

Public can participate in EOTEC project success

By **DAVE DROTMANN**
Guest commentary

Dear Eastern Oregon residents,
Recently, the Eastern Oregon Trade & Event Center board hosted a community update that was well attended. However, we know that many of you who are interested and invested in this project were unable to attend. With that in mind, I reach out to you today with a project update on Phase 1 of the EOTEC.

As a historical reminder, the EOTEC project is a joint venture between the city of Hermiston and Umatilla County to remove the old Umatilla County fairgrounds from the compressed 21-acre site in downtown Hermiston to a new 94-acre site south of town, near the airport.

It's long been a vision, started over 30 years ago by many regional leaders, that one day the new site would be the location for the Umatilla County Fair and the Farm-City Pro Rodeo, coupled with a new Eastern

Oregon Event Center. The Event Center will be capable of hosting larger audiences and attracting local, regional, and state conventions and conferences, all of which is not possible at the current site without the investment of millions of dollars into massive infrastructure changes.

The Umatilla County Fair is unique in that it is one of the few fairs in the nation that successfully operates in the black, and its participation has grown by more than 54 percent over the last five years. This fact, coupled with the success and support of the Farm-City Pro Rodeo, makes for great appeal to a larger audience of attendees and spectators.

Over the last 10 years, regional leaders have been meeting to discuss the impending growth demands of the Hermiston School District, including the high school. It was agreed upon by all, that for the high

school to expand, the fairgrounds needed to move. So in 2012, the school district purchased the fairgrounds for \$3 million dollars, saving the community millions of dollars in bonding. By doing this, the school district guaranteed its expansion possibilities, without having to purchase additional land and build a new high school site somewhere else, at an estimated cost of over \$100 million.

We all know that an initiative this size can't be accomplished without significant amounts of funding, which is the primary reason the fairgrounds haven't been moved for over 30 years. That all changed when the school district purchased the land, and EOTEC received the state lottery funds secured by state Rep. Greg Smith. Those funds, along with other state grants, and contributions from Umatilla County, the city of Herm-

iston, and our local hotel group, has bolstered us to \$14 million in available resources.

The EOTEC Authority Board hired the FREW Group in October 2013. Over the last two years, 55 out of the 94 acres of barren ground has been transformed to meet our current needs and potential future expansions. In January 2015, the Exhibitor & Event Center building started construction and is now 75 percent complete, with an expected completion date of April 1, 2016.

A fundraising group, consisting of Dennis Barnett, Greg Harris, Nate Rivera and myself, has been authorized by the EOTEC Authority Board to pursue additional contributions with the goal of raising \$2 million in private funding. If these funds are raised, EOTEC will be unburdened by mortgage payments, allowing it to be profitable sooner. This would also complete Phase 1, allowing us to host the Umatilla

County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo starting in August 2017. By getting the funds upfront, this regional complex will not be taking on large debt, like other regional event centers, and this region can start seeing the rewards sooner.

Families, groups, and businesses throughout the region, can directly invest in a facility that reflects Eastern Oregon quality and brings benefits to all of us. EOTEC can be the facility that communicates to the rest of the state, "We are

committed to the people of our region and are willing to work together to make it happen."

So, please, join us, and the many others who've already invested in this project. To learn more about Phase 1 of the EOTEC project, or how you can contribute, go to www.eotechermiston.com.

David Drotmann is an optometrist and owner of Lifetime Vision Source in Hermiston. He has been mayor of Hermiston since January 2013.



Drotmann

Final EOTEC meeting of 2015 is Brookshier's last

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center board said goodbye to its chair Friday during its last meeting of 2015.

Ed Brookshier said serving on the board has been a "true honor and pleasure," even though the task has not been easy.

"I hope to be able to continue to help in any way I can," he said.

Brookshier is being replaced by Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith after the City Council demanded that Smith be put on the board as a condition of the \$600,000 the city recently agreed to contribute toward construction.

Vice chair Dan Dorran thanked Brookshier, noting that he had been meeting with people "no less than five times a week" about EOTEC business in recent months.

