

Baker City theater's rebirth continues thanks to \$200,000 state grant

By LISA BRITTON
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A recent grant has kickstarted work again on the Baker Orpheum Theater renovation project for Phase Five of the six-phase endeavor on the historic building at 1812 Main St., Baker City.

The \$200,000 grant came from Oregon Heritage, a division of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

"This is a big deal," said Aletha Bonebrake, chair of the Orpheum building committee. "The \$200,000 is the largest amount they're allowed to give."

Bonebrake is also a board member for Eastern Oregon Regional Theatre, which will make its home in the Orpheum when it is complete.

The grant was one of 28 awarded to Oregon Main Street Network organizations across the state for projects that "encourage economic revitalization."

Baker City Downtown solicited applications for local projects, and a BCD committee selected the Orpheum to submit to the state.

"It had a good solid plan ready to go, local support, and the economic impact to

downtown will be huge," said Carol Phillips, a BCD board member.

This most recent grant, paired with \$295,000 from the Cultural Resources Economic Fund that was awarded in April 2021, gets the ball rolling again on the project.

"Now we're starting to build," Bonebrake said. "These two grants have been spectacular."

The last bit of asbestos has to be removed, and a geotechnical analysis on the foundation is underway to prepare for concrete footings, which will support the structural steel framework for the balcony, staircase and fly loft.

"This is the beginning that people have been waiting for," Bonebrake said.

Sid Johnson & Co. is the general contractor.

The timeline

The project began in May 2016 with a \$130,000 donation from David Burris that enabled Eastern Oregon Regional Theatre to purchase the 1889 building that housed the first Orpheum Theatre, a vaudeville stage that grew with silent films and "talkies" into the late 1950s.

The theater closed in 1956. In 1964 it was remodeled into retail space.

After Burris' donation,



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

This photo from June 3, 2022, before construction started again, shows the interior of what will be the Baker Orpheum Theatre in downtown Baker City.

the Orpheum project grew with grants and donations that funded feasibility studies, design plans and asbestos removal.

Total fundraising to date is \$1,116,027.

Of that, \$355,527 came from local gifts and events.

The amount from foundations and public funds totals \$760,480.

Bonebrake is pursuing more grants for the sixth, and final, phase.

"The phase after this is the finish work," she said.

The total project cost is

estimated to be \$2.5 million.

The plan

The Baker Orpheum Theatre will have 325 seats with a professional stage, balcony, fly loft, and state-of-the-art acoustics, sound and lighting.

The marquee design is based on the 1930s art deco style.

Bonebrake said the Orpheum will be used for EORT performances, as well as local music groups and other performing arts.

She said the main floor, with 125 seats, will provide a space for smaller gatherings or presentations.

The Orpheum will also bring national acts to Baker City, she said.

This is where Burris' support comes in again — he has created a donor advised fund through Oregon Community Foundation that will support the Orpheum's future, such as underwriting the cost for national artists to reduce the price of tickets for local residents.

Donate

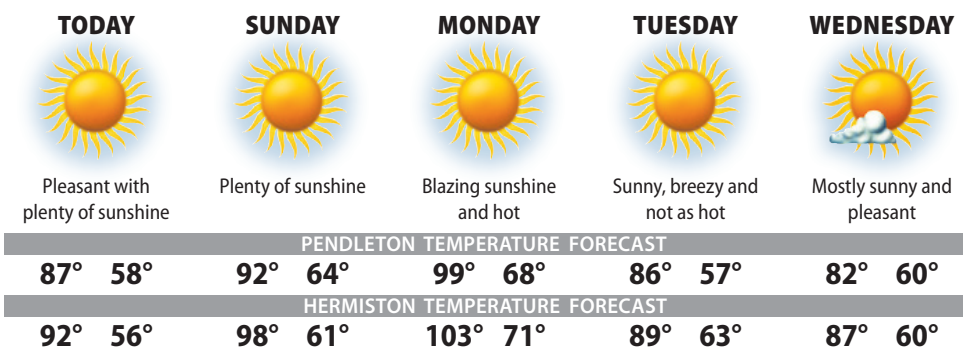
Bonebrake is happy to talk about the Orpheum project with interested groups and individuals.

"I'll show what we've done," she said.

