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**INSIDE** SPRING 2022 SPECIAL SECTION ON AGRIBUSINESS



## Hermiston Food Pod fills up

By ERICK PETERSON  
*East Oregonian*

HERMISTON — Taking a rare break during a busy day, Patrick Hunt leaned against his food truck and chatted about the success of the Hermiston Food Pod.

The pod, a collection of food trucks at 240 S.W. Third Street, across from the post office, is full. Its nine trucks are present and open for business. The final holdout was Krack Burger, which opened Friday, April 15.



Hunt

Hunt manages the pod, coordinating the individual business owners and acting as a liaison with the city of Hermiston.

“I’m grateful to the community for making this happen,” Hunt said. He added he was appreciative to city government, too.

The pod had been closed so the city could renovate the property. Plumbing and electricity were added, making it possible for additional trucks to set up shop. In recent months, the pod reopened, with between two and four trucks present at any given time.

Hunt’s mobile restaurant, Southern Twain BBQ, was among the few that opened early. At the restaurant, he cooked and served sausages, sandwiches, nachos and more. Slowly but surely, more trucks hooked up until the lot was full.

The fleet of trucks offers a variety of food: barbecued ribs, grilled hamburgers, kalua pork, tacos, biscuits and gravy and more, depending on the particular truck from which one wants to dine.

Hunt said the diversity of foods was important to him. Many restaurateurs wished to open at the pod, he said. He added he turned some down, just because he wanted to avoid having redundancies.

“We can’t have too much of the same stuff,” he said. “There were vendors who wanted to offer more tacos and I had to tell them that I was sorry, but we weren’t going to do that.”

Such a situation, he said, would have made things worse for both customers and vendors.

He said his goal is to create fun. A Hermiston resident, Hunt said he wished for the pod to be a lively place for people, children and families, in particular, to gather. Music plays, and banners wave. The pod, he said, is an attraction for people who might not have anything else to do.

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## DOWNTOWN PENDLETON

# Improvement pains

### Businesses report losing customers due to upgrades to infrastructure

By JOHN TILLMAN  
*East Oregonian*

PENDLETON — The Oregon Department of Transportation’s signal upgrade project in downtown Pendleton has left some businesses short of customers.

Work has progressed on Court and Dorion avenues to replace traffic lights with new ones or stop signs and to make sidewalks accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The project has affected blocks around The Marigold Hotel, 105 S.E. Court Ave., reducing traffic to one lane and making sidewalk access difficult.

Kristine Taylor owns ReRide, a Western resale store at 108 S.E. Court Ave., across the street from the hotel. She took to Facebook on Sunday, April 17, to express how the construction is affecting her business.

“Until further notice: Due to construction beyond our control we will only be open for sure on Fridays and Saturdays,” according to the post, “and that’s only if we can get to our front door.”

She told customers the shop may be able to open in the evenings or for private shopping, so message ReRide and see its website and social media pages for some store merchandise.

“And just to be real, it’s literally crazy how ODOT can do construction that almost completely blocks off a store for at least six weeks,” Taylor posted, “and there’s no financial help ... or any kind of relief plan.”

ReRide “contacted everyone we can think of,” she continued, and all it got was sympathy.

“Sympathy is not going to keep our store open,” Taylor stated in the post, “so if anybody has an ‘in’ to an Oregon state official or a really good attorney that would want to take a case pro bono. We’re sure that we’re not the only ones being affected. This is not something the state of Oregon should just be able to do.”

Jeannine Camden of Robbins Rockin Boutique tanning salon, 104 S.E. Court Ave., on April 18



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Zach Drew, of HP Civil, uses his measuring tape on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, while working on sidewalks in front of the Hamley Western Store & Saddle Shop. The construction work has narrowed traffic flow to one lane and reduced sidewalk access.



