

NE Oregon hospitals bank \$8M

By ALEX WITTWER
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — A bevy of local hospitals and providers are receiving more than \$7.8 million in funds through the American Rescue Plan via a program specific to rural hospitals.

While the fund allocated \$118 million to hospitals across the state, nearly 25%, or more than \$29.4 million, was sent to hospitals in Portland — mostly to Providence, a hospital chain that serves the Willamette Valley and coastal regions of Oregon.

The largest single payment in Northeastern Oregon went to Good Shepherd Health Care System, Hermiston, which collected a little more than \$2.6 million, while Baker City's Saint Alphonus Medical Center received more than \$1.1 million through the program. The list of providers and suppliers that were awarded funds also includes: Interpath Laboratories, Pendleton; Center for Human Development Inc., La Grande; Wallowa County Health Care District, Enterprise; Blue Mountain Hospital District, John Day; and Morrow County Health District, Boardman.

"Good Shepherd Health Care System did receive the \$2.6 million, and we plan on using it for either of two areas — to be applied to addi-



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Motorcycles fill a portion of the parking lot at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston on Dec. 5, 2020, following the Echo Toy Run. Good Shepherd Health Care System, which operates the hospital, received \$2.6 million in funds through an American Rescue Plan program for rural hospitals.

tional COVID expenses we have incurred or to lost revenue due to the COVID pandemic," Caitlin Cozad, marketing and communications director for Good Shepherd Health Care System, said in an email.

An official with Baker City's Saint Alphonus Medical Center said the funds will be crucial in renewing depleted resources and hiring temporary staff such as nurses.

The American Rescue Plan Rural payment program pool totals nearly \$7.5 billion in federal funds, and was targeted toward suppliers and providers that serve rural Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicare beneficiaries, according to a release from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"Health care providers in

rural communities have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they continue to experience significant financial hardships," U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a press release. "The infusion of these funds will be critical to ensuring rural communities maintain access to high-quality health care and addressing urgent needs like workforce recruitment and retention."

Payments ranged from as little as \$500, which went to providers such as individually licensed psychiatrists and social workers, to several million dollars. The largest single award for Oregon went to Central Oregon's Saint Charles Health System, which received more than \$10.5 million.

Of the nearly 500 awards distributed, the most frequent

award was \$500, which went to 88 Oregon suppliers and providers.

Provisions in the program allowed providers in the Portland metropolitan area to receive funding, even though there was a separate fund of \$9 billion already earmarked for providers and suppliers in non-rural areas. Clinics and providers in Portland that received funding included Northwest Urology in the Pearl District of Portland, which received just more than \$90,000.

According to U.S. Health and Human Services, providers who serve Medicaid, CHIP, and Medicare patients who live in rural communities are eligible for the ARP Rural payments. As well, providers who serve any patients living in Federal Office of Rural Health Policy-defined rural areas with Medicaid, CHIP, or Medicare coverage, and who otherwise meet the eligibility criteria, will receive a minimum payment.

Other Portland businesses that received funding include optometrist clinics, acupuncturists, a dentist office, retirement homes and Portland State University — which received just more than \$1 million, though the university does have its own on-campus clinic.

U.S. Health and Human Services did not respond to requests for comment about the requirements for the payments before publication.

Many support keeping Snake River dams

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

SALEM — A new survey commissioned by Northwest RiverPartners indicates broad public support for keeping the Snake River dams.

Less than 30% of respondents favor removing the four dams.

The survey, conducted by DHM Research, an independent and nonpartisan research firm in Portland, reached a total of 1,200 Northwest residents — 400 each in Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

According to the survey, 60% of respondents indicate support for "the use of hydroelectric dams on the lower Snake River to produce electricity" while 17% oppose it, and 23% don't know.

Only 29% of respondents agreed that the dams should be removed to protect wild animals and their habitats. The rest opposed removal or didn't know, according to the survey, which did not indicate the percentages for other answers.

Asked to rank their top concerns about removing the dams, respondents most often highlighted higher electricity costs, losing a source of carbon-free energy and impacts on agriculture.

About 14% said they had no concerns about the potential removal of the dams.

Kurt Miller, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners, told the Capital Press he wasn't sure what to expect prior to commissioning the survey.

"I was definitely pleased with the results," Miller said of the survey. "I was heartened, gratified to see that."

He pointed to messaging from advocacy groups and media attention surrounding Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson's proposed plan for dam breaching and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Sen. Patty Mur-

ray's federal-state assessment of salmon recovery, including dam breaching, as reasons for his uncertainty.

"People are being told that their neighbors essentially support dam breaching, and I don't think that's the case," he said. "It's important for the public to know it's only a smaller minority that believes this would be good policy for the Pacific Northwest."

