

## New farm worker housing development planned on Tower Road near Boardman

Will accommodate 200-800 seasonal workers needed for increased organic farming at Threemile Canyon Farms

By David Sykes

A new housing development capable of handling between 200 and 800 seasonal farm workers is being planned for construction on Tower Road near Boardman, according to an application filed with the Morrow County Planning Department. The development is to be built on 66 acres currently owned by the City of Boardman but being sold to nearby Threemile Farms.

“Threemile Farms is looking to increase the use of organic farming practices,” the application said about the project. “Organic farming is a much more labor intensive process and requires the use of a larger workforce.” The documents also stated that Threemile plans to use the Farm Worker H-2A Visa Program to employ the additional 200-800 workers on a season basis. Application for actual construction of the housing project has not been dealt with by the Morrow County Planning Commission; however, a request to rezone the city-owned land from Space Age Industrial to Exclusive Farm Use prior to the sale was approved by the Planning Commission last Tuesday night.

The rezoning clears the way for the project since farm worker housing is an



Location of proposed new farm worker housing project. The new development would be located on 66 acres on Tower Road. Tower Road turns off from Interstate 84 approximately nine miles west of the city of Boardman. -Contributed

allowed use in an agricultural zone. The planning commission action will also allow the new housing project, which will consist of 36 three-bedroom units, to extend sewage lines from a nearby Port of Morrow sewage treatment lagoon system across Tower Road,

to serve the new housing project. Water for the housing development will also come from a Port of Morrow water well. The city has owned the land for about 20 years and it was purchased then for proposed use in waste water treatment.

The planning commis-

## BMCC breaks ground on Boardman bond project



BMCC and county representatives gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony for BMCC’s new Workforce Training Center at the Port of Morrow last week. Those who wielded a golden shovel at the ceremony were (L-R) Dr. Tony Turner, BMCC Board of Education; Milton-Freewater; Rob Dreier, BMCC Bond Project Manager, Frew Development Group; Ed Taber, BMCC Board of Education Chair, Pendleton; Tyson Furstenberg, Vice President, McCormack Construction; Chris Brown, BMCC Board of Education, Morrow County; Louis Carlson, BMCC Bond Campaign Volunteer, Morrow County; Susan Plass, BMCC Board of Education, Pendleton; Kim Puzey, BMCC Board of Education, Hermiston; Cam Preus, BMCC President; Jerry Healy, Port of Morrow Commissioner; Gary Neal, Executive Director, Port of Morrow. -Photo by David Sykes

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## Hansell named to Transient Lodging Tax Work Group

Salem—Last week, Oregon Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena) was named to the Transient Lodging Tax Work Group, a work group to study issues related to the state transient lodging tax and regional tourism.

HB 4146 increased the transient lodging tax during the 2016 short legislative session. The bill increases the state transient lodging tax rate from the current one percent to 1.8 percent until the end of June 2020, at which time it will be reduced to 1.5 percent. The bill also changes the distribution of revenue from a discretionary amount with a ceiling of 15 percent to two categories for regional development, and creates a study group led by the Legislative Revenue Office to study how these funds should be administered.

HB 4146 was proposed as a way to fund Track Town, a program coming to Eugene in 2020. However, once the bill was finally taken to the floor for a vote, it was amended so the financial increase would be spread throughout the state. Although the bill passed on a strictly party-line vote, Senate President Peter Courtney asked if Senator Hansell would join the conversation.

“Although I was a no vote when this lodging tax bill went to the floor, I feel I have an opportunity to help craft the program to be beneficial to those of us in rural Oregon, not just larger Oregon cities. The last thing we want is for rural and Eastern Oregon to be left out of the conversation,” Hansell said. “I am very

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## KEVA planks arrive at local public libraries



Chloe, Daniel and Nathan Sinnett, Boardman patrons, are busy creating with the KEVA planks. -Contributed photos

KEVA Planks are now available at all 12 public libraries in Umatilla County, the Cook Memorial Library in La Grande, Enterprise Public Library and the Oregon Trail Library District. LEO (Libraries of Eastern Oregon) purchased the planks for the libraries with grant funds provided by the Wildhorse Foundation. Funds from the Community Outreach Committee of Cayuse Technologies were also used to purchase the planks for Umatilla County and Oregon Trail libraries.

Each set of KEVA (Knowledge, Exploration, Visual, Arts) Planks

come in a wooden bin with handles/wheels and 1,000 maple planks 5 inches by 1½ inches. The planks are designed for stacking and layering in endless formations—from simple play for young children to complex towering structures by students and adults without using glue or connectors, just gravity and imagination.

The KEVA Planks are meant to transform libraries into engaging, interactive, community learning places. The planks serve as a gateway to math, science and physics, and can be used by

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## ‘Church of the Dog’—Novel shows Heppner through a different lens

By Andrea Di Salvo

“Children play in the outdoor city swimming pool. Old men sit outside the feed store. The electric company is a co-op. I pass a park that sits in front of the elementary school, a library/historical museum, and a grocery store. On the other side of the street is the senior citizens’ center, a drugstore, a bank, a fabric store, and another bank. People look friendly. On the left side there’s an auto shop, Kate’s Pizza and Video, the Elks Club, and a Les Schwab tire store. There’s a dentist’s office

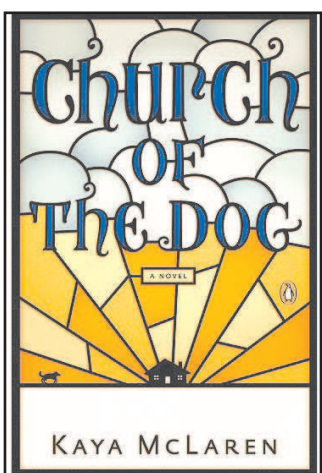
and a chiropractor’s office, a bowling alley, and, up on the hill, a small hospital. On my way out of town I pass a graveyard, a concrete dam, and a small lake.”

Reading those words, anyone from Morrow County might assume they come from a letter or diary of some neighbor, or at least

a tourist passing through. They’d be wrong.

That paragraph is from the book “Church of the Dog” by Kaya McLaren.

McLaren is the author of three novels — “Church of the Dog,” “On the Divinity of Second Chances,” and “How I Came to Sparkle Again.”



## Graduation time for Morrow County students



It’s graduation time for seniors at Heppner and Ione

high schools.

Ione baccalaureate will take place tonight, June 1, at 7 p.m. at Ione Community Church. Everyone is welcome to the service to bless Ione’s graduating seniors.

Ione commencement will take place Friday, June 3, beginning at 7 p.m.

Baccalaureate servic-

es for Heppner will take place tonight at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Heppner’s commencement ceremony will take place Saturday, June 4, beginning at 2 p.m. in the Heppner Jr./Sr. High School gymnasium.

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