

# EOTEC continues moving forward

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
Staff Writer

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center board made a formal recommendation Friday morning that the Umatilla County Fair board and Farm-City Pro Rodeo board keep their events at the current fairgrounds until 2017.

The move came after a meeting with stakeholders on Sept. 16 in which the board and project manager Frew Development Group said they needed time to raise another \$2.3 million if they were going to be able to keep from further scaling the project back.

Umatilla County Commissioners voted last week to recommend the fair not move next year to allow more time for work at the EOTEC site.

Materials presented to the public about EOTEC, including the Frequently Asked Questions document on the

city of Hermiston's website, have characterized 2016 as year the project will begin hosting the fair and rodeo. But board members said Friday it had always been a possibility that the move might not happen until 2017, which is why the county's lease for the current fairgrounds didn't expire until then.

"We have until 2017, but we were trying to push the envelope," county commissioner Larry Givens said.

During Friday's meeting, board members approved a request by Frew Development Group to amend the company's contract to make it the general contractor.

Gary Winsand of Frew Development Group said aspects of the project haven't gotten as many bids as hoped because people are unfamiliar with the "design-build" process inherent to EOTEC,

which overlaps design and construction steps instead of presenting contractors with a set-in-stone plan to bid on. The adjustment to Frew Development's contract allows the company to make cold calls to area contractors to solicit bids rather than being limited to just putting out a request for proposals.

"We're trying to speed up the process," Winsand said.

He said, in light of discussions about raising more funding, design and construction of lighting for the site had been broken into separate phases that can be completed as funding comes available. He also said Frew Development is studying the cost of building the barns out of cheaper materials in order to save money.

He said the bid package for irrigation is on hold until tests determining water avail-

ability on the site are completed. Results from the test well that was being measured on Friday were promising.

Winsand said contractors began to install the roof deck on the event center/exhibition hall building on Thursday.

"It's been rolling on real well," he said.

Business manager Heather Cannell said someone from Frew Development is working on creating a more user-friendly website for EOTEC, which she hoped would be finished by the end of next week. She said she is also moving forward with the event-scheduling software that will eventually be part of the website.

Cannell said people have already contacted her and expressed interest in hosting everything from horse sales to local fundraisers at EOTEC in 2017.



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

bound Ford pickup.

The driver of the pickup was taken by ambulance to Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston. The pickup and the tractor were disabled in the crash.

The accident is still under investigation.

**Umatilla County Sheriff's Deputy James English (in vest) directs traffic around a disabled John Deere tractor that was involved in a crash with a Ford pickup Monday north of Stanfield. The driver of the pickup was injured and taken by ambulance to Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston.**

## Rural crash injures one

One person was injured Tuesday in a crash between a tractor and a pickup north of Stanfield on South Edwards Road.

The cause of the accident is still under investigation, but preliminary information indicated that the John Deere Tractor had pulled out of a field and was turning south onto Edwards Road, and it was struck by a north-

## Hermiston likely to seek new school bond in 2017

New review committee expected to deliver recommendation within six months

By **SEAN HART**  
Staff Writer

With record enrollment and a steady increase projected, Hermiston School District is considering asking voters to approve a facilities bond in May 2017.

After the Facility Master Planning Committee completed a Comprehensive Master Plan in June 2015 outlining significant needs in the next 10 years, Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith discussed the next step in the process at the school board meeting Monday.

He said the administration would recruit a diverse group of 14 community members to serve on a Citizens' Review Committee along with two school board representatives. The group will review the Comprehensive Master Plan and the 2008 school bond outcomes to recommend a capital planning program to meet district and community needs over the next 10 years, which is expected by March 2016.

If the committee recommends pursuing a bond, Smith said the district could begin initial community outreach and solicit feedback from March to June and could then continue outreach and plan refinement until January 2017, when the school board ultimately begins considering whether to place the bond on the May 2017 ballot.

Smith said alternatives, such as having two separate shifts of students at one school, were not attractive, long-term options for the district or the community. He also said if voters approve a bond by May 2017, the district may qualify for a new state grant program that would cover between \$4 million and \$8 million of the cost.

"We are ripe for that up to \$6 or \$7 million," he said.

Other districts in the state competing for the \$125 million in grant funding available may not be as far along in the process as Hermiston, he said. The Facility Master Planning Committee was established in 2013 and completed months of work before presenting the Comprehensive Master Plan in June 2015.

The plan cites a Portland State University population study that predicts a likely increase of 800 students in the district by 2023. Based on that projection, 56 modular classrooms — serving almost 1,100 students — would be needed if additional permanent capacity is not added.

