

EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF 16 ONPA AWARDS IN 2021



INSIDE SOAR TO THE PENDLETON AIR MUSEUM IN GO!

Familiar names jump into commissioner races

Hermiston campaigns competitive; Pendleton council gets a pass

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — David Nelson made a sudden return to local politics on Tuesday, March 8.

On the last day candidates could file for local office ahead of the May 17 election, Nelson, a former

state senator, joined a packed race to replace Position 1 Commissioner George Murdock.

The Pendleton resident represented District 29 as a Republican in the Oregon Senate from 1997-2013, including a stint as the majority leader. After retiring from the Legislature, Nelson served on the Eastern Oregon University Board of Trustees before stepping off in 2020.

Then-Commissioner Bill Hansell won election to succeed Nelson in the senate. A decade later,

Nelson now is seeking the county board seat Hansell once held.

It's not unprecedented in Oregon for legislators to seek county office after serving in Salem. Former Republican Minority Leader Herman Baertschiger left the senate in 2020 after he was elected to a seat on the Josephine County Board of Commissioners. And in 2016, former state Rep. Jessica Vega Pederson successfully ran for a county commissioner seat in Multnomah County, although unlike

Nelson, both legislators immediately transitioned from state to county office.

While Nelson brings plenty of name recognition to the race, he won't have a glide path to a seat on the board. Before Nelson entered his name, five other candidates already filed.

Two business owners — Susan Bower of Pendleton and Cindy Timmons of Milton-Freewater — were the first to join the race. Bower has spent more than \$18,000

on her campaign while Timmons has reported more than \$3,000 in expenditures. The rest of the field is composed of Bob Barton, a Hermiston construction business owner; Jesse Bonifer, an Athena city councilor and Second Amendment activist; and Alvin Young, a Hermiston store manager.

A late entry means voters also will weigh in on Position 2 in the May primary.

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SHEARER'S FOODS FIRE

The other shoe drops

Shearer's Foods lays off employees from destroyed plant

By **ERICK PETERSON**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The devastating fire last month at the Shearer's Foods facility in Hermiston has led the company to end employment of the men and women who worked there. And the city is without a sure sign the company will rebuild.

Shearer's Foods CEO Bill Nictakis made the announcement in a press release Tuesday, March 8.

"After assessing the damage, it's clear that the destruction is too great to quickly rebuild and begin production in the near term," according to Nictakis. "Unfortunately, it would take at least 15-18 months before we could resume production. We have not yet decided the future of the Shearer's Hermiston site. This has led to the very difficult decision to end employment for our team members."

The company has reported it employed 230 people at the plant.

Nictakis stated the company is "exploring opportunities to relocate team members interested in working in our other plants" and has "provided a severance and benefits continuation package to recognize the effort and tenure that has gone into making the site successful over the past years."

He continued, "We will do everything we can to support our Shearer's family during this transition."

According to the press release, Shearer's Foods has been teaming up with community organizations on projects, including food drives, family activities and job fairs, to benefit its former employees.

"We will continue to provide counseling services to those

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Unlocking THE VAULT

Lance Saling, owner of The Vault Tavern, poses for a portrait Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at his bar in Pilot Rock. Photos by Ben Lonergan/
East Oregonian



A pool table sits in the dining room of The Vault Tavern.

Tavern owner Lance Saling builds trailers by day, manages his bar in the evenings

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

P ILOT ROCK — Whenever Lance Saling passed by the building that used to house Archie's Restaurant, he kept expecting someone to move in and start something new. Eventually, Saling realized he would be the one to do it.

When it came time for Saling to come up with a name for his new establishment, he chose to lean on the building's history.

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The Vault Tavern sits at the corner of Northwest Birch Street and West Main Street in Pilot Rock.

