

# Green: 'Golf is a game that can be played by all generations and all people'

Continued from Page A1

The event will be the 17th stop on the Epson Tour's 2022 schedule, welcoming professional female golfers from all over the United States and more than 30 countries. The tournament will feature between 133 and 144 players, but the final roster will be announced a couple of weeks before the event.

Next year, the Wildhorse Ladies Classic will be in August.

Wildhorse is the fifth tribal venue to sponsor an Epson Tour event. Circling Raven and Morongo Golf Club in California are two others.

The Wildhorse Ladies Classic is one of three new events on the Epson Tour schedule this season. The others are in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"The Epson Tour has the core values we want to promote," George said. "We want to promote the game of golf in our region, with the focus on our youth, especially girls golf. It's a sport that really hasn't attracted a lot of support in our area. A lot of high schools don't even have a girls team. It needs a boost, and we would love to partake in that."

The 2022 season will conclude with the Epson Tour Championship from Oct. 6-9 in Daytona Beach, Florida, at LPGA International. The top 10 will receive LPGA Tour membership for 2023.

Recent Epson Tour graduates include Olympic gold medalist and top-ranked American, Nelly Korda, as well as fellow major champions, Hannah Green and Patty Tavatanakit.

## A top-notch venue

Listed as one of America's top casino golf courses by Golf Digest, Wildhorse offers more than 7,000 yards



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

**Jim White, of Pendleton, tees off Thursday, March 31, 2022, at the Wildhorse Golf Course, which Sept. 2-4 hosts the Wildhorse Ladies Classic, the 17th stop on the Epson Tour's 2022 schedule, welcoming professional female golfers from all over the United States and more than 30 countries.**

of pristine greens with five lakes and 66 sand bunkers.

The John Steidel designed course sits at the base of the Blue Mountains and has been open since 1997.

Though the course has a good reputation, Epson Tour officials made a visit March 23 to check out every last inch of the course.

"They loved the course, and said we are ready to have the tournament right now," George said. "That was nice to hear."

Mike Hegarty, director of golf at Wildhorse, said the course is in such good shape that they won't have to close

the course ahead of the event.

"We are fortunate to be known for good course conditions," Hegarty said. "Our golf course superintendent Phil Lagao does a nice job. It will be nice to feature the entire resort. It's a very cool thing. We are very excited to have this event come to our facility, and excited to show them Wildhorse hospitality."

The course also will have flags representing all of the countries represented at the tournament.

"It's a global event and we will be treating it as such," George said. "We will put on a good show. We want them

to talk highly of Pendleton, Oregon."

Wildhorse is the home course for Pendleton and Nixyaawii high schools, it hosts several tournaments a year and offers junior golf clinics in the summer. It also is open to the public.

"Golf is a game that can be played by all generations and all people," George said. "They can play together. That's a benefit we see here at Wildhorse. The Elders with their grandkids on the course or on the driving range."

George said he hopes the Epson Tour will generate a little more interest locally

in the sport.

"Having this event, which is comprised of young ladies who have graduated from college, is positive for our area," George said. "If you look at it, there are a lot of young ladies who want to be professionals. To even qualify for the Epson Tour, it's very competitive."

## It takes a village

Just like with the Pendleton Round-Up, events of this size depend on volunteers to make sure everything runs smoothly.

The Wildhorse Ladies Classic is looking for about

150 volunteers to help with a multitude of tasks during the event.

Volunteers will assist with scoring, help with parking and ticket distribution, and act as marshals and spotters.

One of the biggest challenges will be to find volunteers to provide housing for some of the tournament players.

"We haven't really launched anything," George said. "We still have a lot to do. We are looking for volunteers, and community members to host players to help them defray costs for housing. These are young ladies and travel can be expensive."

Interested volunteers can visit [www.wildhorseresort.com/resort/golf/tournaments](http://www.wildhorseresort.com/resort/golf/tournaments) for information and to register.

