

Title III grant brings \$2.5M for EOU student services

The Observer

LA GRANDE — As classes began last fall, Eastern Oregon University had something extra to celebrate.

The university in La Grande was notified in late September that it had been awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The Title III funding is a Strengthening Institutions Grant, paid out at \$450,000 each year for five years, with the initial distribution received in fall 2021.

“This is a significant, substantial grant for a university like EOU because it’s five years long and the amount of money that comes to EOU allows us to follow through with the things we know we need to do,” said Nate Lowe, dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences who is also acting as interim grant director.

Funds are to be used for academic quality, institutional management and fiscal stability. He said the broad support of this particular grant removes some of the constraints that small, regional universities like EOU tend to face.

“A Title III grant like this can be transformational for a campus like ours because it’s integrational across campus,”



Students walk to class at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, in this undated photo. The university was notified in late September that it had been awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Eastern Oregon University/Contributed Photo

Lowe said. “It’s not only a financial boost, but it creates an opportunity for the institution to work together.”

A new, comprehensive student success program, called BRIDGES, will take shape thanks to grant funds. Leaders from across the university collaborated to apply for the grant, and will continue their interdisciplinary work to implement a range of resources,

from faculty-led math tutoring, to expanded diversity and equity efforts, to new staff positions. This integrated approach is united in its aim to increase retention and graduation, thereby improving student success and ensuring the university’s fiscal stability when the grant funding ends.

“There are dozens and dozens of faculty and staff on this campus who are directly

connected to this grant and its activities, out to every corner of campus,” Lowe said. “It’s meant to create collaboration and interconnection of the work that we do in order to support students.”

Initiatives driven by this grant seek intentionally to break down barriers and increase collaboration for the benefit of students. BRIDGES contains six distinct areas of focus —

enhanced academic advising, math and English courses designed to bring students up to college level, experiential learning curriculum for every degree program, comprehensive First Year Experience for incoming students, improved degree planning systems and cultivated a sense of belonging backed by a new associate vice president for diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging.

The university is in the process of hiring the associate vice president, who will serve as grant director for the Title III funds and oversee the creation of a Center for Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging at Eastern.

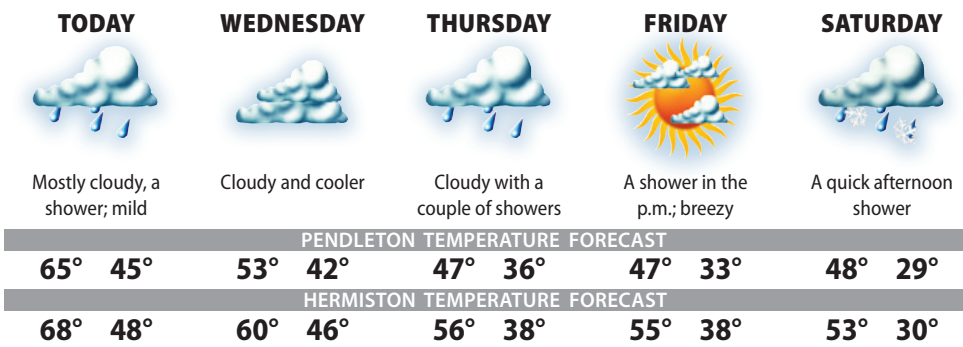
“This is the anchor of the entire grant,” Lowe said. “The funds allow us to invest in additional personnel to enhance student support, especially for those who are underrepresented or underprepared and those who have bigger roadblocks to success.”

Some of the work has already begun, while other aspects are still taking shape. Lowe anticipates a growing number of opportunities for university departments, employees and stakeholders to get involved.

It’s been eight months since EOU’s Provost convened a cross-campus team to spend several weeks working with consultants to apply for a highly competitive Title III grant. Already, it’s abundantly clear that these funds have potential to transform the student experience at EOU.

