

WEEKEND EDITION

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## Cliff Bentz alleges 2020 election was 'bought'

Bentz also comments on insurrection and school board violence

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — Oregon U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, does not believe former President Donald Trump's claim that President Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential election because of voter fraud.

"The election was not stolen, it was bought," Bentz, a first term congressman, said during an appearance Jan. 6. in La Grande.

It was one of several statements Bentz made during the La Grande event and later expanded on Wednesday, Jan. 12, in an interview.

### 'It was bought'

Bentz said Democrats had an enormous edge in funding donors with deep pockets, including one who donated \$400 million to Biden's campaign. Bentz said the Democrats spent several times more money per vote than the Republicans did.

Bentz referenced a large donation made by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and suggested it benefited Biden and Democrats.

In September 2020, Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, personally made a \$300 million donation to two groups — Center for Tech and Civic Life and the Center for Election Innovation & Research. The money was specifically designated to recruit poll workers, supply them with personal protection equipment and set up drive-thru voting. The rest was distributed to state election officials throughout the country. According to a press release, the Center for Tech and Civic Life received an additional \$100 million from Zuckerberg and Chan in October 2020.

Bentz said he based his comments around an October 2021 article from The Federalist, a conservative media website, entitled "Zuckerbucks 101: How A Media Mogul Took Over The 2020 Election And Why GOP Leaders Must Never Let It Happen Again."

The article, mostly citing other conservative sources, argues the Center for Tech and Civic Life "corrupted" elections by sending money to election offices in Democratic-leaning areas and by facilitating the mail-in voting process.

Referencing the article, Bentz said the nonprofit was not apolitical because the founders had once worked for an organization with

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

A disco ball spins Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2022, in the main hall of the Active Senior Center of Pendleton. The nonprofit Pendleton Children's Center took ownership of the building Jan. 10.

# Finding a home

## Pendleton Children's Center acquires the former senior center

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — A local nonprofit is looking to turn the Active Senior Center of Pendleton into a facility that serves residents on the other end of the age spectrum.

On Monday, Jan. 10, the Pendleton Children's Center announced it had acquired the senior center at 510 S.W. 10th St. with the intention of renovating it into a child care facility that will eventually serve 150 or more children between the ages of six weeks and kindergarten-age.

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

The Active Senior Center of Pendleton, 510 S.W. 10th St., is going to be home to the Pendleton Children's Center.

# Hermiston's new schools get ready for fall

## Projects are part of \$82.7 million bond voters passed in 2019

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Starting this autumn, Hermiston will have two new elementary schools.

Trudging around in the muck Wednesday, Jan. 12, at the construction site of the new Rocky Heights Elementary School, Hermiston School District Superintendent Tricia Mooney said she was pleased with its progress.

"I am impressed," she said.

This is the first school construction she has overseen, she said, and she is enjoying it.

"It's going up fast, and it's really looking like a school."



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Hermiston School District Superintendent Tricia Mooney, left, and Jose Aparicio, a construction manager with the Wenaha Group Inc., walk the site of the new Rocky Heights Elementary School Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2022, in Hermiston.

She added she also was happy about the advancement on the Loma Vista Elementary project.

She was on the site with Jose

Aparicio, Wenaha Group Inc., construction manager, and Jon Fowler, project superintendent with Kirby Nagelhout Construction Co.

Voters in November 2019 approved an \$82.7 million bond measure to pay for projects to address student capacity. The new Rocky Heights and Loma Vista schools are part of the district's plans to address capacity.

### Anticipating a grand opening

Mooney, along with the Wenaha and Kirby Nagelhout bosses, said the schools were on schedule to open for classes in the fall.

Aparicio said the schools will have the same "feel and layout" as Hermiston's West Park Elementary School. The two new schools will resemble each other, too, he said. The biggest difference between them will be the direction they are facing.

The buildings will have four classrooms per grade level — kindergarten through fifth grade — and four classrooms for additional

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