Wildhorse offers 300 hotel rooms and has a full-service recreational vehicle park and teepee village, but public relations manager Mary Liberty-Traughber said the resort will not be able to accommodate all of the expected 2,000 players, volunteers and fans. They are working with other properties to arrange housing.

"It is something we are working on," Liberty-Traughber said. "This will benefit the entire city. We will need hotel rooms around the city for the volunteers and people coming in to watch the tournament. There are clear guidelines we have to follow. This is a pretty big deal. We think it will draw in a lot of people, and they will fall in love and want to come back. This is the first time for us. We are still learning."

Local eateries and shops should also see an influx of business during the week of the tournament.

"It won't have the impact of Round-Up or Whisky Fest," George said, "but it will still be nice."

## Principal:

Continued from Page A1

tutelage of former Superintendent Fred Maiocco and former Assistant Superintendent Wade Smith. Nearly nine years later, Headings said he was ready to return to the top job.

If the board chooses Headings, he said he plans to be out and about in schools and the community as much as possible.

"I don't enjoy sitting in my office," he said. "I don't enjoy office work."

Both Stanfield and Hermiston have significant Latino populations and Headings was asked the same question Casey was about what he would do to help them in Pendleton. While Headings didn't want to implement anything before further studying the situation, Headings said Stanfield had some success with Hispanic family nights at the schools to increase trust and participation in the Latino community.

## The runner-up

Casey spent the early parts of her introduction spotlighting her rural bonafides.

She said she grew up in Ellensburg, Washington, in a farming family that spent plenty of time on horseback and in the combine.

"You can solve a lot of things with baling wire and baling twine," she said.

Casey started her career in business, including a stint working in Chrysler's Portland office, but switched tracks to education after getting a divorce. Casey said her career move encouraged other women in her family to go back to school and was hoping she could "break the cycle" with students in Pendleton.

Casey said she could get creative in recruiting and retaining teachers, having hired a math teacher through a job ad on Craigslist and working hands-on with first-year teachers to find them housing in Grandview.

"We really need to think outside of our box," she said.

Grandview High School



Antonio Sierra/East Oregonian

**Kevin Headings, a principal from Hermiston, gives a speech Thursday, March 31, 2022, during a public interview at the Pendleton School District administrative offices. The school board the morning of April 2 announced it hired Headings as the superintendent of Pendleton schools.**

is a majority Latino school and an audience member asked what she did to serve that student population and she might implement those

ideas in Pendleton, where Latinos are a small but growing population. Casey said it's not just about translating school messages into Span-

ish, but also about understanding Latino culture and incorporating it into how the school approaches students and families. She said a

similar, culturally-sensitive approach also could be used for students from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

## Uber:

Continued from Page A1

agreed to the deal under pressure from city staff. Some city councilors were skeptical as well, pointing out the city couldn't properly evaluate the program if both weren't running at the same time. Mayor John Turner eventually cut off debate and requested staff return with an ordinance the council could consider at its April 5 meeting.

Missing from these discussions was Uber. While Uber sets some standards around drivers and vehicles,

all Uber drivers are independent contractors rather than employees. That meant the aspiring ride-hail drivers were acting independently rather than at the direction of Uber.

Whatever objections Uber had with the proposal, the city is staying mum about it. Kerns declined to say if Uber took issue with the city's day-night split between taxis and ride-hailing services.

At the meeting, the council also will consider establishing the Pete Wells Aquatic Scholarship, a swimming lesson discount program named after the former Pendleton city attor-

ney and municipal judge.

Wells died late last year from complications from a head injury. In a report from Parks and Recreation Director Liam Hughes, he wrote that Wells volunteered at the aquatic center and with the local swim team. Hughes wrote the aquatic center has a program for low-income families that provides discounted season passes, but nothing similar for swim lessons.

The council meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave. The meeting also will be available online live via Zoom at [bit.ly/3iaPLbo](http://bit.ly/3iaPLbo).

2022

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