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PENDLETON

PDC considers reducing grants

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton Development Commission could cut the size of grants it gives for projects in the city's urban renewal district.

The commission's advisory committee at its June 2 meeting discussed the availability of urban renewal funds for this year and reductions in grant percentages. The PDC plans to address the issue and grant award changes at a special workshop Tuesday, June 14.

City Manager Robb Corbett, who doubles as the development commission's executive director, said the PDC increased the percentage amounts possible for grants to entice more project applications, and the move worked.

"Now the PDC is looking to reduce the percentage grant amount as a way to extend the number of projects we could get done," he further explained. "It is thought that perhaps now that there is more interest, 40% might be too generous."

PDC advisory committee members discussed returning to awarding more grants for a smaller percentage of total project cost. Charles Denight, the commission's associate director, said some owners would be happy with a grant of 20% the value of their project or even less.

"Others need or want more," he said. "In the past, some members of the PDC have been reluctant to use this approach, because they believe every applicant should have the same opportunity for funding."

The PDC is a governmental entity separate from the city, although city councilors serve as its commissioners. It manages the urban renewal district and receives feedback from the citizen committee of volunteers, which meets monthly.

The PDC is using a large portion of its budget for street reconstruction. The advisory committee at its June 2 meeting reviewed the funding available, the grant commitments made and formulated recommendations for the best path forward for the PDC through 2022 and into 2023.

The PDC at the workshop also plans to discuss altering grant award amounts. Roy Jones serves on the PDC advisory committee. He said granting variable amounts could lead to the appearance of favoritism.

Public money draws private investment

The PDC in May provided a \$500,000 grant to the \$2.2 million project to convert the crime-ridden Marigold Hotel, which the city shut down, into the extended-stay Pendleton Hotel.

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Brandon Granberry puts on makeup Friday, June 10, 2022, in preparation for a drag queen show in Pendleton.
Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

DRAGGING PENDLETON

Drag queens take to the stage in a first for Round-Up City

By YASSER MARTE
East Oregonian



Photos by Yasser Marte/East Oregonian
Andrea Wabaunsee as Tatiana Rexia is ready for the Let 'Er Drag show Friday, June 10, 2022, in Pendleton.



Drag queens Katana, bottom, and Brandon Granberry prepare Friday, June 10, 2022, for Let 'Er Drag, a first-ever drag queen show in Pendleton.



Sugar Woodward prepares makeup Friday, June 10, 2022, right before the Let 'Er Drag show at Electric Sundown, Pendleton.

PENDLETON — She smeared a dash of blue face paint on her hand and with her brush she dipped into the blue like a painter with a palette.

Andrea Wabaunsee, stage name Tatiana Rexia, leaned in front of the mirror and applied the makeup on the canvas of her cheeks, getting ready for Let 'Er Drag — a first-of-its kind drag show Friday night, June 10, at Electric Sundown in Pendleton. The place was standing room only, with maybe 300 people in attendance.

"Mostly on stage I'm a female demon or genderless demon just because most of my drag is centered from my dark mind, especially as a child growing up being transgender and not being able to say that," Wabaunsee said. "It's kind of a lot so I keep it bottled up and paint it on my body."

Her drag family considers her mother, a title and duty she takes with serious and admirable care.

"It's a lot of responsibility, especially when someone is in a situation where they don't feel wanted publicly with the person they care for," Wabaunsee said. "So I just need to be there like my drag mother was there for me."

PFLAG Pendleton hosted the event. PFLAG provides support to family and friends of the LGBTQ community.

Nine drag queens from Pasco, which has had an active drag scenes for many years, came to Pendleton to perform in the show, which also included some locals. Among the group was Brandon Granberry, Karisma and Sugar Woodward and performers only going by their stage names, including Katana.

Granberry and Katana helped each other dress for the show, listened to music together and made fun of each other.

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'I'm afraid for the mothers with babies on the way'

Mothers face challenges of finding baby formula

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The baby formula shortage plaguing the country persists in Umatilla County. Graciela Arechiga of Hermiston is struggling to find formula for her 5-month-old baby.

"I'm not able to produce enough breast milk to feed my baby, so formula is my only option," she said. "We have gone to several stores for days straight, first thing in the morning to check and see if any formula had been delivered. When I ask the store associates when they would get more they would always answer that they didn't know."

Arechiga said she would be nervous when she got to half a can of formula

because she didn't know what she would feed her daughter if more formula wasn't available.

"Sometimes we would be so desperate," she said. "We would have to feed her any formula we were able to find at the store, even if it wasn't the kind she normally took. Even recently we have had to go to different towns looking for it, just to find that there's nothing there either."

Arechiga is in a few first-time mom support groups. When she has been able to find the formula a member's baby needs, she mails it to the mom.

"I can't tell you how many times I've cried or haven't been able to sleep thinking about babies not having anything to eat because of this shortage," Arechiga said. "I'm lucky because



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Graciela Arechiga gives her daughter Rosalia a bottle on Saturday, June 11, 2022. The Hermiston mom worries about being able to find enough formula to feed the baby.

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