

MORROW COUNTY

# Commissioners suspend \$672K gift for BMCC

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — Morrow County Board of Commissioners last week voted to suspend a \$627,517 share of Amazon's one-time gift payment to Blue Mountain Community College.

The move came Wednesday, April 20, after Commissioner Melissa Lindsay said she wanted the county to "hold on to those Blue Mountain Community College dollars."

She said BMCC had "transitioned away somewhat from our workforce development" and she had felt "uncomfortable." It was her preference, she said, to keep that money until more was known about where it would be directed. She said she wanted to ensure that it would benefit Morrow County.

According to Lindsay, because BMCC is not going to fund its part of the Workforce Training Center in Boardman, the county itself could direct the money to the center.

"I did confirm that those checks had not been cut yet," she said.

This being the case, suspending the payment would be an easier matter than they would have been otherwise.

Commissioner Don Russell said this move by the commissioners would be an overreach.

"Blue Mountain has a

board of directors that is elected by the public to oversee their budget," he said. "They spend a dollar where they think it benefits the most people. And now for three county commissioners to weigh in and say, 'We don't like how your elected officials are running your budget, and so we're going to withhold tax dollars that, probably, rightfully, were yours,' I think is wrong."



Doherty



Lindsay



Russell

He stated an error by Oregon led to a problem with distribution. The college, because it is in the taxing district, should have received an even greater share of the Amazon gift, he said.

Lindsay countered Russell by stating her belief this money should not be sent to Pendleton.

Following this discussion, there was a vote to suspend the money until research could be done. Commissioners voted 2-1, with board Chair Jim Doherty and Lindsay voting to suspend

the money and Russell voting against.

Doherty on Tuesday, April 26, said he was heartbroken over BMCC's problems. The school is suffering low enrollment, cutbacks and budget shortfalls. The commissioner said he and his son are alumni of the college.

He said the topic of the suspension will be revisited at some point, following further discussions.

Lindsay, too, said more discussions are scheduled.



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Good Shepherd Medical Center employees pose April 21, 2022, with Hermiston quilter Jeanne Echols, 95, who donated her homemade quilts to give to the hospital's youngest patients. To the right is Echols' friend, Diane Isom, who drove her to the Hermiston hospital.

# No time for bingo

95-year-old Hermiston woman keeps on sewing

By KATHY ANEY  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Jeanne Echols pushed her walker purposefully toward the glass front doors of Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, the morning of April 21.

In the walker's basket lay nine colorful, neatly folded quilts. The miniature quilts would go to comfort the hospital's youngest patients.

One might think this nonagenarian would want to kick back and relax in her advanced years instead of toiling away on quilts, but that's evidently not in Echols' DNA.

"Why should I just play bingo or something?" she said. "I love to sew."

On this day, Echols entered the hospital lobby with her most recent batch of patchwork masterpieces and donned a mask. Good Shepherd CEO Brian Sims stepped forward to ooh and ah over the quilts. He told her about the ones he has at home, quilted by his grandmother.

"I don't know anybody who does this anymore," Sims said. "It's a lost art."

The Hermiston woman can't quite recall when she started sewing, but she was tiny. By age 12, she was sewing her little's sister's pajamas and other garments on the family sewing machine. Later, she stitched everything from snowsuits to hats and fleece jackets for her five children. She sewed shirts for her husband, Hal. When the shirts wore out, she cut them up and made panties for her two daughters.

"My first machine was a little treadle that my husband took the top off of and put a little motor in for me," she recalled. "That was in 1945. I sewed on that for years and years."

Herald was a career Army man so the family moved often. Military service took them to Georgia, Germany, Kansas, Washington D.C and finally to Hermiston where he served as commander of the Umatilla Army Depot from 1973-75.

In Hawaii, Jeannie sewed her husband Hawaiian shirts. Everywhere they moved, they hauled the sewing machine with them. Hal died a year-and-a-half ago in the aftermath of a stroke. The two met as four years old in Sunday school class in Orange, California. She misses her

husband of 75 years.

Before Echols moved into an apartment in Sun Terrace, she decided to give away her sewing machine, thinking she wouldn't have space to sew. But she missed it. She bought a little Singer and got sewing again.

So Echols continues to make quilts for the young patients at Good Shepherd. She also provides quilts for the Trucare Pregnancy Clinic in Hermiston and crochets hats for premature babies at Kadlec Regional Medical Center.

