

Pendleton's Westgate Apartment Homes project moves ahead

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Work commenced this month on Westgate Apartment Homes, a 204-unit housing complex at 2701 Westgate, Pendleton.

Haley Hawkins, portfolio manager at C&R Real Estate Management Group, Portland, provided project details.

The complex will offer studio, one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom apartments with open floor plans, air conditioning, 9-foot tall or vaulted ceilings, include cable and internet and more. In addition, residents will have access to a large clubhouse with a recreation room, fitness center, sports and business facilities.

"This is not subsidized housing," Hawkins said. "Rents are not yet set but will be reflective of the amenities and features of the community."

Pendleton Mayor John Turner in the city's newslet-



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Construction workers build a retaining wall Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at the site of the future Westgate Apartment Homes in Pendleton.

ter for May called attention to Westgate Apartments as well as other housing projects.

Housing studies in 2011 and 2016 showed Pendleton needs new housing for all levels of income, and Turner reported cited leaders see a direct link between scarce housing and a lack of workforce in Pendleton.

One study showed a need for 1,000 new housing units in the next 20 years, so in 2017 the city council adopted "more housing" as a city priority with a goal of building 50 new units each year.

"After six years of building relationships with land owners, developers and contractors, our efforts are

starting to pay off," according to Turner.

Pendleton in 2016 issued 10 new housing permits, then averaged 50 housing permits a year from 2017 to 2020.

"We issued 163 new permits in 2021," Turner reported, "and in the first four months of 2022, we have already issued 215 new

permits. We have more housing starts on the way and should be on track to issue about 300 new permits in 2022."

The mayor said he is encouraged with the progress on affordable housing.

"The Wildflower complex next to Olney Cemetery will begin renting units in July and will eventually offer 80 units of affordable housing," according to Turner's statement. "In September, the Horizon Project is planning to break ground on another 70 units of affordable housing on the east side of Pendleton. Both of these apartment complexes have been made possible by partnering with Oregon Housing and Community Services."

Turner also stated the future of more single-family homes is starting to focus on several plots of land.

A cluster of about 20 new houses eventually will go on the land near the entrance to the Sunridge Middle School. A group of developers from

the Tri-Cities is working with the city to build houses and townhomes on about 56 acres between the Middle School and Southwest Nye Avenue. The city also is working closely with a group of landowners on the east side of Pendleton to eventually develop about 250 acres that stretches from the water filtration plant west to Highway 11.

This major construction project will require the city to build a water booster pump station near the water filtration plant and widen Goad Road for better access.

"We intend to form a reimbursement district, which will require the developers to pay the city back its infrastructure costs as they sell the houses," Turner stated.

New housing in Pendleton, according to Turner, means a larger workforce, more children in Pendleton schools, more shoppers in stores and restaurants and an increase in property tax revenues for the city.

HERMISTON

Student drivers take the wheel

Driving program set to return to high school

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Driver's education is returning to Hermiston High School.

"We haven't had a class since spring of 2019, so people have been waiting for it to come back," Steve Anderson, Hermiston High School teacher, said.

Anderson is one of the two driver's education teachers for classes that began Wednesday, May 18, and end July 1. He said the program was put on hold in 2019, by order of the Oregon Department of Education. There are private companies, which were not under the same restrictions, and they were able to offer classes, he said; the Hermiston School District was not so lucky.

For months, while these classes were on hiatus, students frequently asked him about driver's education, Anderson said. Now that it is available once more, he added, the buzz about it has been positive.

"People are really excited about it," he said.

Class sign-up started, and Anderson said the class filled quickly. Thirty students are presently enrolled in the class that begins and ends.

The application for the program shows students must pay a \$300 fee before starting the class, though a student may qualify for reduced tuition of \$225. In addition to paying the fee, students must have their Oregon Instruction Permit.

According to a Hermiston School District brochure, students will attend class five days a week for one hour and drive and observe for three hours one day a week for seven weeks.

Anderson commented on one special thing about the class. According to the instructor, students will receive a driver's education program certificate and may qualify for a waiver so they won't have to take a DMV drive test.

