

COMMENTARY

EOTEC moves forward, still a work in progress

By **ED BROOKSHIER**
EOTEC board chairman

From the beginning, the scope of the Eastern Oregon Trade & Event Center (EOTEC) project has always been subject to available funding. This means that it has always been a "work in progress," and subject to change as prices and funding change. For the most part these things are beyond the control of the EOTEC board. The following components have been on the drawing board from the start:

- Below ground work (infrastructure)
- Exhibitor and event center
- Rodeo venue
- Livestock barns
- Vendor facilities
- Access, entry and signage
- Professional services, various fees and costs (soft costs)
- Furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E)
- Storage and maintenance
- Grounds facilities for parking, carnival, etc.
- Public amenities such as restrooms, etc.
- Full service RV park
- Amphitheater
- Indoor arena
- 4-H building

At this point the last three listed above are not being pursued, and won't be unless unanticipated funding materializes. And though there will be some RV park-type capacity, it certainly won't be "full service."

The exhibitor and event center is fully funded and under construction. That facility will host 4-H and open class activities during fair, plus a variety of other events throughout the year.

The EOTEC board expects to move forward soon with the construction of at least one barn, and the beginning phases of the rodeo piece. We do have the funding on hand to begin this work.

There are also funds on hand to put toward the other components that are still part of the site plan. These other components, though, are in delay status until the board can determine whether to seek new bids; re-examine priorities; to scrub the budget to see how far funds on hand can be stretched; and explore possibilities for additional funding to assure that what gets "built out" is of the quality needed to do the job now and into the future.

The EOTEC board is pleased with the work being done by Frew Development Group. The board had hoped to be far enough along to host the 2016 fair and rodeo, but have moved away from that date for the reasons mentioned above. There is ample time for EOTEC to be ready for the fair and rodeo to move out of their current location by the end of 2016 (as originally agreed upon with the school district). I believe it's safe to say that the fair and rodeo will be in good shape to produce their events at the EOTEC site in 2017.

Chairman Chet Prior's untimely and unexpected death certainly was a blow. But the EOTEC Board is still pulling together. We are 100 percent committed to delivering for Chet and for the public. We are seeking and listening to input that will assist in the review process alluded to above. We all need to support these efforts, and be patient while this is concluded. Hopefully that will occur by mid to late November.

A final comment, actually a quote that pretty well captures the division of attitudes toward the EOTEC project: "A person who wants something to happen will find a way; a person who doesn't will find an excuse."

Thank you to the many proponents and supporters of this worthy project.

Ed Brookshier is chairman of the EOTEC board.

Community campfire creates family fun

HERMISTON HERALD

A Community Campfire & Hayride provides a perfect way to enjoy a crisp fall night.

In its fourth year, the Hermiston Parks & Recreation department invites residents to come out and enjoy an evening around bonfires, roasting marshmallows and drinking hot chocolate, which are provided free of charge.

The event, which features hayrides from 6-8 p.m. and campfire fun from 7-9 p.m., is Friday at Riverfront Park, located at Orchard Extension Loop. Additional parking is available at Hermiston Church of the Nazarene, 1520 W. Orchard Ave.

To help offset expenses, the cost for hayrides is \$2 per person or up to \$8 for those in an immediate family.

For more information, call 541-667-5018.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Participants roast marshmallows during a past community campfire event. This year's Community Campfire & Hayride is Friday at Riverfront Park in Hermiston.



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