Smith said, however, that projection was based on mid-range growth, but the district added more than 200 new students this year, which aligns with the study's high-range estimate. If the current growth rate continues, the district would add 1,200 stu-

dents by 2023, requiring 80 modulars to house 1,500 students.

Maintaining the district's oldest campuses will also require expansive repairs, according to the plan, with Rocky Heights Elementary built 53 years ago, Highland Hills Elementary School 35 and Sandstone Middle School 20. The plan states the old elementary schools also pose safety and security risks due to their outdated designs.

The plan offers three approaches to accommodate capacity needs. Each would build an additional elementary school on Theater Lane property owned by the district, expand Hermiston High School and provide an addition at Sandstone.

The modest approach, with a \$73.7 million price tag, would expand the high school to accommodate 2,000 students and add a four-classroom addition at the middle school.

The moderate approach, at about \$94 million, would replace either Rocky Heights or Highland Hills, provide an eight-classroom addition at Sandstone and expand the high school for 2,000 students.

The \$131 million comprehensive approach would replace both Rocky Heights and Highland Hills, provide an eight-classroom Sandstone addition and expand the high school to accommodate 2,200 students.

When the \$69.9 million 2008 bond was approved by

voters, the district and participating committees anticipated asking for another bond in five to seven years for the second phase, which includes the projects in the new plan. The previous bond replaced Armand Larive Middle School, Sunset Elementary School and West Park Elementary School.

Smith said, during the last bond, the facilities planning committee identified \$110 million in needs, which was reduced to \$80 million by a review committee and further reduced to \$69.9 million after feedback from the community.

School board member Jason Middleton, who started in 2008, said he remembered participating in some of the final aspects of the previous bond. He said it seemed soon to be pursuing another bond, but he wasn't sure what other options the district had to accommodate the growth it is experiencing.

"There's a lot of need out there," he said. "We're growing very fast. If there's no money to do anything, where do we put the kids we're required to take?"

### IN BRIEF

#### Parks & Rec offers classes to learn dance basics

In just six lessons, participants will learn the basics to get the beat, learn the moves and have fun during dance classes offered through Hermiston Parks & Recreation.

Three swing dances will be taught, country, hip-hop and rhythm and blues. Also, a basic social dance class will provide smooth and social dancing with lessons in the foxtrot, waltz and cha cha.

April Dyntera will instruct both classes beginning Oct. 15 and continuing each Thursday through Nov. 19. The Basic Social Dance session is from 6:15-7:15 p.m., and Just Swing It is from 7:30-8:30 p.m. The sessions meet in the basement at the Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave.

Open to ages 14 and up, the cost for the class is \$30 for residents and \$38 for non-residents.

For more information, visit [www.hermistonrecreation.com](http://www.hermistonrecreation.com). To register, call 541-667-5018 or stop by the recreation office, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

#### Warming station to train volunteers in October

The Hermiston Warming Station will be conducting trainings for people interested in volunteering at the overnight shelter.

The trainings will take place from 6-8 p.m. Oct. 13, 6-8 p.m. Oct. 14, noon to 2 p.m. Oct. 16 and 4-6 p.m. Oct. 17 at St. John's Episcopal Church, 953 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston.

The warming station at the ARC building, 215 W. Orchard Ave., is open any night forecast with freezing temperatures or

severe weather Nov. 1 through March 31. Volunteers must be at least 18, and two are always on duty at any given time.

Volunteers work one of three shifts: from 6:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., from 12:30-4:30 a.m. or from 4:30-7 a.m. For more information, call 541-720-1146 or email [warmingstation@gmail.com](mailto:warmingstation@gmail.com).

#### Foundation awards grant for walking path at BMCC

The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation recently awarded an \$11,000 grant to build a walking path at the Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center on Southeast Columbia Drive in Hermiston.

The public pathway will allow students to exercise without leaving campus and will be used for Blue Mountain Community College health and physical education classes.

"We're very excited about this project as it's been in development for about three years now," BMCC Hermiston Associate Vice President Harvey Franklin said. "This project will benefit the entire community and help with the quality of life in our area. We're very appreciative of the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation for its generosity in helping us realize this pathway."

The grant funds the project's first phase, which will develop 1,800 feet of 4-foot walking path, and will purchase two benches to be placed along the path. The second phase anticipates expanding the path to encompass neighboring properties, including the Oregon National Guard, Stafford Hansell Justice Center and the state of Oregon building on Southeast Columbia Drive.





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## Attention Parents: Don't Miss the Bus!



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