

EAST OREGONIAN

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WINNER OF 16 ONPA AWARDS IN 2021



INSIDE WILDHORSE POW WOW SHOWCASES NATIVE CULTURE

EASTERN OREGON

Colleges agree on equity strategy

East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — A collaboration between three Eastern Oregon schools aims to close equity gaps for Eastern Oregon students at two- and four-year colleges and universities by 2030.

Gov. Kate Brown announced Monday, June 27, an investment of \$1.6 million for Blue Mountain Community College, Treasure Valley Community College and Eastern Oregon University to launch an initiative called “Moon Shot for Equity.” The three schools will work together as part of a five-year, student-centered comprehensive strategic plan to identify and remove systemic barriers that are preventing access and attainment to a post-secondary education degree.

BMCC President Mark Browning said open and equitable access is what the Pendleton-based institution strives for.

“We are excited about how Moonshot for Equity can help us reach those goals and deliver even greater success for students,” he said.

“Every student in Oregon, no matter who they are or where they come from, deserves equitable access to higher education,” Brown said in a press release announcing the initiative. “We must invest and innovate to break down the barriers that have kept too many Oregonians from succeeding in higher education. This initial investment is just the start of a program to deliver lasting and meaningful change this year and in years to come. Every person in Eastern Oregon — and throughout the state — should be able to attend college and earn a degree.”

The initiative is part of Brown’s work with public universities and community colleges to embrace innovation and focus on working smarter across education sectors to support students through every stage of education. The \$1.6 million will be funded with federal Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund dollars, which are reserved for allo-

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Browning



Insko



Pendleton High School student Allen “Len” Nguyen adds rice to her meal June 22, 2022. She uses the same ingredients in her practice session at Pendleton Tech and Trade Center as she will use at the upcoming national Family, Career and Community Leaders of America competition.

The HEAT is on

PHS student readies for national culinary arts competition

By ANTONIO ARREDONDO
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — In its first full year back in operation, Pendleton High School’s Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America already is sending a student to the national competition.

Allen “Len” Nguyen qualified for FCCLA’s Culinary Arts national competition thanks to a first-place showing at the state competition back in March. Nguyen’s qualification comes after she, her classmates and instructor and culinary arts teacher Melissa Smith put a year’s worth of hard work.

FCCLA is an organization where high schoolers learn real-life skills, such as culinary arts, fashion design and job interviewing. When Smith started teaching at the high school four years ago, the FCCLA program was nowhere to be found. One may have existed in the past, but the



Photos by Antonio Arredondo/East Oregonian

Melissa Smith, left, Pendleton High School teacher, poses for a photo June 22, 2022, with her student Allen “Len” Nguyen, who shows off her finished cooking at the Pendleton Tech and Trade Center. Nguyen is competing in the national Family, Career and Community Leaders of America competition in late July in San Diego.

remnants were long gone.

Though she was intrigued by the idea, dwindling student interest and pandemic impeded the start of the new program. While some students participated online in 2021, the new in-person school year was the

perfect time for Smith to go all in.

“I talked to the kids about it because I was finally ready and excited for it,” Smith said. “Several students were excited too, and that’s how it all came to be.”

Practice is key ingredient

As the new group started to fundraise and prepare for state competitions, Len Nguyen immediately jumped out as an engaged member. Despite not being an officer for the group, the junior — who had just moved from Houston three years prior — quickly took control.

“She was a passionate, hands-on leader,” Smith said, “and very eager with the fundraising. She’d get a lot of other students excited about it all.”

That passion for raising money transferred to a passion for competition — Nguyen decided to compete in culinary arts and put her heart into the work. She practiced with Smith almost every day, leading up to the state competition in Portland.

“She would come in and practice during her free period, during advisory, whenever she could,” Smith said. “She even went to neighbors’ houses, bringing them meals and asking how it tasted.”

Rising to the top

That practice was tested in March when Nguyen and her classmates traveled to Portland for the state competition. With no regional for the Eastern Oregon area, state was Nguyen’s first opportunity to show off her skills.

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MORROW COUNTY

Commissioners fire county administrator

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — Morrow County no longer has a county administrator.

County commissioners at a packed public meeting Tuesday, June 28, voted 2-1 to immediately terminate the employment of Darrell Green, who has held the county administrator job for four-and-a-half years.

The county board on June 27 called an emergency closed-door meeting for the next morning to consider Green’s employment. But Green insisted on holding the meeting in public rather than in an executive session.

Board Chair Jim Doherty at the

start of the meeting explained this was about one topic — considering Green’s employment. And the board would hear from only one person: Green.

Green told the board he learned in August 2021 there may have been a complaint against him and an investigation to see if he violated nepotism rules. But no one addressed the complaint with him at the time.

He told the board that in his tenure he never received any verbal or written warnings, and even today does not have the full information about what led to this moment.

“I’m struggling to understand why I’m sitting here,” Green said.

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Phil Wright/East Oregonian

Morrow County Board of Commissioners listen Tuesday, June 28, 2022, as Darrell Green, center in the lavender shirt, gives a statement to the board about the call for his termination as county administrator. The board voted 2-1 to immediately fire Green.