"It's an amazing amount



FILE PHOTO

Ed Brookshier (center) is flanked by Dan Dorran (left) and John Frew, CEO of Frew Development, at a work session on the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center earlier this fall with the Hermiston City Council. Friday was Brookshier's last meeting as chairman of the EOTEC board.

of time people don't understand that goes into this and it's all volunteer," he said.

The board had plenty of business to get to Friday. Rob Dreier, project manager for Frew Development Group, said the event center/exhibitor hall

is on schedule to be completed by March 2016. He suggested the board begin laying out policies and procedures for operating the building so that the EOTEC authority could "take off running" with hosting events in the building as soon as it opens in March.

He also asked for the board to make a decision between using natural gas or propane to heat the building and the rest of the site. Natural gas would cost about \$56,000 to put in, he said, compared to \$23,000 for propane. But in the long run natural gas is more efficient, its price doesn't fluctuate as greatly and it doesn't take up the space that a fenced-in collection of propane tanks would.

The board unanimously agreed on natural gas after the discussion.

They also approved EOTEC's annual audit by

Barnett & Moro, which found no structural weaknesses or other issues with EOTEC's bookkeeping that needed to be fixed.

The board approved an agreement with LRS Architects to create a three-dimensional model of the project to show potential investors during the fundraising committee's four-month campaign to raise \$2 million for construction by April 1, 2016.

Dorran said the fundraising committee was on a "very aggressive schedule" that works out to raising about \$200,000 a week. Since EOTEC will host the fair, rodeo and other events to the benefit of the entire county he said the committee is planning to look beyond Hermiston to the rest of Umatilla County, as well as eastern Morrow County and across the river into Washington for possible donors.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Baker City woman thankful for help

On Saturday, Dec. 19, while driving home, I had a tire blow out and it did a lot of damage to the front of my car. I want to thank the very nice Umatilla state trooper that came out and helped me and stayed with us until the tow truck arrived and had my car loaded. I also want to thank the gentlemen from Hermiston Auto Body & Towing for graciously

and safely towing me and my car back to Baker City. Umatilla and Hermiston areas, you are so fortunate to have such wonderful people in your communities. It's also so nice to know that there are such caring people in this area, given everything that is going on in the world. I am truly grateful! Thank You.

AUDREY HINDMAN
BAKER CITY, OREGON

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Worship with us!

The Full Gospel Home Church
235 SW 3rd
Phone 567-7678
Rev. Ed Baker - Rev. Nina Baker
Sunday: Sunday School.....10:00 am
Worship.....11:00 am
Evening Service.....7:00 pm
Wednesday Service.....7:00 pm
"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
1 Pet. 5:7

First United Methodist Church of Hermiston
Rev. Dr. James T. Pierce, Pastor
Open Hearts, Open minds, Open doors
191 E. Gladys Ave.
Sunday Worship at 11am
(541) 567-3002

NEW BEGINNINGS
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Worship Service 10:30 AM
Sunday School 9:00 AM
Pastor J.C. Barnett
Children's Church & Nursery Available
700 West Orchard Avenue
P.O. Box 933
Hermiston, Oregon
541-289-4774

Echo Community Church
21 N Bonanza Street
Echo, OR
Phone: (541) 376-8108
Sunday School.....9:30 am
Worship.....10:45 am
Children's Church.....11:15 am
Potluck & Communion ~
First Sunday of the Month

Oasis Vineyard
A COMMUNITY OF HOPE
1255 Hwy. 395 S. • 567-5834
oasisvineyard.us
Worship 10:00 AM
"come as you are"

Seventh-day Adventist Church
Saturdays
Sabbath School.....9:30 a.m.
Worship Service.....11:00 a.m.
567-8241
855 W. Highland • Hermiston

First Christian Church
"Proclaiming the Message of Hope, Living the Gospel of Love"
SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:30 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:30 AM
CHILDREN'S CHURCH 11:00 AM
Nursery Provided
567-3013
775 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston

