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## Fall enrollment a mixed bag for BMCC

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — When Blue Mountain Community College President Mark Browning began his tenure in September, he stated he was hoping the college wouldn't see its enrollment drop by more than 1% in the fall. Whether BMCC met that goal is a matter of how you look at the numbers.

The Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission recently released enrollment data for every community college in the state. By raw headcount, the data showed Blue Mountain's fall 2021 enrollment grew by 38 students, or 2.5%, compared to fall term last year.

But measure enrollment by full time equivalent — a number that is calculated by the number of classroom hours each student takes and the metric the state uses to determine funding — and Blue Mountain's enrollment falls by



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian  
**Blue Mountain Community College students watch as Matt Liscom, an agriculture science instructor at the college, inspects a horse's hoof Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021, at the college's Facility for Agricultural Resource Management in Pendleton.**

17, or a 4.4% decrease.

In other words, more students are attending BMCC but they're

spending less time in the classroom overall. BMCC is far from alone: Community college head-

count enrollment across the state dropped by less than 1% but full-time equivalent enrollment fell by more than 7%.

In an interview, Browning said he was glad more students were attending the college, but staff needed to continue working toward raising its full-time equivalent enrollment.

"We need to keep moving in the right direction," he said.

BMCC's enrollment has been declining for years, but 2020 saw the college's headcount drop by around 30%. BMCC endured dozens of position eliminations amidst budget cuts during the past two years. Browning's predecessor, interim President Connie Green, said some of it was done in the name of "right sizing" Blue Mountain.

Browning said determining the proper size of BMCC's staff or student body is an open question. He also said it was too

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## Hermiston 2040 survey yields input for future

City to share draft of plan at Dec. 3 tree-lighting event

ERICK PETERSON  
Hermiston Herald

HERMISTON — Results are in for the Hermiston 2040 survey, the city's effort to create a 20-year vision plan for the community. The city gaged the wishes of the public with the survey, and people responded with their input.

The survey suggestions, called draft actions, which received more than 100 votes were "more retail shopping options" (244), "more restaurants and greater cuisine variety" (238), "build indoor pool/aquatic center" (154) and "more businesses and job opportunities" (119).

The greatest number of draft actions were for parks and recreation (19) and economic development and economic development (12). The remaining categories and their number of draft actions were housing (3), attractive and safe community (6), infrastructure and planning (7), transportation and mobility (10) and culture and engagement (8).

Community members gathered Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 16 and 17, to discuss these topics in Hermiston Vision Labs. The intent of these labs was to "test the ideas gathered from the community and refine them into goals and actions for the Hermiston 2040 vision," according to the city's handout at the labs.

"The best thing that came out of the meetings was we got a good turnout from the public," Byron Smith, Hermiston city manager, said. "I was really excited about that."

For the four vision labs, he said attendance ranged from 12 to 30.

He reported hearing suggestions and then turned the discussion toward ways to meet those suggestions. Lab participants also discussed less concrete ideas, Smith said. For instance, when the topic "beautify Hermiston" came up, people were tasked with deciding on what it means to do that.

Other goals, such as building an aquatic center, are ones that have been discussed for several years, but they are not out of the question, Smith said.

"(An aquatic center) would take some exceptional funding, so if the community really wanted to support it, would they support a bond issue to pay for it?" Smith asked. He added there might otherwise be a creative way for it to be funded.

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# SAMS IS IN

'Accountable,' 'unflappable'  
Chuck Sams to take the helm  
of National Park Service

