

# EAST OREGONIAN

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### GAS PRICES

## Local city officials express caution

By ERICK PETERSON AND ANTONIO SIERRA  
*East Oregonian*

UMATILLA COUNTY — The increase in gas prices has local city government looking at ways to meet the bottom line.

Regular unleaded in Pendleton and Hermiston is around the mid-\$4 per gallon for regular unleaded. Diesel is around a dollar more per gallon.

The AAA Gas Prices website, [gasprices.aaa.com](http://gasprices.aaa.com), listed the average price of gas in Umatilla County on Tuesday, March 29, at about \$4.42 a gallon, which in Oregon puts the cost on the cheaper end of the spectrum. Statewide, the average was \$4.72.

AAA listed the per gallon price at approximately \$4.01 a month ago and \$3.16 a year ago.

“From a straight city operations perspective, we’re certainly taking those things into account in our budgeting for the upcoming year for fuel costs of operating vehicles, but where we’re really feeling it the most is in some of our capital construction projects,” Mark Morgan, Hermiston’s assistant city manager, said.

He explained that the city recently was notified of a diesel fuel surcharge for asphalt for the foreseeable future. Projects such as paving, he said, are very oil-intensive and are seeing more inflation than others.

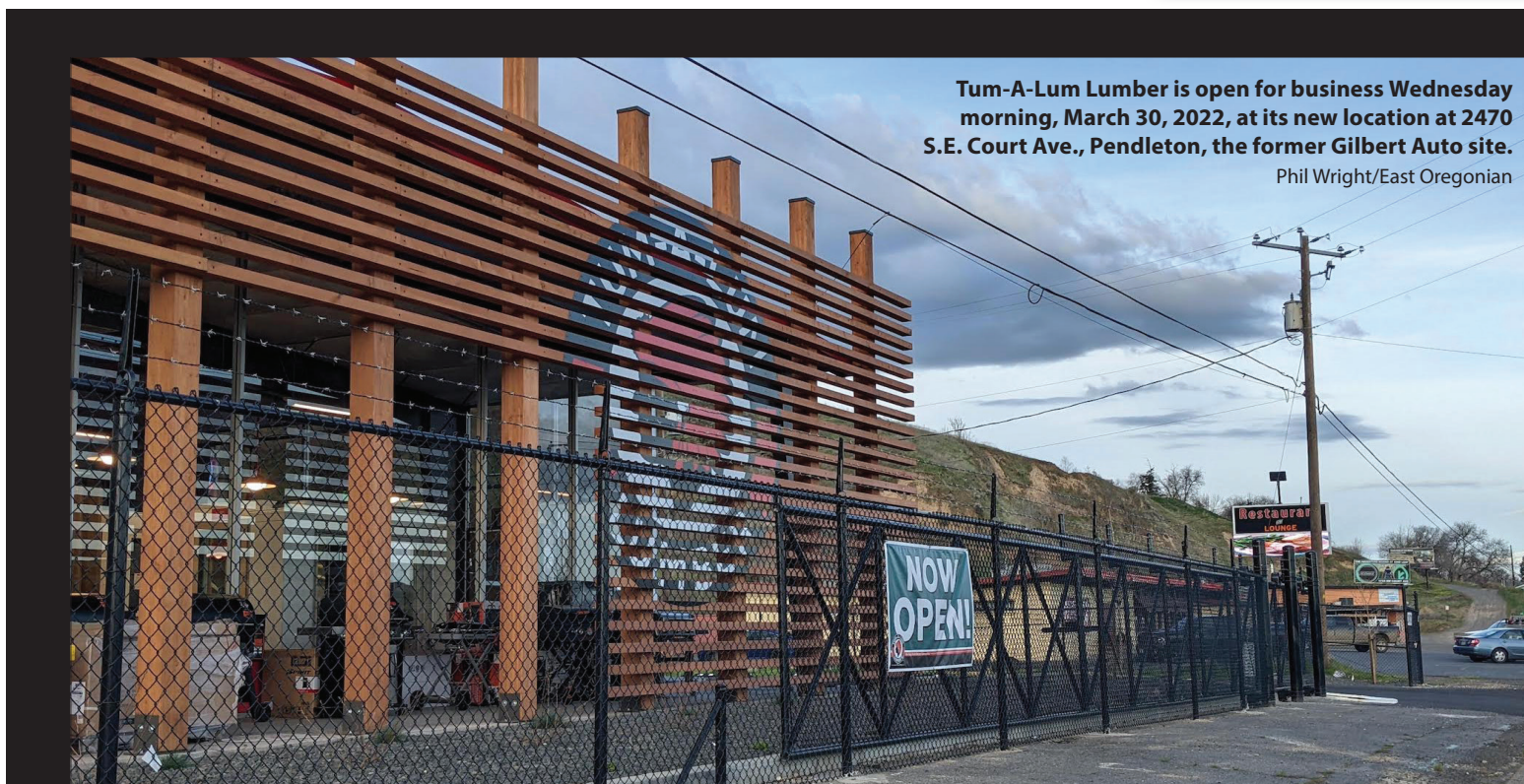
“One of the ways that we manage that is that if we start to feel pressure on a price is that we will break a project down in to component parts, and try to identify what are the most critical parts, then when we bid the project, we will list some of the smaller parts as alternatives,” he said. “That way, we have the ability to complete the core project on budget by just jettisoning some of those extra components that might be able to be pushed off for something in the future.”

