

# Pendleton student follows up state culinary win with trip to nationals

By ANTONIO ARREDONDO  
East Oregonian

SAN DIEGO — After winning the state competition back in April, a Pendleton student took the next step, competing at the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America nationals conference June 29 to July 3 in San Diego.

Allen “Len” Nguyen, an incoming senior at Pendleton High, earned a silver medal for her dish of chicken, rice and green beans. The medal does not imply second place, rather meaning Nguyen scored in the 80-89 point range from the judges — still an impressive showing.



Len Nguyen/Contributed Photo

**Allen “Len” Nguyen of Pendleton poses with her silver medal after the conclusion of the national Family, Career and Community Leaders of America conference June 29-July 3, 2022, in San Diego. Nguyen scored between the 80-89 range in her culinary competition to earn the medal.**

It’s the first year back for the FCCLA program after several years off due to funding. This time around, Nguyen and her advisor, Melissa Smith, were the only two from Pendleton to make the trip down to California.

“It was my first time being there, and I learned so much,” Smith said. “And we got to see all of our kids dressed in their red jackets together.”

The two stayed with a fellow FCCLA group from Enterprise. Nguyen made friends with girls from both Enterprise and La Grande as they toured San Diego, stopping in places such as Belmont Amusement Park.

For Nguyen, who came in knowing only a few people, having time to hang out with other Eastern Oregon high schoolers was helpful.

“There was definitely less stressing than I thought,” Nguyen said.

The day of the national competition was anything but stress-free though. Nguyen originally believed she would be competing with 15 other students, but soon realized there were at least 80 competing in five pods. Smith said there could

have been as many as 160 competitors during the two days.

Much like the state competition months earlier, there were some last-minute changes. Nguyen had practiced her dish with different herbs, and a stove but was presented with a portable burner and slightly different ingredients.

“I messed up on the rice,” she said. “If I didn’t I think I would have gotten a better score in the 90s.”

Despite Nguyen’s negative attitude for the day, Smith showered her student with praise. While she was not present to watch Nguyen’s competition, Smith knows that the experience was a good, life-building one.

“When preparing for a competition, it’s tricky to mimic real life,” Smith said. “You get it drilled in your head that the competition will be strictly by the book, and when you get there it’s not by the book.”

Nguyen battled through the rice, herbs and stoves to finish with a good score. While the results haven’t been revealed to participants yet, she did earn

the silver medal for her work.

Both student and advisor are already planning for next year. Smith will not be teaching at PHS but hopes to continue her role as FCCLA advisor. After a successful first year of the program, she wants to build on it even more.

“This year we were always trying to get through the current thing,” Smith said. “With about eight weeks to go until state, we finally focused on FCCLA.”

At that point, most other schools were well underway with training. Sending a student to nationals with so little training time compared to her peers is already impressive, and Smith hopes to keep the ball moving and start from the beginning of the year.

Nguyen, meanwhile, plans on running for FCCLA president next year. She hopes to fundraise from the beginning of the year to include more people. Above all else, she wants to be back at nationals contending for a gold medal.

“I want to go back,” Nguyen said. “I hear next year is in Denver, and I hope we can bring five to six people next year.”



Mackenzie Whaley/East Oregonian

**The Umatilla River in Pendleton is flowing lower Monday, July 11, 2022, as summer heats up. The National Weather Service in Pendleton forecasts area temperatures for July 12 above 100 degrees.**

# Region under heat advisory

NWS forecasts highs of 103-106 degrees for Columbia Basin

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The National Weather Service in Pendleton issued a heat advisory for Tuesday, July 12, in the Tri-Cities and Hermiston areas. NWS is forecasting high temperatures of 103-106 degrees for the Columbia Basin.

“When a high-pressure ridge sits in, it pushes air down, and we get heat-

ing during the day,” NWS meteorologist Rob Brooks said.

For most of the week, the NWS predicts mostly dry, hot conditions with the occasional afternoon breeze. But for July 12, the high-pressure ridge will cause afternoon temperatures to rise.

While Eastern Oregon mountain areas may see isolated thunderstorms in the afternoon of July 12, Pendleton is expected to have a high of 102 degrees. Hermiston and the Tri-Cities will be slightly hotter, with Hermiston expecting a

temperature in the 103-106 degree range.

The heat advisory should only last one day, with a southwest flow bringing cooler temperatures to the region the following days.

Temperatures rise again July 16 as the area remains under the high-pressure ridge, but the Pendleton area is not expected to break 100 degrees for the remainder of the week. By July 17, a low-pressure area should bring cooler weather.

National Weather Service also advised locals to drink plenty of water and stay in cooler locations.

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### Hermiston police cite ambulance driver in crash

HERMISTON — A Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 ambulance transporting a patient Friday, July 9, collided with another vehicle, and Hermiston police cited the ambulance driver after the crash.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston reported officers were assisting Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office and Oregon State Police that morning at a crash involving a vehicle and a motorcycle just outside the city limits on Highway 395. The fire district reported it was taking one of the crash victims to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, to rendezvous with a helicopter ambulance.

A Hermiston police officer decided to follow the ambulance at a distance to ensure it made it to the hospital without any interference from drivers, according to Edmiston. The officer was operating without lights and sirens and kept several hundred yards behind the ambulance, which had lights and sirens going, when it entered the intersection of North First Place and Elm Avenue/ Highway 207 and collided

with another vehicle.

