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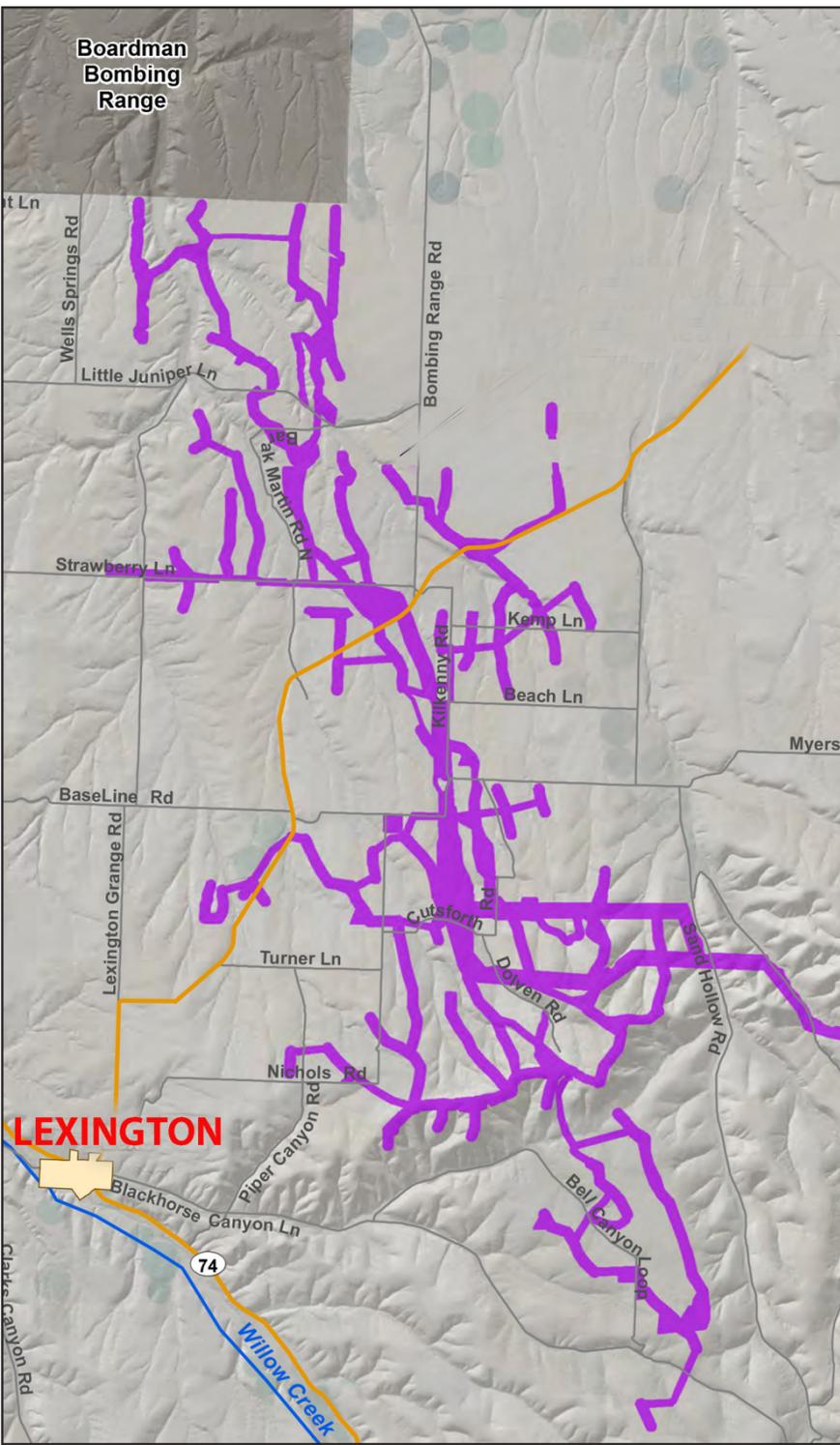
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HAPPY  
NEW YEAR

VOL. 139 NO. 1 6 Pages Wednesday, January 1, 2020 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

# Morrow County's newest wind farm boosts Portland's green power to 50 percent

*PGE, a partner in new wind, solar and battery facility*



The Wheatridge wind project will stretch from just north of Lexington to the edge of the Bombing Range in Morrow County.

By David Sykes

The newest wind energy project coming to Morrow County will be under construction soon. When completed, the electricity will be sold to Portland General Electric (PGE), helping that company meet its aggressive renewable energy agenda and boosting its green energy production to 50 percent of its total.

Located north of Lexington, the Wheatridge wind farm is expected to begin building soon and could bring up to 300 temporary construction workers into the area. The project is being constructed by Florida company NextEra, in partnership with PGE, and is permitted for up to 292 wind turbines with an additional 350 acres used for solar panels. The project includes wind, solar and batteries and will cover 14,624 acres in Morrow and Umatilla counties.

