

Feds pass on I-84 grant request again

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The city of Pendleton's fourth attempt at securing a massive federal grant to realign the Interstate 84 Exit 209 interchange fell short, but the city already is planning to make a fifth attempt.

In a Tuesday, Dec. 21 interview, Pendleton Public Works Director Bob Patterson said the U.S. Department of Transportation passed on Pendleton's \$24.4 million grant application through the federal RAISE program.

The city first applied for

the grant in 2018, when it was known as the BUILD grant. While the exact scope of the ask has changed over the years, the goal has been the same: realign the interchange at Exit 209 on I-84, near Southgate/Highway 395, to alleviate congestion and safety concerns.

The price tag of doing such a project is beyond Pendleton's budget, so for the past several years, city officials applied for the federal grant with the support of the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Patterson said the city won't get feedback from the federal DOT until Janu-

ary or February on how to improve its application, but the city is planning on seeking the grant for a fifth time in 2022. Patterson said the city intends to keep applying for the grant until it can secure the funding for the project, but it's beginning to explore other options. He added that city staff publicly will discuss its options at a January city council meeting.

The issues at Exit 209 have been on the city and the Oregon Department of Transportation's radar for more than a decade as the agencies have taken steps to improve traffic

safety in the area. The latest version of their plan calls for the four-way intersection of Southwest Emigrant Avenue and Southwest 20th Street to be moved west, where some homes and High Desert Cannabis are now. Instituting such a change would require realigning 20th Street and building a new road to access the Exit 209 entrance and exit, among other adjustments.

Past efforts from the city to lock down the grant have included Mayor John Turner personally traveling in 2018 to Washington, D.C., to lobby lawmakers and federal officials.



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File

The city of Pendleton tried and failed for a fourth time to secure \$24.4 million through a U.S. Department of Transportation grant for a realignment of the Interstate 84 Exit 209 interchange.

Bailey enters Oregon Bankers Hall of Fame

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — The president and CEO of the Bank of Eastern Oregon in Heppner now is a Hall of Famer.

The Oregon Bankers Association on Dec. 6 inducted Jeff Bailey into the Oregon Bankers Hall of Fame during the Oregon Bank Leadership Symposium.

Bailey in a phone interview said his induction puts his name on a list of other excellent bankers. Three other bankers in his bank's history have achieved this recognition, he said, and he reported feeling good about the association.

He said the honor is humbling. Fellow inductees include people who have devoted themselves to their communities and have done well by their customers, he said. He stated he strives for the same excellence.

OBA President and CEO Linda Navarro during Bailey's induction shared comments she received from his colleagues about his contributions and service, according to a press release Thursday, Dec. 16, from the association about the ceremony.

Gabrielle Homer, a member of the bank's board of directors, said she appreciated Bailey's open door — both as a customer of many years and when joining the board last year — and described him as helpful, friendly, incredibly knowledgeable and dedicated and loyal. Other peers credited Bailey with having a "strong moral compass," the press release stated, for being a strong leader who cares about employees and customers and for having "a holistic view of situations and is committed to making the greater good succeed."

Good saver early on

Looking back, Bailey said his history in banking goes back to his early childhood. Born in Enterprise, he had family members who were bankers. Also, he started his first bank account when he was very young, after selling night crawlers and mowing lawns to earn money. Even in his youth, he said, he was a good saver.

"It was instilled in us at an early age that you have to



Oregon Bankers Association/Contributed Photo

Jeff Bailey of Heppner holds his award for being inducted in the Oregon Bankers Hall of Fame on Dec. 6, 2021.

save for a rainy day to provide for yourself and your family," he said, adding he carried that ethic into adulthood.

Bailey earned a degree in agriculture business from Eastern Oregon University and began his career as a grain buyer in Port-

land, according to the press release, and 25 years ago he began his career with the Bank of Eastern Oregon as a commercial loan officer in Gilliam County. He served as the bank's chief credit officer 2003-09, then moved up president and CEO.

ABOUT THE OREGON BANKERS HALL OF FAME

The Oregon Bankers Hall of Fame was founded in 1987, has 81 inductees and is the "the highest honor bestowed peer-to-peer within the Oregon banking industry," according to the Oregon Bankers Association, recognizing "outstanding contributions inductees have made to the Oregon banking industry, to the OBA and to the communities in which they live and work."

His service is not just inside the bank, though, as Bailey has worked as a past chair of the OBA and has recently started a two-year term as the chair of the Community Banks of Oregon, a sister entity of the Oregon Bankers Association "that serves as a unique voice dedicated to banks headquartered in Oregon," according to the press release. Bailey also is active in the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group, the Heppner Chamber of Commerce and other civic and nonprofit groups.

Hauling appliances in a Honda leads to arrest of three men

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton police arrested three local men for stealing appliances from a home that's for sale.

Pendleton police on Dec. 14 at 5:48 p.m. received a report of the burglary at the home on the 1400 block of Southwest 41st Street, according to a press release from Pendleton police Chief Chuck Byram. But the big clue to help crack the case came that morning.

An officer on patrol at 4:50 a.m. spotted a blue Honda Civic in the area of Southwest 37th Street and Southwest Jay Avenue.

"The vehicle drew the officer's attention due to the fact that there were two occupants riding in the open truck while holding onto the handles of a dolly, towing the dolly behind the car," according to Byram. "The dolly had a new washing machine strapped to it."

The driver and the two occupants in the trunk

told the officer they were moving the washing machine to their friend's house, and they did not have a truck to transport the washer.

"While suspicious, the officer did not have any evidence at that time that led him to believe that a crime was being committed," Byram stated. "The officer admonished the three individuals for violating motor vehicle laws."

When the officer learned of the reported burglary, however, it was apparent to him the three individuals could be suspects.

Pendleton police followed up and found the washer and dryer in a Pendleton home, and on Dec. 17 arrested Eldon M. Browning, 41, and James L. Waligorski, 30. Police on Dec. 20 arrested a third suspect, Cody N. Pearson, 36. Police arrested the trio on suspicion of first-degree burglary, first-degree theft and criminal conspiracy.

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