The officer immediately activated his body-worn camera, according to Edmiston.

“Those cameras constantly record and once activated, the recorded clip begins 30 seconds prior to activation,” he explained. “In this case, the collision was caught on camera.”

And after a thorough investigation, Edmiston also reported, police cited the driver of the ambulance, William Dewitt, 34, Hermiston, was cited for failure to obey a traffic control device.

The fire district reported a second ambulance arrived shortly after the crash and transported the initial patient to Good Shepherd.

Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 also reported one of its employees was injured in the collision at North First Place and Elm Avenue, and an ambulance took the employee to Good Shepherd.

### Stabbing leaves Hermiston man dead

HELLS CANYON OVERLOOK — A 64-year-old Hermiston man was stabbed to death Friday, July 8, at the Hells Canyon Overlook in southeastern Wallowa County according to a press release from the

Wallowa County Sheriff’s Office.

Dan Ridling got into an altercation with an Albany man and was stabbed in the torso, Sheriff Joel Fish said July 11. He died at the scene.

“They got in an altercation in the parking lot,” Fish said. “It was a fight between two guys, and he ended up stabbed.”

He said the weapon used was a fixed-blade sheathed knife similar to a hunting knife.

The 911 call requesting medical assistance was made at 11:36 a.m. Oregon State Police Major Crimes Unit responded to a request to assist with the investigation, the release stated.

The man who is believed to have done the stabbing cooperated with the investigation, Fish said. Law enforcement also interviewed Ridling’s wife.

No charges have yet been filed. Officials are awaiting the results of an autopsy before making any decision on charges.

“Once we get it all done, it’ll go to the grand jury,” Fish said. “He’s not been charged with anything.”

As a result, Fish declined to identify the Albany man.

Fish stated in the release that there are no known threats to the public following the incident.

—EO Media Group

## CHI ST. ANTHONY HOSPITAL

# Health techs file for union recognition

By JOHN TILLMAN  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Forty health care technical workers at CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, have filed for union recognition with the National Labor Relations Board.

The Oregon Nurses Association in a press release Thursday, July 7, announced it is representing the group of imaging, pharmacy, laboratory and sleep lab technicians and respiratory therapists. The association represents registered nurses working at CHI St. Anthony.

The technical workers identified a range of issues as their primary reasons for organizing, including ensuring safe staffing, providing high quality care and seeking equitable wages.

“Imaging technicians — a highly skilled group of technologists who use specialized equipment to create internal images used by doctors to diagnose and treat patients

— have wages that are well behind their colleagues at other hospital systems,” according to the press release.

Katie Heath, an imaging tech at St. Anthony and one of the staff members supporting the union effort, said in the press release the hospital’s is not paying her nor her coworkers what it should.

“Imaging techs’ wages are way behind industry standard, have not kept up with the cost of living and are not reflective of our experience,” she said. “Unionizing will give us the opportunity to address these kinds of wage discrepancies and will help us recruit and retain the best and most qualified staff. Being in a union means we will have a seat at the table to help raise standards for our community.”

Respiratory techs at St. Anthony are regularly denied time off, have been working with a skeleton crew and forced into inconsistent schedules to cover for short staffing, according to the ONA. Many

are feeling burnt out and have considered leaving the hospital for other work.

“We want respect, we want safer staffing and we want to have a voice on issues that impact our patients, our communities and our careers,” said Derek Skufca, a respiratory therapist at St. Anthony and a union supporter. “All of us know that joining a union will empower us to achieve those goals.”

The NLRB is scheduled to hold a hearing in mid-July to determine a union election date.

St. Anthony CEO Harry Geller said the hospital is urging technicians to vote “no.”

“They do a terrific job of serving our patients,” he said. “We’ll follow all National Labor Relations Board guidelines. We respect the rights and opinions of all staff. We hope to move forward in a positive manner and engage in productive communication with them.”

# Development commission advisory committee members resign in protest

By JOHN TILLMAN  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Three members of an advisory committee to the Pendleton Development Commission resigned in protest over a procedure violation, reported Charles Denight, city urban renewal associate director.

The seven-person volunteer Pendleton Grant Review Committee oversees the Facade Restoration and Second Story grant programs of the Pendleton Development Commission. Kate Dimon, Bill Taylor and Velda Arnaud resigned. Dimon was the committee’s chair.

Denight said the PDC usually takes one to two

months to act on an advisory committee’s recommendations. But the commission on May 20 was swift to approve the \$500,000 grant to developer Sidney True of Clackamas to buy and remodel the crime-plagued Marigold Hotel

“True was on a tight deadline,” Denight explained, “so the commission chose to forego some procedures.”

Members of the city council serve on the PDC and receive advice from citizens’ committees.

“The commission sets procedures for advisory committees to follow,” Denight noted. “In this case, it chose to change its procedure, due to the short time available.”

Dimon, a community college historic preservation professor, said she objected to other rule violations besides the short period for review, recommendation and approval. True didn’t own the building, which she said was a requirement for PDC grant recommendation procedures. Nor did the project’s proposed paint scheme meet downtown historic district requirements.

“Why even have an historic district?” she asked.

City Manager Robb Corbett said the PDC does not require someone to own a property to obtain a grant.

True renamed The Marigold as The Pendleton Hotel. Renovation work on it continues at 105 S.E. Court Ave.

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