To request a presentation, call Bonebrake at 541-519-3255.

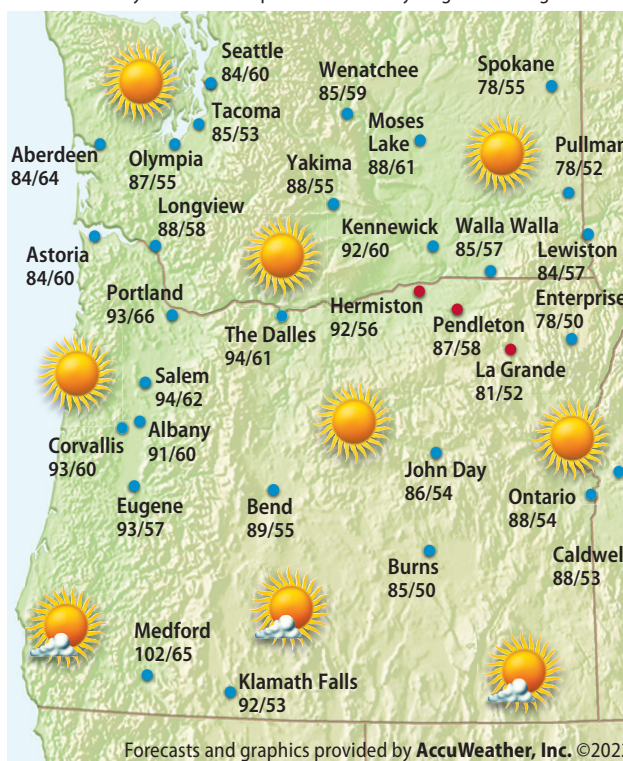
Monetary donations can be mailed to EORT, Baker Orpheum Theatre Fund, 2101 Main St., Suite 113, Baker City, OR 97814.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	79°	50°
Normals	82°	54°
Records	102° (1992)	30° (1904)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	2.16"
Normal month to date	1.00"
Year to date	10.82"
Last year to date	4.29"
Normal year to date	7.84"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	80°	53°
Normals	85°	54°
Records	107° (1992)	41° (1934)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	1.66"
Normal month to date	0.58"
Year to date	7.45"
Last year to date	2.46"
Normal year to date	4.96"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sun.
Boardman	ENE 7-14	NE 6-12
Pendleton	NE 6-12	N 6-12

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:07 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:49 p.m.
Moonrise today	2:44 a.m.
Moonset today	6:06 p.m.

