

Hermiston projects on schedule, more or less

By **ERICK PETERSON**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Two major Hermiston construction projects are facing material cost or supply chain or issues, though they are not suffering great setbacks.

Officials with each project said they are adapting to changes and are either on their schedule for completion or just a couple of months behind.

Hermiston City Hall

The nearly \$8.7-million project for a new Hermiston City Hall began in March with the demolition of the old building and then foundation work for the new building in June. Mark Morgan, Hermiston assistant city manager, expressed satisfaction with the progress of the project.

“Construction continues to move forward at a good pace,” he said.

Workers have poured the concrete floor for the ground floor, also referred to as the second floor, Morgan said, and workers soon would pour the floor for the basement.

Meanwhile, crews were installing steel framing, and plans were in place to install prefabricated stairs and third floor sheeting, Morgan said.

“The schedule remains on-track for opening in late 2022,” he said, though the back-end completion and open date are “a bit squishy.” A flexible deadline helps the city “absorb changes,” he said. He added he will have more details about a deadline later, possibly in summer 2022.

Morgan said steel is becoming costly, which has caused some change in plans. Project planners have substituted steel components, which were expected for the project, for other materials, according to Morgan.

Meyer Distributing warehouse

The new Meyer Distributing warehouse is progressing, though a couple of months off deadline, according to Jeff Braun, Meyer CEO. On Nov. 3, in an email to EO Media Group, he cited supply chain issues with building materials.

“We are experiencing quite a few materials delays, from HVAC units to glass sprinkler equipment that are setting back the timeline,” Braun stated. He added he was “hoping for a soft opening in December and then full hiring starting up early 2022.”

Meyer’s construction for an \$11-million warehouse began with a building permit in March. At that



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

Laborers are hard at work Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021, on the construction of the new Hermiston City Hall.

time, Braun said he expected operations to begin in December 2021. The company’s plan at the time was to hire 75 to 100 new employees.

The company, which has its headquarters in Jasper, Indiana, claims 82 U.S. locations, including several distribution centers,

according to its website. The website also states Meyer, which started in 1937 as Meyer Body Inc., offers 700 product lines.

CTUIR chair speaks on climate panel about bringing Indigenous voices forward

By **BRYCE DOLE**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Kat Brigham, chair of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Board of Trustees, sat alongside a prestigious panel on Wednesday, Nov. 3, discussing how Indigenous knowledge can help mitigate the effects of climate change.

The presentation, held over Zoom by the Wilson Center in Washington D.C., occurred alongside the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties summit this week, where world leaders gathered in Glasgow, Scotland, to discuss what still needs to be done to mitigate the effects of a warming world.

“It is here,” Brigham said of climate change. “And we are seeing things we have never seen before.”

A vocal proponent and longtime advocate of environmental preservation, Brigham has fought for years to ensure the sustainability of the natural resources that are the backbone of tribal life.

Joining Brigham on the panel was Dalee Sambo Dorough, chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council. Together, they emphasized the need to bring Indigenous voices and perspectives to the forefront of climate action.

“Action is what is needed,” Dorough said.

The two spoke about treaty rights for Indigenous people, the need to bring forward the perspectives of Indigenous women, the trauma and psychological impact environmental degradation has on their communities, and what recent action by national leaders means to them.

“It’s important that the tribes are there from the very beginning to help,” Brigham said. “We want to help ... When we’re not part

of the solution, we will be a part of the problem, because we will not be protecting our natural resources for our children’s children.”

Brigham spoke about how, for decades, salmon runs depleted across the region. The local tribes consider the fish are essential, so Brigham fought alongside local leaders to restore habitats and bring salmon back, building irrigation systems and hatcheries for the Umatilla and Walla Walla basin. She emphasized the efforts benefitted not only tribal members, but people living across the region.

Tribal efforts made to restore natural resources show how collaboration can lead to meaningful change, Brigham said. Such efforts also will

prove especially important to addressing how climate change impacts communities who are most vulnerable to its effects, Brigham and Dorough said.