St. Johns Episcopal Church
All People Are Welcome
Scripture, Tradition and Reason
Family service 9am Sunday
Gladys Ave & 7th Hermiston
Fr. Dan Lediard, Priest, PFE 367-6672

Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church
565 W. HERMISTON AVE.
DAILY MASS: Monday-Friday
.....English 7:00 am
THURSDAY.....Spanish 6:00 pm
SATURDAY.....English 5:00 pm
.....Spanish 7:00 pm
SUNDAY.....English 9:00 am
.....Bilingual 11:00 am
OFFICE.....Spanish 1:00 pm
OFFICE.....567-5812

Grace Baptist Church
555 SW 11th, Hermiston
567-9497
Nursery provided for all services
Sunday School - 9:30 AM
Worship - 10:45 AM
6:00 pm
Wed Prayer & Worship - 7:00 PM
"Proclaiming God's word, growing in God's grace"

HermNaz
the best thing about Sundays
1520 W ORCHARD AVE
Sunday Worship Service
10:30 am Classes for kids @ 9:15 am
SEEKING JESUS, SHARING LIFE, SERVING PEOPLE
www.hermistonnazarene.org

LANDMARK BAPTIST CHURCH
125 E. Beech Ave. • 567-3232
Pastor David Dever
Sun. Bible Classes.....10:00am
Sun. Worship Service.....11:00am
Sun. Evening Worship.....6:00pm
Wed. Prayer & Bible Study...6:00pm
www.hermistonlmbc.com

NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH
1350 S. Highway 395, Hermiston
Sunday Worship Services
English- Pastor Dave Andrus
9:00 & 10:45 am
Spanish- Pastor Genaro Loredó
9:00 & 10:15 am
Classes for kids during all services
For more information call
541-567-8441

THE COUNTRY CHURCH
Pastor James Becker
32742 Diagonal RD
Hermiston OR 97838
Sunday School 10 am
Worship 7 am
Evening Service 7 pm
Bible Study Wednesdays 7 pm
Firestarter Youth Ministry
(Ages 12-17)
Monday @ 6 pm

To share your worship times
call Amanda Jacobs
541-278-2683

Christmas Worship

The Community is invited and Welcome to Christmas Eve Service and Communion
December 24, 6 p.m.
First Christian Church
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 775 W. Highland - Hermiston
541-567-3013
www.hermistonfirstchristian.org

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

5:30 or 7:00 P.M.
New Hope Church
1350 S. Hwy 395
541-567-8441
www.newhopeon395.com

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
201 SW Dorion Ave., Pendleton

DECEMBER 24TH
5:30 PM - Family Friendly Christmas Eve Service
11:00 PM - Traditional Service, Scripture, Song, Communion & Candlelight

Celebrating Jesus' Birth
You and your family are invited!
Special Christmas Service Sunday, Dec 20th 10:00am
Candlelight Communion Wednesday, Dec 23rd 7:00pm
Living Word Christian Center 541-278-8082
401 Northgate, Pendleton
www.livingwordcc.com

Hermiston Church of the Nazarene

Candlelight Communion
Christmas Eve Service at
Hermiston Church of the Nazarene
1520 W Orchard Ave.
Thursday, December 24th at 6:00 p.m.
I look forward to joining you and your family for this 60 minute celebration as we celebrate Jesus. Pastor Eric
www.hermistonnazarene.org or **HermNaz App**

Celebrate Christmas
with the members of
HERMISTON FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
191 East Gladys

• **LIVING NATIVITY:**
Sat. Dec. 12th 6:00 - 8:00 PM
Sun. Dec. 13th 4:00 - 6:00 PM
- Walk through at your own pace as the Christmas Story unfolds with live actors, a donkey, sheep & chickens.
- Afterwards warm up inside with refreshments.
• **Regular Sunday Morning Services at 11:00 AM**
• **Christmas Eve:**
"Come and Go Communion Service"
in our sanctuary Dec. 24th
from 7:00 - 8:00 PM