Miller hopes policy makers such as Inslee and Murray pay attention to the survey's findings.

"We want to find the most productive ways of helping salmon without harming society," he said. "If we're concerned about the will of the people, it's certainly the will of the people to keep the dams in place."

Miller believes the survey results show residents understand the energy challenges ahead, citing 100% clean energy objectives, initiatives for electric cars and other forms of transportation and the loss of fossil-fuel resources such as coal and natural gas generation plants.

"I think what people see there is that resources that are carbon-free and can produce electricity 24-7 are going to be really important in the region's future," he said. "I think people can do the math."

Efforts to breach the dams, especially Inslee's and Murray's proposed initiative, represent a "significant clear and present danger" to the future of the dams, and eventually the entire hydropower system, Miller said.

"A lot of the arguments that are made in favor of breaching the lower Snake River dams are often not based on complete information, or even (based on) inaccurate information," he said. "Our concern is that those same questionable arguments will be applied to other dams if these dams go."

NCBA recaps its efforts in 2021

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

WASHINGTON, D.C. — It was a busy year in the nation's capital for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, with some significant wins to show for the effort.

"We really had a focus this year on increasing opportunities for producer profitability throughout the supply chain," said Ethan Lane, NCBA vice president of government affairs.

NCBA linked all policy priorities back to that central focus in considering

opportunities and challenges facing the industry in the new administration, he said during a virtual meeting on Dec. 22.

NCBA spent a lot of time educating Congress, consumers and others about the threat to cattle producers created by onerous proposals to help pay for the Build Back Better initiative and other large spending bills, he said.

They included elimination of the stepped-up basis, decreasing the death tax exemption and increasing the capital gains tax to more than 40%.

"All could have a dramatic impact for cattle producers just at a time when as an

industry we're transitioning or expecting to transition about 40% of our operations to the next generation within the next 15 years," he said.

The pushback on those proposals turned into one of the largest grassroots campaigns the industry has ever launched, and Congress heard the message, he said.

"So we're really proud of that work ... and we know we're going to have to continue that focus moving into 2022 as we see whatever the next version of Build Back Better might be," he said.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 29

Kickball
• 4-6:30 p.m., Humbolt Elementary School, 329 N. Humbolt St., Canyon City

Presented by the John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District, this family-friendly activity is free and open to all.

THURSDAY, DEC. 30

Laser tag
• 4-6:30 p.m., Humbolt Elementary School, 329 N. Humbolt St., Canyon City

The John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District presents a family-friendly laser tag night. The cost is \$2.50 per half-hour session. Register online for specific time slots at <https://jdccparksandrec.org/winter/>.

FRIDAY, DEC. 31

Prairie City fireworks show
• 7 p.m., multiple viewing locations, Prairie City

Prairie City had to cancel its traditional Fourth of July fireworks display this year because of the Dixie Creek Fire, so city leaders decided to reschedule for New Year's



Eve, when fire danger is low and holiday spirits could use a lift. The fireworks will be staged at the industrial area west of the mill but should be visible from anywhere in town.

Do you have a community event in Grant County

SPORTS SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 29

Grant Union Basketball @ Burns, boys 11 a.m., girls 12:30 p.m., Baker Invitational, Baker City High School
Prairie City Basketball @

Nixyaawii, boys 6:30 p.m., girls 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, DEC. 30

Grant Union Basketball vs. Pilot Rock, girls 6 p.m., boys 7:30 p.m.

you'd like to publicize? Email information to editor@bmeagle.com. The deadline is noon Friday for publication the following Wednesday.

Your Rural Family Health Clinic

Grant County HEALTH Department
528 E. Main, St. E., John Day

Monday - Thursday 7am - 6pm
Friday 8am - 5pm

Appointments available

Call and schedule your appointment today!
TOLL-FREE 888-443-9104 or 541-575-0429

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Timber Truckers Light Parade

Parade Theme: Light Up the Night

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Mobile Glass
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1188 Brewing Co.
A Flower Shop 'N More
Squeeze's V (Chucks Little Diner)
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Brett Morris Forestry
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Grant County Chamber of Commerce
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Oregon Trail Electric
Blue Mt Eagle
Wendy Cates Real Estate
Hair It Is Salon
Kathy Bishop
Town of Canyon City
DR Johnson Family
Velvet Touch Car Wash
Jude Jungle
Rava Logging
Solutions CPAs
Patriot Plumbing
Outpost Restaurant
Parade Announcer, Mark Bagett
Dinner MC, Kelly Workman

Thank you for your continued support of this event. Timber Truckers Committee

Wishing you the Peace and Joy of the Christmas Season. Best wishes for 2022 from your friends at Eastern Oregon Realty.

Jerry, Traci, Pete, and Jo

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