Anderson said that his program was vetted by the Oregon Department of Transportation against the DMV test. The school's final drive test is just as rigorous as the DMV one, he said.

The only shortcoming, according to Anderson, is that the program does not have more teachers. There are two for the summer, though more teachers are on the way. He said three teachers are set to be trained during the summer, and they will start in the fall. At that time, the school has plans to offer classes to 60 students, with the potential for 90, if necessary.

These teachers, Anderson said, are young. Anderson said he is retiring and planning to return to the district for part-time work. These new teachers, on the other hand, may stick around for years.

He stressed, however, that a driver's training does not begin and end with this program. It is very important, he said, for parents to set good examples for their kids.

"If you drive with one hand on the steering wheel, they'll do the same thing," Anderson said. Likewise, he added, if parents use their phones or yell at other people on the road, young people will follow suit.

For more information, email Anderson at steve.anderson@hermiston.org.

MILTON-FREEWATER

4 caught in connection to graffiti

East Oregonian

MILTON-FREEWATER — Milton-Freewater police Chief Doug Boedigheimer reported law enforcement has caught three teens and one adult related to numerous cases of graffiti.

Boedigheimer in a press release Friday, May 20, reported members of the Milton-Freewater Police Department and the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office "collaborated on the detention of several juveniles and one adult who had been involved in a month's long spree of criminal mischief to public and private property in the Milton-Freewater area."

Residents have reported multiple cases of graffiti

since, according to the press release, but police had no suspects.

Police and sheriff's deputies, with the assistance of Milton-Freewater Unified School District staff, developed several juvenile suspects. Boedigheimer reported that led to referring three juveniles to the Umatilla County Juvenile Department, as well as the arrest of Harry Dwain Shaul, 19, of Milton-Freewater. Police on May 13 booked Shaul into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

"The graffiti involved in this spree was not of an apparent gang nature," according to Boedigheimer.

He explained police do not think the Nazi swastika, which is one of the

graffiti symbols, indicates white supremacist activity in Milton-Freewater, and it has not been specifically linked to the aforementioned individuals.

"The investigation into their crimes, as well as the swastika, is ongoing," he stated.

Law enforcement also is tallying the cost of the damages from the graffiti for the purpose of helping the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office determine charges.

Boedigheimer credited the efforts of law enforcement and the school district as an example of "what can be accomplished when school districts and law enforcement across various agencies work together."

Pendleton schools have new principals

East Oregonian

Pendleton — The Pendleton School District early this week announced it completed the hiring process for several building-level administrator openings and made the following selections. The school district board took official action Thursday, May 19, to approve the hires.

PSD selected Piper Kelm as the principal at Sunridge Middle School. She serves as the assistant principal at Sherwood Elementary School, where she has worked for the past three years and also served as dean of students.

Kelm started her career at Pendleton High School as a science teacher and taught there for 28 years. She replaces SMS Principal Dave Williams, who resigned effective to take a position with InterMountain Education Service District.

Coree Terjeson is taking on the role of principal at Washington Elementary School.

Terjeson serves as the assistant principal at Washington Elementary, where she is completing her first year in this position. Before being at Washington she was a dean of students,

special education teacher and intervention specialist for the Hermiston School District.

Her teaching career started in the Pendleton School District in 2010 as a special education teacher. Terjeson will replace Washington Principal J.P. Richards who resigned effective to take a position closer to family.

Heidi Paullus is succeeding Terjeson as the assistant principal position at Washington Elementary.

Paullus now works for the InterMountain ESD as the Virtual Online Academy principal. For nine years prior she worked as an instructional coach for the

ESD. She also taught sixth grade at Sunridge Middle School for three years, fourth grade for five years in the Hermiston School District and fourth grade for eight years in the Jefferson County School District.

T.J. Presley is the district's selection as the new assistant principal at Sherwood Elementary School.

Presley is the 6-12 grade principal and athletic director in the Pilot Rock School District. He began his teaching career in the Pilot Rock School District as a middle level math teacher. Presley succeeds Kelm as she moves into the principal job at Sunridge Middle School.

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