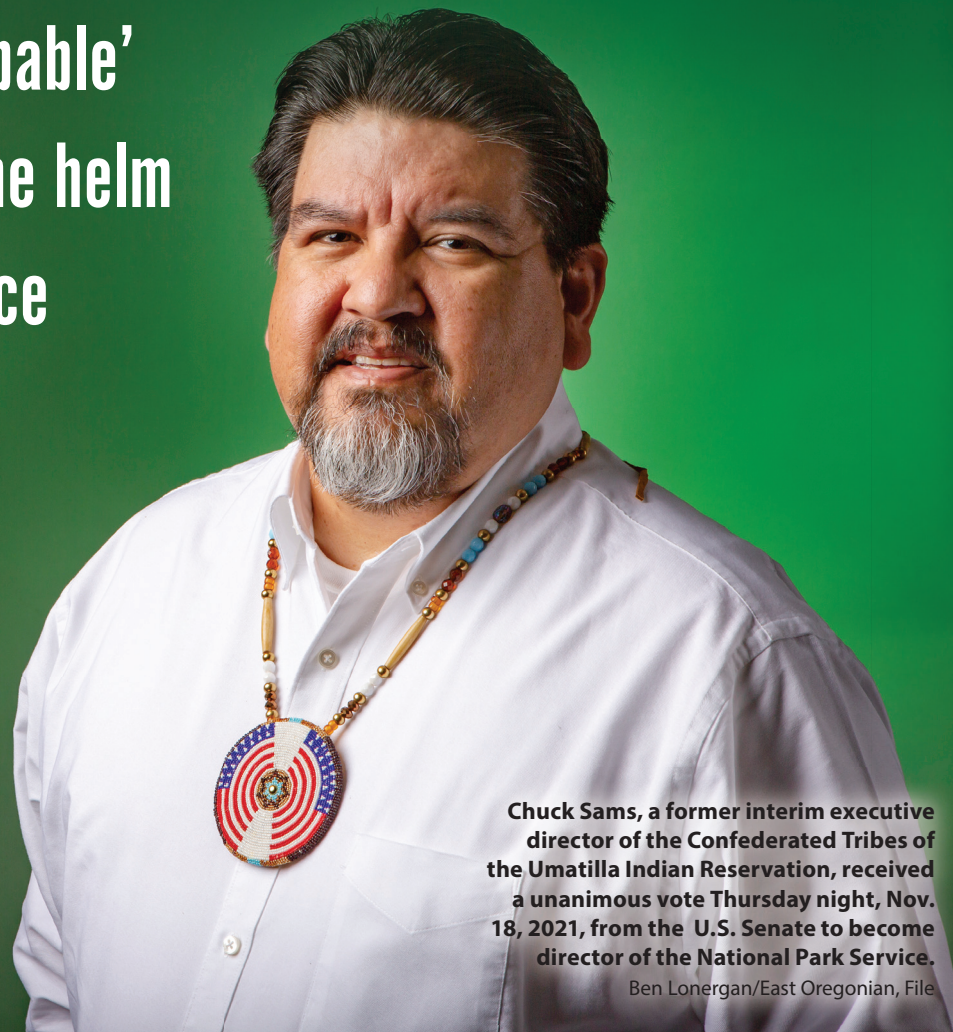
By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate in a unanimous vote Thursday night, Nov. 18, approved the nomination of Chuck Sams as National Park Service director.

Sams is a former longtime administrator for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation near Pendleton and the former area representative on the Pacific Northwest Electric Power and Conservation Planning Council.

Less than two weeks before the Senate confirmed the first American

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Chuck Sams, a former interim executive director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, received a unanimous vote Thursday night, Nov. 18, 2021, from the U.S. Senate to become director of the National Park Service.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

### PENDLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Fritsch announces retirement as superintendent

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Chris Fritsch is retiring as the superintendent of the Pendleton School District effective June 30, 2022, the end of the school year.

Fritsch made the announcement to the Pendleton School Board during a brief meeting Wednesday night, Nov. 17. The board in a voice vote accepted the resignation.

In a letter to the board, Fritsch said it was with mixed emotions that he submitted his notice to retire.

"I would like to thank you,

the current board, and the board members who hired me in 2017 for the opportunity and privilege to work in this fine district," according to the letter. "I have been honored to have worked not only an outstanding board, but also with some of the best administrative and instructional staff on my 41 years in education. I will remember my time here fondly and consider it among the highlights of my career."

He also explained he was making the decision now so the board has time to determine how best to

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Pendleton School District Superintendent Chris Fritsch speaks May 27, 2020, at Hawthorne High School's drive-in commencement ceremony in Pendleton. Fritsch on Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021, announced he is retiring as superintendent effective June 30, 2022, the end of the school year.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