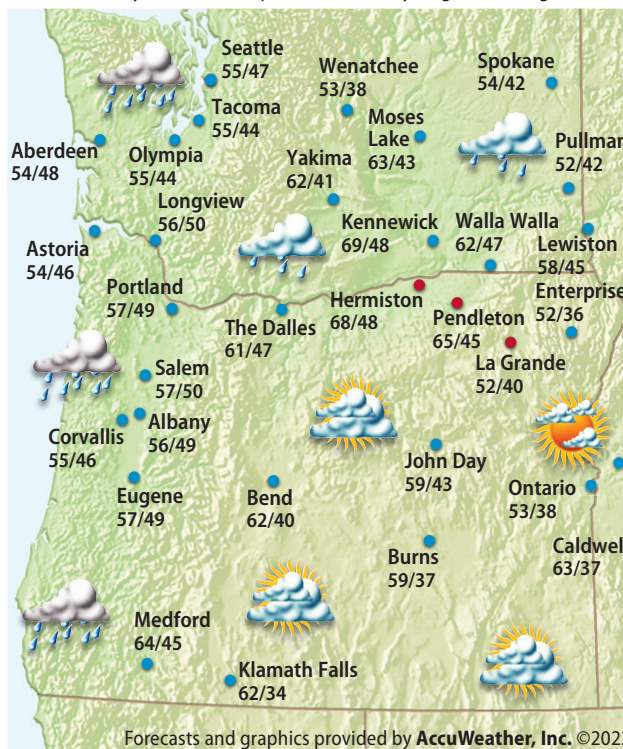
“It’s really a gift to students today and in the future,” Lowe said. “We will be a better institution because of this and on the other side of it.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

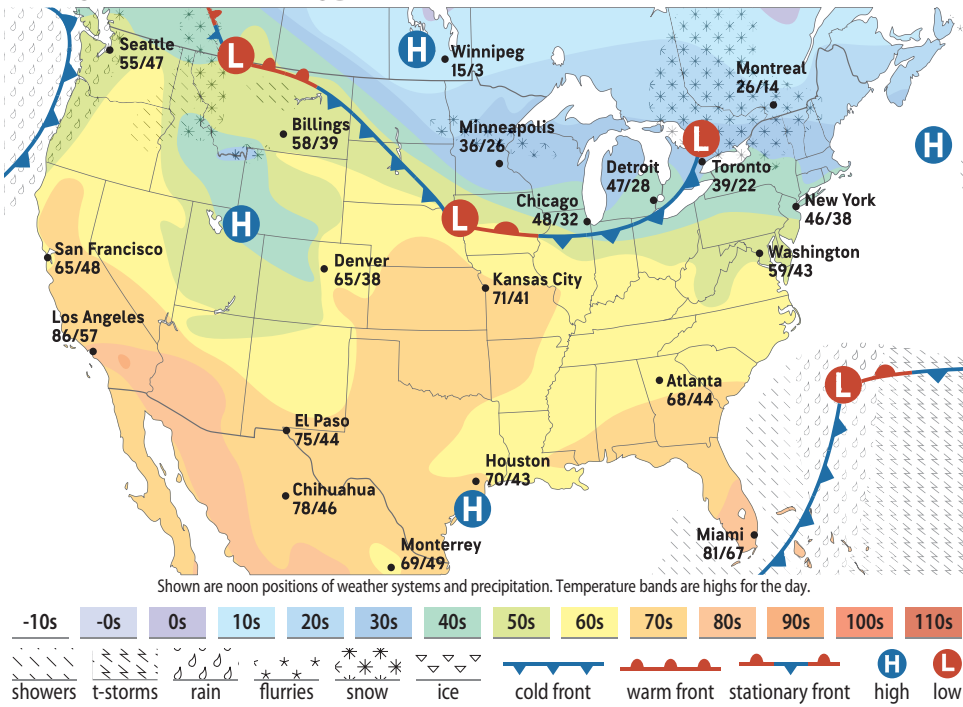
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	63°	53°		
Normals	52°	32°		
Records	74° (1902)	3° (1911)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.03"			
Month to date	0.85"			
Normal month to date	1.15"			
Year to date	2.38"			
Last year to date	3.02"			
Normal year to date	2.69"			
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	68°	39°		
Normals	54°	30°		
Records	74° (1972)	4° (2019)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.05"			
Month to date	0.13"			
Normal month to date	0.86"			
Year to date	1.06"			
Last year to date	1.08"			
Normal year to date	2.00"			
WINDS (in mph)				
	Today	Wed.		
Boardman	SW 4-8	SW 4-8		
Pendleton	SSE 6-12	SE 6-12		
SUN AND MOON				
Sunrise today	6:34 a.m.			
Sunset tonight	5:42 p.m.			
Moonrise today	6:35 a.m.			
Moonset today	4:35 p.m.			
	New	First	Full	Last
	Mar 2	Mar 10	Mar 17	Mar 24

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 88° in El Monte, Calif. Low -23° in Yellowstone N.P., Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Idaho Power heads to court to seek private property access

By DAVIS CARBAUGH
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A highly debated transmission line proposal has reached the local courtrooms in Union County.