On Thursday, Echols soaked in her superstar status for about 15 minutes as she presented her most recent batch of quilts. ER staff gathered around her and admired her work. With Echols and her quilts front and center, they posed for a group photo, including Echols' friend Diane Isom, who had driven her to the hospital.

Afterwards, they peppered Echols with questions. When hospital communications director Caitlin Cozad asked Echols why she keeps on making quilts, the nonagenarian gave a simple answer.

"I love to sew," she said matter-of-factly. "That's my thing."

She doesn't intend to stop any time soon.

# Cattle Barons rides into Pendleton for 14th year

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Highlighting everything from cowboy grit, geldings, working dogs and Western gear, Pendleton Cattle Barons was created as a way to honor the region's Western heritage. The nonprofit event wrangles in money for scholarships for area students pursuing further education in agriculture-related fields.

In its 14th year, the 2022 event kicks off this week in and around the Pendleton Convention Center with the majority of the activities slated for Friday, April 29, and Saturday, April 30. In addition to supporting students, Cattle Barons helps the local economy as thousands of people attend, spending money at area businesses. While some of the events charge an entry fee, there are plenty of activities that people can enjoy free of charge.

The Tradin' Post Trade Show and Western Artistry Show & Sale offer a variety of shopping opportunities. It's open Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. People also can preview the Western Select horses (Friday, 10 a.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.) and working dogs (Friday, 1 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.) that will be on the auction block. Also, information about the horses and dogs is available on the event website. The sale is Saturday, 3-6:30 p.m.

Other highlights include the Ranch Rodeo Championships (Friday, 6 p.m.) and the North American Stock Saddle Bronc Championships (Saturday, 7 p.m.) features nearly two dozen of the best stock saddle bronc riders.

Both events are in the Round-Up Pavilion. Tickets for each event are \$20 for adults or \$10 for ages 5-12. General admission combo tickets for both nights are \$35 for adults or \$15 for kids.

Also, the popular Buckaroo BBQ Challenge offers bragging rights to backyard grillers as they show off their sizzlin' skills in preparing tri-tip, chicken and baby back pork ribs. The contestants also compete for trophies and prize money.

Sanctioned by the Pacific Northwest BBQ Association, a purse of \$5,000 is up for grabs — with the overall grand champion taking home \$1,025 and the reserve grand champion pocketing \$750.

"It's always a big hit, and it's fun to see everyone's preferences and the friendly competition," said Kristen Dollarhide of Travel Pendleton, who serves as the Buckaroo BBQ Challenge director.

For an opportunity to judge the people's choice in tri-tip, follow your nose and purchase a voting button for \$5. The tasting runs Saturday 1-2:30 p.m. in the convention center parking lot. In addition, The Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub is hosting a beer garden

To learn more about Pendleton Cattle Barons, to view a full schedule or to purchase tickets for the ranch rodeo or saddle bronc championships, visit [www.cattlebarons.net](http://www.cattlebarons.net). For questions, about the Buckaroo BBQ Challenge, contact Dollarhide at [kristen@travelpendleton.com](mailto:kristen@travelpendleton.com) or 541-276-7411.

# POM announces new executive director

East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — The Port of Morrow has a new boss.

Lisa Mittelsdorf starts as the port's executive director May 9. She is the port's economic development director. The port announced the move in a press release Wednesday, April 27.

Mittelsdorf has been with the Port of Morrow for more than 30 years, working closely with previous directors, the announcement stated. As executive director, she will be responsible for the management and administra-

tion of port activities.

Port of Morrow Commission President Rick Stokoe said Mittelsdorf is an exceptional leader.

"Lisa's successful collaborations with her many board positions, strong community and business partnerships and experience managing successful teams will elevate the port's success as we continue to be the second largest port in the state," he said according to the release.

Port Commissioner Joe Taylor in the release complimented Mittelsdorf's experiences and relationships as

"a huge advantage not only with our port partners but also with our county, region and state.

The port commission began an internal search to fill the position, which was left vacant by the death of Executive Director Ryan Neal in January. By April 4, it received letters of interest from candidates and then conducted interviews. According to the release, there were three very qualified internal applicants who made the decision difficult.

The commission thanked the candidates.

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### Echo Fire Department receives roof grant

ECHO — The Echo Rural Fire Protection District has received a \$20,000 grant from the Wildhorse Foundation to repair the fire station roof, helping to alleviate the \$26,000 price tag. Operating on an annual budget of \$100,000, the district already spent \$25,000 on a new engine for a truck in early July 2021. Then the roof at the station began leaking in late December.