Phil Wright/East Oregonian

Subcontractors work Tuesday, April 19, 2022, on the installation of electrical systems for traffic signal upgrades at the intersection of Southeast Court Avenue and First Street in downtown Pendleton. Kristine Taylor, owner of ReRide, a Western resale store, says the project, which includes upgrades to curbs, is affecting her business.

said the the construction is affecting business.

“Of course business is way down,” she said. “People can’t park anywhere. It’s hard to deliver. You can’t come to the front door. There are no sidewalks. It hurts all the way around.”

Owner Robbin Ferguson said, “The work has definitely affected our business, especially the boutique. We’re off about 80%.”

She adds, “Originally they expected to be done by the end of April, but there were delays, so it may be longer. I wonder how many legs will be broken or rocks will come through my window.”

She said she hoped the upcoming Mothers’ Day sale may help

regain some losses.

Her building mates, Shannon Reinhart of Hello Honey hairdressing and Jennifer Harrison of Jennifer’s Nails, also said they have lost customers.

“There’s no access to come in. Clients think we’re closed,” Reinhart said. “Handicapped parking is nonexistent. Elderly and handicapped in wheelchairs or with walkers can’t come to the side door. There’s a step up.”

Although it’s an ODOT project, Reinhart concluded, “It would be nice if the city had contacted us ahead of time.”

“We heard nothing from the city,” Harrison added. “Boom! Wham! It’s been at least two weeks on this side (of Court). Normally we’re busy. Clients

### MORE INFORMATION

You can visit the traffic signal and curb upgrade project webpage at [bit.ly/3u9H87u](https://bit.ly/3u9H87u) and visit [TripCheck.com](https://www.tripcheck.com) for up-to-date traffic impacts during construction.

call to cancel or ask if we’re even open.”

Reinhart’s client on April 18 was Harrison.

The city in late January sent a news release to local media and posted on its Facebook page about the traffic signal upgrades and ADA curb ramps ODOT was starting the week of Feb. 7 on Southeast Court Avenue and First Street, which also is Interstate 84/U.S. 30.

“Later this week the contractor will start to move in construction equipment and set up traffic control,” the city reported at the time. “Starting next week, traffic on U.S. 30/S.E. Court Avenue will be reduced to one lane. Crews will also start the removal of existing signals and sidewalks.”

The East Oregonian published a news brief about the work on the paper’s website on Jan. 30 and in the print edition on Feb. 1.

ODOT Project Manager Alan Davis said the department is working with businesses.

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## Events commemorate 80th anniversary of Doolittle Raid

### Airmen training in early days of World War II at Pendleton Field played a significant role

By JOHN TILLMAN  
*East Oregonian*

PENDLETON — The United States was less than five months into World War II and needed a serious boost.

That came April 18, 1942, when 16 Army Air Force B-25 Mitchell bombers took off from the aircraft carrier Hornet in the north Pacific. The 80 airmen raided Tokyo and other parts of Honshu. This unprecedented joint service operation was America’s first offensive action of the war.

Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle — later a four-star general — planned and led the raid. Of the 16 planes and crews, 15 crashed, ditched or crash-landed. One landed in the Soviet Union.

Still, the raid showed the U.S. mili-

tary could reach the far shores of Japan. And the Pendleton Field military base was central to the effort.

According to [oregonencyclopedia.org](https://oregonencyclopedia.org), in November 1941, 14 North American B-25 bombers arrived at Pendleton Field on Pendleton’s Airport Hill, and in December, planes from Pendleton Field flew antisubmarine patrols along coastal areas as part of the 2nd Air Force air defense for the Northwest Pacific coastline. That changes in January 1942, when Pendleton Field was assigned the task of providing heavy bombardment unit training. The airfield was one of four bases with runways long enough to fulfill the training requirements.



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Images of the airmen who trained in the early months of World War II at Pendleton Field for the Doolittle Raid line hang on a wall Monday, April 18, 2022, during the Pendleton Air Museum’s dinner and fundraiser on the 80th anniversary of the raid.

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