



The ground floor interior of The Marigold Hotel in downtown Pendleton reflects several improvements Friday, Sept. 2, 2022.

John Tillman/East Oregonian

Marigold Hotel renovation underway

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Marigold Hotel, soon to be The Hotel Pendleton, sports a new external white paint job and renovated interior.

“The project should be complete in the March to April time frame,” general manager Donald Williams said. “The community has been very welcoming. A gentleman from the city tree committee came by recently to comment on the great paint job.”

Bookings have been moderate during the construction phase, Williams said, but, like everyone else, The Marigold is booked up for the Pendleton Round-Up. Being the closest motel to Main Street contributes to bookings, he noted.

“We’re restructuring the hotel’s image as well as renovating it,” Williams said, “given its prior reputation.”

During Round-Up, a food truck with beer, hamburgers and hot dogs will be in the upper parking lot, he said.

The city revoked The Mari-



Marigold general manager Donald Williams poses for a photo Friday, Sept. 2, 2022, outside the extended-stay hotel under renovation.

John Tillman/East Oregonian

gold’s business license in 2021 due to frequent criminal activity on the premises. Developer Sydney True received a \$500,000 grant from the Pendleton Development Commission this year to help buy and remodel the troubled site

into an extended-stay hotel.

“Owner Sydney True wants to put in an Italian restaurant,” Williams said, “and a mini market with locally-sourced cheese and other items. We’ve had great support from the community and want to

contribute and give back to it.”

Williams also serves in the Economic and Community Development Department of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and owns renewable energy companies.

Deal for new bridge over Umatilla River goes forward

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Umatilla County and the cities of Hermiston and Umatilla are moving to agree on the location of a bridge over the Umatilla River to provide a new connection with Interstate 82.

The county board of commissioners considers a memorandum of understanding for the project at its meeting Wednesday, Sept. 7.

“This overpass affects all partners, the cities of Hermiston and Umatilla and the county,” board Vice-Chair Dan Dorran said. “We each co-funded the study on

options of 11th Street, Elm Avenue and Punkin Center Road. It’s over 300 pages. We came back together with the engineers and (Oregon Department of Transportation) as a participant. All agreed based on the long-term ramifications and needs that Punkin Center would be the preferred option.”

The county and cities jointly agreed in August 2021 to fund the cost for a preliminary engineering study on a potential bridge spanning the Umatilla River as an extension of West Elm Avenue or West Punkin Center Road. Civil engineering firm Anderson Perry & Associates completed the Umatilla River

Bridge Preliminary Engineering Report in August. It concluded the better option is West Punkin Center Road, which is farther north than Elm Avenue.

The county board approved payment of \$50,000 to Hermiston toward the cost of the preliminary report for the new bridge on Aug. 18, 2021.

“There were three roads that everybody was going back and forth on,” board Chair John Shafer said. “What makes the most sense to get the traffic flow truly right. Sometimes the obvious choice isn’t the best, so we co-funded the study. It will be a big help for that region. Try driving into Umatilla. This

will offer another way to get on I-82.”

The three entities want to document a consensus on this option, so a memorandum of understanding to that end and authorization for the chair to sign is before the board.

Before beginning construction of a new bridge over the Umatilla River, the project requires further study. The memorandum of understanding, the agenda item noted, is not a final decision on the bridge location but a general consensus on which option the three local governments prefer. The MOU also requires the county and two cities to update their transportation plan to reflect the bridge project.

UMATILLA COUNTY

Pipeline project to begin construction in 2023

Project to benefit irrigators, industry, cities and more

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

UMATILLA — Construction is on the schedule to begin in 2023 in Umatilla County on the first phase of an irrigation project to benefit industry, cities, irrigators, fisheries and a threatened aquifer.

The approximately \$20 million phase of the Ordinance Regional Water Supply and Aquifer Restoration Project is to carry Columbia River water from Umatilla County’s pump station through a new pipeline to the northeast corner of the former Army ordnance depot. All components of the project might total \$43 million.

“We’re going to turn dirt on phase A in 2023,” said John Shafer, chair of Umatilla County Board of Commissioners and the project supervisor.

The city of Umatilla is to benefit from this phase of the project, which supplies residential water west of the Umatilla River and permits development of an industrial park.

Umatilla County’s contributions to phase one were the purchase of the pump station in 2019, project design, fish screen capacity purchase, easement acquisition, risk capital and debt service cost sharing. Private partners also shared capital cost to design and build the distribution line for the city of Umatilla.

“I was four months on the job when I proposed we buy (Northeast Oregon Water Association’s) pump station on the Columbia west of Umatilla,” Shafer recalled, and fellow Commissioners Bill Elfving and George Murdoch agreed.

Umatilla County has hired a consultant for the project’s up to \$17 million phases two and three to take more water from the Columbia River to help local farmers, while providing a ready source for economic and environmental benefits.

Phase two extends the pipeline from the depot’s northeast corner to industrial development areas and connects with Westland Irrigation District’s existing pipe crossing Interstate 82. From there, Columbia River water can enter Westland’s A Line canal.

The chief beneficiaries of phase two are the Columbia Development Authority, for industrial water, and Westland Irrigation District, which has short supply and relies on Umatilla River and groundwater sources. But fish and wildlife should also benefit, as more water can remain in McKay Reservoir.

Umatilla County estimates the cost of the second phase at around \$13 million. Shafer said the original cost estimate was \$6 million, but costs soared due to inflation in the past year and a half. The county is seeking additional federal funding. Westland is sharing costs through the U.S. Department of Agriculture financing.

Aquifer recharge

Phase three has an estimated cost of \$2.5 million for aquifer recharge and monitoring component. The shallow, alluvial Ordinance aquifer underlies the southern portion of the former depot, extending eastward across I-82. The recharge capability is planned to be 45 cubic feet per second per day. Shafer said 20 cfs go to Westland, 5 cfs for the city of Umatilla and 5 more for the recharge project.

The other 15 cfs are interruptible, Shafer explained. A Y-shaped pipe allows Grimmway Farms to receive half of that flow, with priority over Westland during the growing season. The private company is the world’s largest producer of carrots. In the off-season, the water is available for recharge.

Phase three offers quantity and quality improvements to alluvial aquifer water, according to the county, and could provide a sustainable water supply to Westland, well owners and industrial customers in the Westland Road vicinity. Recharge also might benefit lower Umatilla River habitat.

Umatilla County has secured funding for basin recharge and construction of monitoring wells through a 2021 ARPA appropriation. The county is seeking additional funding for recharge project testing in possible partnership with Oregon State University.

A proposed component of the project would recharge the Ordinance aquifer with Umatilla River water. The \$6 million estimated cost would construct a pump station and pipeline to deliver river water to the recharge basin.

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