When taking this approach, “you also always have to be cognizant of whether that part that you’re pushing off to the future may actually come down in price in the future, or you may be shooting yourself in the foot by making it more complicated and more expensive in the future.”

In Pendleton, department heads who could be affected by gas prices are taking a wait-and-see approach.

With the city appropriating more than \$7 million for this year’s street construction season, the Pendleton

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Tum-A-Lum Lumber is open for business Wednesday morning, March 30, 2022, at its new location at 2470 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton, the former Gilbert Auto site.  
Phil Wright/East Oregonian

# TUM-A-LUM STRETCHES OUT

## Business expands footprint, gives new life to former car dealership site

By JOHN TILLMAN  
*East Oregonian*

PENDLETON — On an early afternoon Tuesday, March 29, front-end loaders crisscrossed the parking lot of Tum-a-Lum Lumber in Pendleton. Trailers took up multiple parking spots. Four days before its official grand opening, the building material supply company’s new premises were a beehive of activity.

Tum-A-Lum’s move to 2470 S.E. Court Ave. afforded the business 4.5 times the retail space and almost three times the acreage.

The migration took place last summer from its historic location at 432 S.E. Dorion Ave. That site, across from the Umatilla County Courthouse, covered just 1.25 acres with only 2,000 square feet of retail space.

Branch Manager Shane



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Tum-A-Lum Lumber store manager Shane Reinhart stands in the design center Tuesday, March 29, 2022, of the business’s new Pendleton location, 2470 S.E. Court Ave. The store, which has a 96-year history in the community, will hold a grand opening celebration April 2.

Reinhart said, “On Dorion, I didn’t have an office.”

The new location at the former Gilbert Auto site includes 3.5 acres of asphalt and buildings in an overall 9 acres. Retail space is 9,000 square feet, plus offices and cubicles for contractor consultations.

The shift followed extensive remodeling and new construction. The company took down part of an existing building,

then added onto it to support the vast lumber yard.

“We gutted the Gilbert Auto showroom. Tore out the wiring, took down walls. A complete makeover,” Reinhart said.

The new store offers a full hardware line, including a design center with cabinets, countertops, doors and windows. It also features an outdoor lawn and garden care center, with a full nursery.

### BACKSTORY ON THE NAME

Tum-A-Lum Lumber founder J. M. Crawford thought “tum-a-lum” meant “spreading waters” in the Umatilla language, and “Tum-A-Lum Lumber in Walla Walla, Washington” sounded lyrical. Gretchen Kern, linguist at the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, said the word “tamalam” refers to a “rocky bar in a river, dry stream, gravel bar, rocks by a creek, pile of rocks, rocky bottom or gravel.” She added, “Tum-A-Lum’s founder’s interpretation may have come from the fact that water tends to spread or flow around such rocks. Tamalam also was a place name referring to Plymouth, Washington, and Milton-Freewater.”

TAL Holdings owner, Bill Cornelius, Jr. of Vancouver, preferred not to state the purchase price, but public records suggest the site went for less than its assessed valuation of \$1.8 million. The company made money on the sale of its old location.

“We tried to buy it previously,” Reinhart commented.

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## ‘Hidden treasure’

### EOU, local advocates secure funding to restore historic staircase

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
*The Observer*

LA GRANDE — A treasured architecture feature in La Grande will be preserved for generations to come.

A \$100 million rural infrastructure package passed by the Oregon Legislature in March granted \$4 million to save Eastern Oregon University’s Grand Staircase, highlighting years of

advocacy by the university, local individuals and regional organizations. Upon deteriorating into an unusable relic of the past, plans are now underway to renovate and protect the staircase as a critical element to Eastern’s campus.

“We’ve worked at a lot of different angles trying to find funding for it,” said Tim Seydel, Eastern’s vice president of university advancement. “It’s an incredibly beautiful piece of architecture that is one of a kind. We just kept working at it.”

### Cause worth fighting for

The Eastern Oregon Normal School, a college for aspiring

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Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

The view from the top of Eastern Oregon University’s Grand Staircase on March 23, 2022, shows how the structure once restored will again connect the campus with the community of La Grande.



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