renovating the theater in Athena. The renovation is intended to turn the generations-old structure into a regional platform for performing arts, McIntyre said.

He said different parts of a Wurlitzer can be very expensive, and they likely wouldn't have been able to purchase those parts without the grant.

It's the third grant the project has received from the cultural trust, McIntyre added. So far, about \$1.7 million has been allo-

cated toward the renovation.

Students from Weston-McEwan High School for four years have donated countless hours toward the renovation, McIntyre said. The class, called Opus 503, works on different projects, such as rebuilding the Wurlitzer's air reservoir and re-leathering an organ chest's pneumatic valves.

The Oregon Cultural Trust also granted \$12,213 to the Arts Council of Pendleton "to support delivery of a variety of cultural services in rural Eastern Oregon," the press release said.

The trust reported the awards were part of more than \$3.2 million in grant to 140 cultural organizations across the state. The amount was a record for the trust.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Tribal offices closed for state's Indigenous Peoples' Day

PENDLETON — Government offices on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation were closed Monday, Oct. 11, in observance of Oregon's first Indigenous Peoples' Day.

The holiday comes a week after the board of trustees passed

motions approving the new holiday alongside Juneteenth, which celebrates the emancipation of Black Americans from slavery.

It is the first Indigenous Peoples' Day since Oregon passed legislation in May recognizing the holiday. The holiday commemorates the significant contributions Indigenous people have made to the state and country.

—EO Media Group

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