Recent actions by the Biden Administration, including the appointment of Deb Haaland to lead the Interior Department as the nation’s first Native American to lead a cabinet-level agency, show how the federal government is making efforts to bring Indigenous leaders forward, Brigham and Dorough said.

Brigham called recent actions by the Biden administration to amplify Indigenous voices in combatting climate change a “turning point.” The next move, she said, will be to educate and empower youth to protect the land.

“When we have no clean air, and we have no clean water, where are we going?” Brigham said. “We have no place to go. We have to protect our natural resources for today, tomorrow, and all our future generations. I want to be able to say, when our grandchildren ask, ‘What did you do?’ I want to be able to say we spoke up. We fought for your rights and your children’s rights.”



Brigham

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— Kat Brigham, CTUIR board chair

LOCAL BRIEFING

Nine more Umatilla County residents die from COVID-19

PENDLETON — Umatilla County Public Health in the span of two days reported nine more residents died from COVID-19.

The health department announced the deaths Thursday, Nov. 4, and Friday, Nov. 5. The nine fatalities increase the county’s pandemic death toll to 164.

The health department reported 11 COVID-19 deaths this week alone. The victims include a 28-year-old and a 36-year-old, the health department reported.

According to Umatilla County Public Health, the nine deaths are:

- A 56-year-old woman who tested positive July 21 and died Oct. 10 at Legacy Good Samaritan, Portland. She was the county’s 156th victim of the disease.
- A 70-year-old man who tested positive Aug. 19 and died Aug. 24 at Providence Portland Medical Center, Portland. He was the county’s 157th victim of the disease.
- A 78-year-old woman who tested positive Oct. 11 and died Oct. 26 at Good Shepherd Hospital, Hermiston. She was the county’s 158th victim of the disease.
- An 89-year-old man who tested positive Oct. 11 and died Oct. 27 at Guardian Angels, Hermiston. She was the county’s 159th victim of the disease.
- An 89-year-old woman who tested positive Oct. 11 and died Oct. 29 at Good Shepherd Hospital, Hermiston. She was the county’s 160th victim of the disease.
- A 54-year-old woman who tested positive Aug. 3 and died Sept. 20 at the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Portland. She was the county’s 161st victim of the disease.
- A 36-year-old man who tested positive Sept. 14 and died Oct. 28 at Providence St. Vincent Hospital, Beaverton. He was the county’s 162nd victim of the disease.
- A 79-year-old man who tested posi-

tive Oct. 6 and died Oct. 31 at Providence St. Vincent Hospital, Beaverton. He was the county’s 163rd victim of the disease.

• An 85-year-old man who tested positive Oct. 13 and died Oct. 29 at CHI Franciscan Health, Tacoma. He was the county’s 164th victim of the disease.

Umatilla County Public Health on Nov. 4 and 5 also reported 62 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the county’s total number of cases to 14,819 since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Pendleton police arrest 19-year-old for rape, more

PENDLETON — A 19-year-old Pendleton man is in jail on felony sex crimes.

Pendleton Police Chief Chuck Byram said the arrest of Markus Paul Davis stemmed from a report in September.

The police department on Sept. 26 received a report of a sexual assault that occurred on the Pendleton River Parkway near Southwest Seventh Street, according to a press release from Pendleton police.

Through the course of the investigation, officers identified the suspect as Davis.

The Umatilla County District Attorney’s Office presented its case against Davis to a grand jury on Oct. 28, which handed up an indictment of felony charges of first-degree rape, first-degree sodomy, first-degree sexual abuse and third-degree sodomy.

Pendleton police detectives on Nov. 3 contacted and arrested Davis and booked him into the Umatilla County Jail.

The district attorney’s office arraigned Davis on the charges on Nov. 4. According to state court records, the district attorney’s office has accused Davis of raping and abusing a 16-year-old girl.

Pendleton police in its press release also stated it would direct further questions about the case to the Umatilla County District Attorney’s Office.

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