What is unique about the project is unlike other wind projects in the county, this one combines wind and solar electrical production as well as battery storage. PGE says Wheatridge will be the largest in North America integrating those three technologies and the largest battery facility in Oregon. With the addition of battery storage, one disadvantage to green power will be removed. Wind and solar only produce electricity intermittently.

PGE is investing in the new generation facility to offset the pending closure of its coal power plant in Boardman. PGE recently finished construction on a natural gas-fired generating plant near Boardman and had planned to build more for its future power needs. However, the company suspended construction of gas generation and now opted to go forward completely

with emission free electric production. PGE said it expects to spend \$160 million on its portion of the Wheatridge project and own 100 megawatts of the total wind power generated by Wheatridge, committing to buy the remaining output from NextEra in a 30-year agreement.

PGE serves approximately 885,000 customers in 51 cities and says it will own 120 of the Wheatridge 292 permitted wind towers, which it says, along with its other renewable projects, will provide electricity for approximately 340,000 homes. NextEra Energy Resources will own the balance of the project and sell that output to PGE under 30-year power purchase agreement.

The wind component of the facility is expected to be operational by December 2020 which means it will qualify for the federal pro-

## Large crowd turns out for alumni games



Front row (L-R): Ryan Cecil (2016), CJ Kindle (2016), Logan Grieb (2017), Jake Lindsay (2017), Jeremy Rosenbalm (2004), Lane Bailey (2008), Brian Rill (2016) and Jared Huddleston (2010). Back row (L-R): Logan Burrigh (2019), Beau Wolters (2018), Kevin Murray (2017), Wyatt Steagall (2018), Kevin Smith (2018), Cason Mitchell (2019), Patrick Collins (2016), Nacho Elguezabal (2008) and Bailey Haguewood (2014). -Contributed photo.



Front row (L-R): Kelsey Greenup Fennern (2002), Alexis Doutre (2009), Madison Bailey Rosenbalm (2005), Paige Grieb (2015), Kayla Kindle (2014), Stefania Hanson Sweeney (2004), Jodi Johnston Hand (1994), Annie Hisler Weygandt (1998) and Kelly Wilson (2015). Back row (L-R): Emma Osmin (2013), Shelley Rietmann McCabe (2002), Janelle Healy Ellis (1999), Holly Eckman Schuening (1994), Amy Greenup Kollman (1991), Mindy Binschus Wilson (1998), Jenni Krein Offel (1995), Sarah Greenup Campbell (1994), Charlie Campbell (still in school, but playing for the team) and Rylee Kollman (2016). -Contributed photo.

The ninth annual Heppner Mustang Alumni basketball games were held in front of a large crowd of over 100 basketball fans, family and friends December 22. This annual event, a fundraiser for the Heppner boys' basketball program, saw a record turnout of players this year. According to a source, both the men's and women's games were extremely entertaining to watch.

In the women's game, the "young guns", a team made up of players from the

classes of 2002-2016 won the game by the score of 42-25. It was a fast paced and sometimes very physical game that was closer than the final score indicates. It was reported that everyone enjoyed seeing so many former Fillies and Mustangs play their hardest and have lots of fun doing it.

High scorers for the winning team were Alexis Doutre, Shelley Rietmann McCabe and Rylee Kollman. Leading the way for the "more experienced" team was Annie Hisler

Weygandt and Sara Greenup Campbell.

The men's game was a three-point shooting contest that saw the team of players from 2004-2016 defeat the team from 2017-2019 by the score of 86-77. The winning team was led in scoring by Brian Rill, Jeremy Rosenbalm and Patrick Collins. The "young guns" were led in scoring by Jake Lindsay and Logan Grieb.

It was reported that a fun time was had by all and everyone is looking forward to next year's game.



The project also includes something new for renewable energy projects: batteries. The battery storage will allow energy to be generated when the wind is blowing and then stored for periods when it isn't. The batteries will add consistency or "load balancing" to green energy production. The battery component of the Wheatridge wind project is reportedly one of the largest in the world.



### How the Wheatridge Renewable Energy Facility will work

As sunlight hits the solar panels, the photovoltaic energy is converted into direct current electricity (DC). The direct current flows from the panels through inverters and is converted into alternating current (AC). From the inverter, some of the emissions-free energy goes into a battery system to be stored for use at a later time while the rest of the energy travels through the power grid for delivery to homes and businesses.

duction tax credit at the 100 percent level. Construction of the solar and battery components is planned for 2021 and will qualify for the federal investment tax credit. The tax credits are very important for renewable energy projects as they help bring down the cost of construction.

Under its permit with the state of Oregon, NextEra must complete construction on the wind towers by May 24, 2023. Construction of solar facility components must begin by November 22, 2022 and must be completed by November 22, 2025.

The project has two

components, east and west. The Wheatridge West turbine group would be located entirely within Morrow County, approximately seven miles northwest of Heppner. The Wheatridge East turbine group would be located approximately

-See WIND FARM/PAGE TWO

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