A number of Union County residents faced legal action this past week as Boise-based Idaho Power seeks out access to private property to conduct surveys and testing. The utility is looking to conduct the land testing ahead of a proposed 500-kilovolt line across Eastern Oregon that would traverse roughly 300 miles between Boardman and Hemingway, Idaho.

More than 10 Union County residents received petitions from Idaho Power, requesting access to their private land so the company could conduct testing to prepare for the construction of the project. The plots of land include areas the proposed power line would travel through or be in close proximity to.

The surveys that Idaho

Power plans to conduct vary by location, but include the following:

- Three-toed woodpecker and northern goshawk.
- Rare plant inspection.
- Wetlands inspection.
- Terrestrial visual encounter survey.
- Raptor survey.
- Noxious weed survey.
- Cultural, archeological and historic properties management plan inspection.
- Land survey.
- Appraisal field visit.

Out of 12 cases that went through the Union County Courthouse on Feb. 11 and 14, four were dismissed and one case resulted in a default judgment since the landowner in question failed to appear.

In the case of Idaho Power Company vs. John and Connie Williams, the court ruled that Idaho Power and its agents, employees and contractors may enter the property to conduct the surveys.

Two cases were granted a continuance, while four

of the cases were set over to retain counsel. The landowners are set to participate in hearings scheduled around the end of March.

According to Jim Kreider, one of the founders of the Stop B2H Coalition, those opposed requested the extensions in order to seek out legal assistance in their respective cases.

“Our general advice to everybody is to ask for an extension and then consult with an attorney and consider your options,” he said.

Kreider noted that with the nearly identical petitions filed by Idaho Power to residents across Eastern Oregon, the coalition is seeking to find legal representation that can cover the bulk of the cases.

While several landowners chose to have the petitions dismissed and allow access onto their property, about half in Union County are continuing to push on. According to Kreider, the court costs associated with the contested power line proposal is causing a hurdle for some.

IN BRIEF

Baker City resident finds skinned coyote beside street

BAKER CITY — Brian Blomster wondered what caused the neighbor’s dog to jump into the bushes beside the street and later attracted his cat’s attention.

Then he saw what it was. And wished he hadn’t.

The carcass of a skinned coyote was discarded atop some shrubs beside Hillcrest Drive, Baker City, just across the street from the home, at 305 Hillcrest Drive, where Blomster has lived for four years.

He found the carcass the morning of Feb. 21. “I was freaked out because it looked like a dog,” Blomster said.

He called the Baker County Dispatch Center.

Officer Rand Weaver of the Baker City Police Department arrived around 9:30 a.m. He said he took the carcass to the Animal Clinic of Baker, where a veterinarian identi-

fied it as a coyote, not a domestic dog.

Blomster said he’s convinced that whoever dumped the carcass did so the previous night. If it had been there Feb. 20, he’s certain he or someone else would have seen it.

Blomster said although he’s glad the carcass wasn’t a domestic dog, he still is bothered someone would toss a dead animal beside a residential street rather than outside town.

“It just feels offensive,” he said in a phone interview on Friday, Feb. 25. “Why would you do that?”

Blomster and Weaver both said inside the carcass was a surgical rubber glove and a length of red cord.

Weaver figured the person who skinned the coyote wore gloves while doing so, and used the cord to suspend the carcass while skinning it.

Weaver said if police could identify the person who discarded the carcass, the person could be cited for offensive littering.

—EO Media Group

EAST OREGONIAN
— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com

In the App Store:

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.
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Circulation Dept.
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 800-781-3214

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	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$10.75/month	50 percent
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\$1.50 Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

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