

# EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2022

146th Year, No. 85

WINNER OF 16 ONPA AWARDS IN 2021



## INSIDE HERMISTON CAR CLUB HEATS UP WITH COOL RIDES

### MORROW COUNTY WATER EMERGENCY



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

Community organizer Ana Maria Rodriguez adjusts water flow June 24, 2022, at Sam Boardman Elementary in Boardman. Clean water was made available at the school during Morrow County's water emergency.

## EOU gets grant to prepare students for college

\$1.2M will go to funding rural focused program

By ANDREW CUTLER  
*The Observer*

LA GRANDE — A program to help recruit and retain rural students at Eastern Oregon University is getting a boost.

Oregon U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley announced recently that roughly \$1.2 million in grant money will go to Eastern to power a new program called Achieving Careers for Rural Oregon Student Success, or ACROSS. The program's goal is to increase outreach to schools in the region and provide courses that allow students to earn credits for high school and college at the same time.



Brown



Seydel

“Part of our case is, we’re ‘Oregon’s Rural University,’ this is what we do,” Tim Seydel, Eastern’s vice president for university advancement, said. “We’re primed to do this.”

Seydel said the ACROSS program ideally could save students up to a full year of tuition and get students into the workforce sooner. “It’ll expedite their college completion because they would be able to come in as, essentially, a sophomore if they do it all,” he said. “And that can fast track them into career pathways within the workforce.”

Kathleen Brown, Eastern’s associate director of early college initiatives, told Oregon Public Broadcasting the funding will help the university hire two college engagement specialists to support the ACROSS program as it gets off the ground. Brown said she and the new hires will be able to travel to schools throughout the region to meet students in person and talk to them about EOU.

“We have some obvious places where we get students. We get people from Pendleton. We get people from La Grande High. We get people from Baker,” Brown said. “But there are some small schools where they’ve reached out to us, so, let’s go out there.”

EOU will begin implementing the program in October, when it can officially access the grant money. But Brown told OPB that the university is starting to do some work in the meantime. Part of preparing the ACROSS program will be beefing up what Brown called “pre-college success courses.” She said that means increasing both online and in-person dual-credit offerings for rural high school students.

Brown said the idea is to provide offerings to help students “not just take random dual credits but be able to really focus and see what they can do so they can be successful here.” But Brown said EOU is still in the process of mapping out what exactly those offerings will be.

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## Boardman: Our water is safe

Local officials, workers explain the facts of Morrow County's drinking water

BY ERICK PETERSON  
*East Oregonian*

**B**OARDMAN — Boardman is working to ensure its residents know they can drink the city's water as the Port of Morrow deals with a \$2.1 million state fine for excessively spreading nitrogen-rich wastewater as fertilizer on area farmland for years.

The city even posted this message on a sign near city hall: “The city’s water is safe to drink.”

City Manager Karen Pettigrew explained city of Boardman residents receive safe and dependable water supplied from local aquifers different from their rural neighbors.



Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

A city sign on June 24, 2022, tells the public that Boardman's water is safe to drink.

“This isn’t a new issue for us,” she said.

Pettigrew said she drink’s city water and has done so for years and does not filter the water she receives from the tap.

Things were different, she said, when she was living “in the county.” Back then, she bought and consumed bottled water.

Pettigrew said city water is on a quarterly testing schedule. The

most recent test results are from Jan. 20, she said, which show nitrates at 4.77 parts per million. According to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, nitrate levels above 10 ppm “may present a serious health concern for infants and pregnant or nursing women.”

Pettigrew said many people do not know the facts about their drinking water and some people

### FOR MORROW COUNTY RESIDENTS

Anyone in Morrow County who discovers high nitrate levels should contact Morrow County Public Health at 541-481-4200 or email Ana Pineyro, Morrow County communicable disease and emergency preparedness coordinator, at apineyro@co.morrow.or.us.

believe mistruths that have been popularized on social media.

### Facts from the source

Over at Sam Boardman Elementary, workers have been filling up water containers from a fire hydrant. This water, sourced from the city of Boardman, is safe to drink, they said.

Zaira Sanchez, director of community organizing for Oregon Rural Action, was among the helpers at the school.

“We’re here, ready to distribute water to the community for people who have private wells, who might have water contaminated by nitrates,” she said.

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## Local students earn history honors

By ANTONIO ARREDONDO  
*East Oregonian*

UMATILLA COUNTY — Two local students earned top honors at the National History Day virtual conference, presenting projects regarding the nation’s history.

The National Museum of American History honored McKenzie Rose of Echo for her project, while Helix’s MayaBella Texidor earned the Outstanding Affiliate Award for her documentary.

Rose and Texidor were part of the half a million students who prepped for the National History Day contest, a program where students conduct original research on a historical topic and present it to judges.



MayaBella Texidor/Contributed Photo

MayaBella Texidor sits at Griswold High School, Helix, with her project of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council meetings. Texidor’s project earned the Outstanding Affiliate Award at the National History Day competitions on June 18, 2022.

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