

## Project builds more houses

Most workers at Port of Morrow commute to job from other towns

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
Staff Writer

Boardman's new Tuscany subdivision celebrated the completion of its first two houses Friday on South Main Street and Wilson Lane.

The development marks a major step forward for a city in need of housing to accommodate a rapidly growing workforce. Employees of businesses at the nearby Port of Morrow now outrank the city's overall population, and estimates show 68 percent of those workers commute from other areas.

Riverwood Homes, of Meridian, Idaho, began developing the Tuscany and Chaparral Park subdivisions late last year to capitalize on the market in Boardman. Two homes are finished in Tuscany, and foundations laid for two more. Fourteen lots are slated for the project's first building phase.

Greg Johnson, president of Riverwood Homes, said one of the finished houses has already sold.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Two homes have been completed so far in the first phase of building at the Tuscany subdivision in Boardman. The subdivision could add as many as 160 homes to the city.

Johnson said two more homes will be finished in the next 60 days at Chaparral Park, located west of City Hall at the end of Kinkade Road. Four more homes will begin construction there before the end of the year. The neighborhood will include rental units.

Their goal, Johnson said, is to provide higher quality housing at Tuscany and more moderately priced townhouses at Chaparral Park. With more options available, Johnson said some port workers might decide to live locally instead of driving from Hermiston or the Tri-Cities.

Housing has been a priority in Boardman since com-

munity leaders convened with the governor's Regional Solutions team in 2010 to capture an influx of industry at the port.

At the time, the port claimed 1,600 employees, though that figure has since swelled to 4,000-plus. Boardman's population is roughly 3,400.

The Regional Solutions team conducted a survey of employees at Columbia River Processing, Greenwood Resources, ReKlaim Technologies and the Morrow County School District. Of those 69 workers surveyed, about 70 percent said they commuted to work, most from more than 25 miles away.

The current housing stock in Boardman is approximately 900 living units, he said. There is a shortage of rentals.

Barry Beyeler, community development director, said he is excited about a relatively new home-buying incentive program through the Boardman Community Development Association that provides \$5,000 grants to potential homeowners.

"The ball is rolling, but it's not an avalanche," Beyeler said. "We're starting to get to the place where commercial entities can look at us and say there's a market here."

Jill Parker, president of the community development association, said they have already awarded 45 grants in just 13 months. Of those, 65 percent are moving into the community from outside Morrow County.

Riverwood Homes will sell houses in the Tuscany and Chaparral Park neighborhoods as the market calls for them.

Tuscany can eventually be built out to 160 lots, and 18 townhouses in the first phase of Chaparral Park.

### BRIEFCASE

#### Good Shepherd hires communication director

To help meet the demands of the changes in health care and to increase community awareness about Good Shepherd Health Care System services, the organization recently hired Nick Bejarano as its new marketing and communication director.



Bejarano

Bejarano comes to Good Shepherd with more than 12 years of experience in marketing. Most recently, he worked as senior marketing and communications manager for a two-hospital and 22-clinic system in California.

"Eastern Oregon is a beautiful place and Hermiston is a great small community to raise a family," Bejarano said. "Good Shepherd Health Care System also has a reputation as being a great place to work and has a renowned legacy of caring for the community."

#### Yo Country offers more than frozen yogurt

Yo Country Frozen Yogurt in Hermiston also features kombucha, a fermented beverage available in a variety of flavors.

The drink is available in pints, and growlers can also be filled at the shop, 1725 N. First St., Hermiston. For more information, call 541-289-8611.

#### Umatilla County, BMCC announce partnership

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners voted Oct. 21 to join Blue Mountain Community College in developing a skilled workforce in the area.

The partnership will include working with Susan Bower, owner of Eastern Oregon Business Source, to conduct a thorough study of workforce needs in the area.

Commissioner Bill Elfering said in a news release that the need for skilled workers is second only to the need for more housing in Umatilla County.

"The demand for a skilled workforce and skilled workforce training is a high priority in the private sector," Elfering said. "We believe the county and BMCC can help fill that niche, which will lead to business expansion and recruitment for family wage jobs."

According to the release, Elfering has been meeting with industry leaders and state and local officials on the topic.

## Umatilla Electric receives \$43M federal loan

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**  
Staff Writer

The Umatilla Electric Cooperative plans to use a \$43 million federal loan to rebuild aging power lines and substations, some of which are now

more than 40 years old. UEC was one of 77 utilities and co-ops in 31 states to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Electric Program,

which has awarded \$34 billion in low-interest loans since 2009.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack made the announcement Oct. 22, saying the program helps provide reliable and affordable electricity to rural customers.

Steve Meyers, UEC spokesman, said the loan will pay for system improvements in 2016 and 2017. It is the co-op's primary source of funding long-range construction projects.

"UEC is in its most intensive period of building and upgrading since the 1970s," Meyers said. "This loan reflects that."

In recent years, UEC has rebuilt six miles of power

lines on Weston Mountain and completely rebuilt its Coyote Springs Substation east of Boardman. The Juniper Canyon Substation was also refurbished in 2014.

Meyers said there is still work to be done around Hermiston and Irrigon. Meanwhile, the co-op recently broke ground on its 30th substation, named Tumbleweed, at the Port of Morrow. It also plans to build a 1-megawatt solar array east of Umatilla.



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November 5 ~ December 17, 2015

**Opening Reception: Thursday, November 5 • 4:30~6:30 pm**

BETTY FEVES MEMORIAL GALLERY

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Betty Feves, Aaron Burgess, Jan Dow, Alice Fossatti, Doug Kaigler, Joel Kaylor, Kyoung Sook Kim, Jim Lavadour & David Waln

*The Feves Gallery 25th Anniversary: The Legacy Continues* celebrates the anniversary of the art gallery by honoring its namesake, late artist Betty Feves, whose pieces will be on display surrounded by the work of artists who apprenticed with her.

Blue Mountain Community College

Gallery Hours: Monday-Thursday 10:30am-2:30pm  
Special Hours: Saturday, Nov. 7th 11am-4pm  
By appointment: 541-278-5952

Betty Feves Memorial Gallery located at Blue Mountain Community College, Pioneer Hall, 2411 NW Carden Avenue, Pendleton, Oregon

**— Welcome —**

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Dr. McEntire specializes in general dentistry for patients of all ages and will be extending our services to include oral surgery and dental implants. We will continue to provide the same great dental care. New patients and same day emergencies are always welcome.

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