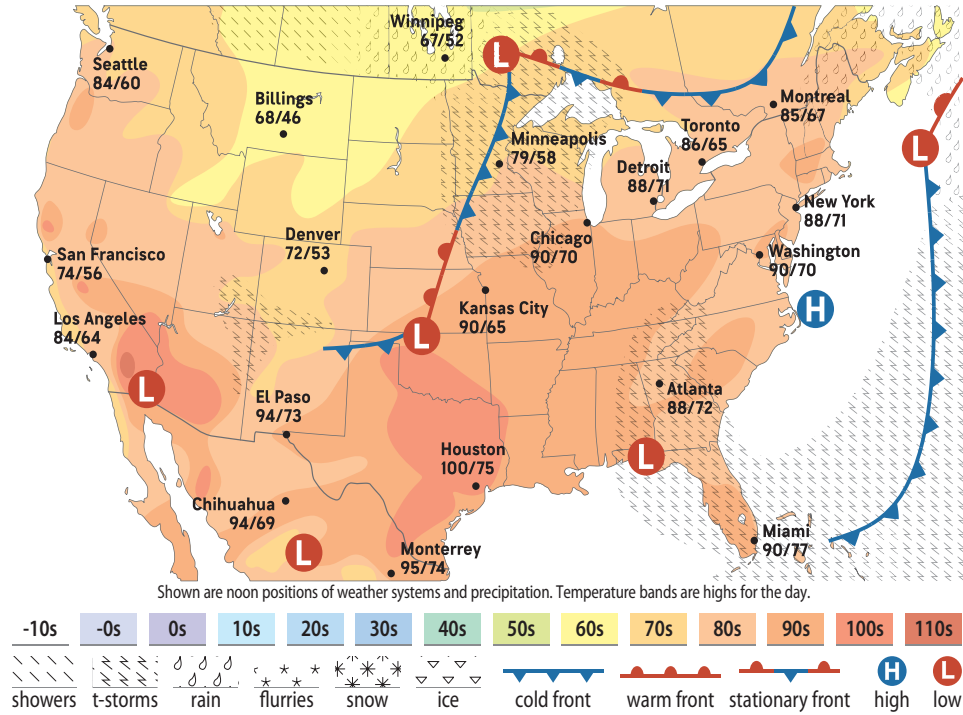
June 28 July 6 July 13 July 20

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 108° in Needles, Calif. Low 27° in Bodie State Park, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



GRANT COUNTY

Art association proposes business murals for downtown John Day

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Downtown John Day is headed for a makeover.

The Grant County Art Association and various unaffiliated artists are looking to paint a number of murals on the sides of downtown businesses in a project they're calling "Paint the town." That proposal is in addition to the city's ongoing efforts to revitalize and update the look of downtown John Day.

The Grant County Art Association is a nonprofit entity that has existed since 1968. Association President Elouise Boren said the association "has been strong in the community, but we've been silent."

Boren presented a proposal for murals to the John Day City Council during its June 14 meeting. The proposal calls for between seven and

10 murals to be painted on the sides of various businesses along Main Street.

Designs for the murals will focus on people and events relevant to the history of Grant County, including logging, ranching, gold prospecting, Native Americans, cattle drives, rodeo and the exploits of Long Un and Doc Hay.

Boren approached the city council seeking financial support so her team of artists can begin work on the murals as soon as possible. The council unanimously approved \$750 in funds that will cover paint and other materials the artists need to begin the work.

Grant County Art Association Secretary and Treasurer Kathy Kite said the group has already been in contact with a number of local business owners about painting murals on their buildings and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Of course, we need build-

ing owner permission before we started in, and we would have our compositions put together for review before we started in," she said. "We thought it could be a fun enhancement for the town."

Kite said the idea to paint murals on businesses came up during talks between various artists and that everyone "perked up" when the idea was presented.

"It sounds like the city council is trying to get tourism to be an attraction to bring people into the area, and we thought that would fit right in; also to keep our town looking Old West, which seems to be more important all the time," she said. "As time goes on, those things fade away."

The artists would complete work on one mural before starting another project, according to Kite. "We aren't going to just start drawing all over town and painting here and there."

Good Samaritans save woman, dog from water after crash on Highway 395

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

DALE — Good Samaritans jumped into the water Monday, June 20, and helped rescue a woman and her dog from a Kia minivan that crashed into Camas Creek on Highway 395 near the Grant/Umatilla county line.

According to Oregon State Police trooper Mike Mayer, the van started sliding and the driver overcorrected and hit the gravel on the shoulder of the road, going around a curve before flipping over two to three times and rolling into the middle of the creek near milepost 53.

While the passenger was able to escape the damaged van, the driver and her dog had a tougher time getting out.

Two linemen with the Monument-based Columbia

Power Cooperative, Garrett Warner and Jack Jewell, pulled up on the scene of the accident roughly 15 minutes after it happened and assessed whether they could run a rope to the vehicle and pull the driver and her dog out of the car safely.

With recent heavy rains adding to the strong current, Warner said he did not want to get swept under the car. But, in the end, Warner said, he and Jewell figured they could do it — and should before the driver, Cheryl Patterson, 69, of Olivehurst, California, got hypothermia from the cold water.

Before wading into the creek's rushing water, Jewell lent his jacket to the passenger, Lilly Papadopoulos, 19, also of Olivehurst, who by that point was sitting in the backseat of a passer-by's vehicle with the heater on trying to warm up.

Warner said he and Jewell bring clothes for all occasions when they're on the job.

"We never know how the weather is going to be," Warner said.

Warner said there are five linemen who work at the co-op, and they are about to add a sixth. He said Columbia Power has a community-oriented outlook.

"We kind of just look out for everybody out here because we're such a small co-op," Warner said. "We try to take care of the community, and when we see somebody that needs help, we just try to help them out."

According to an entry in the OSP media log, both Papadopoulos and Patterson suffered minor injuries and were taken to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, and their vehicle was towed.

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