"At first, we thought it would be an easy fix," Fire Chief Delbert Gehrke said, "but then insulation began to fall into the firehouse, exposing a hole that allowed you to see through the ceiling."

Gehrke decided to put an application in with the Wildhorse Foundation, despite only a couple

of weeks left in the application window, hoping for funds to help alleviate some of the cost.

To his surprise, the foundation was able to approve the request and write the grant in a short time.

The Wildhorse Foundation uses 3% of the net gaming revenue made at the Wildhorse Resort & Casino to invest in community matters.

According to the Wildhorse Foundations website, [thewildhorsefoundation.com](http://thewildhorsefoundation.com), since the foundation's indoctrination in 2001, the organization has provided \$13 million to local cultural, educational and public health endeavors. In 2019 alone, the Wildhorse Foundation provided more than \$1.1 million to 127 organizations within the state.

—EO Media Group

**AN INVITATION TO STUDENTS OF THE BIBLE**  
**CHRIST PREACHES TO "THE SPIRITS IN PRISON"**  
*The Text: 1 Peter 3:18-22*

The Question: *What does this passage mean to Seventh-day Adventist Christians who believe that the dead are truly dead (body, mind, and spirit) until Jesus returns, and that hell is a future, temporary event?*

The Plan: *Examine the "who," "what," "when," "where" and "why" of this passage.*

You are invited to attend Saturday, April 30, 11 a.m. 855 West Highland Avenue, Hermiston, Oregon (Followed by Lunch and Q&A session).  
Presenter/Facilitator: Pastor Kent Knight

*Help us, help our community! April 30 @ Roy Raley Park 10am-1pm*

**PENDLETON LIONS CLUB FOUNDATION**

**CAN & BOTTLE DRIVE**

**SODA**

# UEC hits capital credits milestone

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Umatilla Electric Cooperative announced it surpassed \$100 million in total refunds to its members through the cooperative's history.

UEC's Board of Directors in March approved the return of \$4.5 million to members as part of the cooperative's capital credits program, according to a press release April 11, from the co-op. Current and former members who purchased electricity during 2018 and 2020 will receive a refund.

Umatilla Electric will mail the checks in mid-April, except for refunds of less than \$10. That will instead remain in the member's capital credits account until it surpasses that amount in a future distribution.

As a not-for-profit, member-owned company, UEC operates at cost, with net operating revenues returned to members in the form of capital credit refunds. Refunds to members are based on the amount of electricity purchased during the specified year.

With the latest distribution to members, UEC has exceeded \$100 million returned to members since the cooperative began distributing capital credit refunds early in its history. UEC becomes the 24th of nearly 900 rural electric cooperatives nationwide to reach the milestone.

"As capital credits reflect each member's ownership in the cooperative, it's a tremendous achievement to reach this milestone," Bryan Wolfe, president of UEC's board, said in the press release. "It's important for us to demonstrate to our members what it means to be a cooperative. What better way to tell our story than to return capital credits?"

UEC's annual meeting on October 10, 1947, was lightly attended; as it turned out, only a few dozen members were present in person to witness the dawn of "capital credits."

Ray Woolley, UEC's general manager in 1947 explained how capital credits work: Members share in the cooperative's profits, called "margins," which is revenue minus expenses. A member's share of the margins is called capital credits.

If a given member spent \$200 for electric service during the year and UEC's margins totaled 10% of revenue, UEC would set aside \$20 to return to that member at a later date. The membership in 1947 voted 30-1 in favor of adopting capital credits.

UEC provided no capital credits from 1937 until 1941, because the cooperative operated without profits during its early years. It has assigned capital credits in all years since, and UEC paid its first capital credits, totaling \$29,216, to its members in 1960.

**WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO**  
**4/29 - May 5**  
**Cineplex Show Times**  
Price changes: Adults: \$10.00 • Child: \$8.00 Senior: \$8.00 • Matinees (before 4:00pm): \$8.00

The Northman (R)  
4:50p 7:50p  
extra 1:50p show 4/29-5/1

The Bad Guys (PG)  
3:50p 6:30p 9:10p  
extra 1:10p show 4/29-5/1

Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore (PG13)  
4:30p 7:30p  
extra 1:30p show 4/29-5/1

Sonic the Hedgehog 2 (PG)  
3:40p 6:20p 9:00p  
extra 1:00p show 4/29-5/1

The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent (R)  
4:20p 6:50p 9:20p  
extra 1:40p show 4/29-5/1

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