

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I want to give an enormous thank you to Rascal Rodeo founder Ann-Erica Whitmarsh for putting on a fun-filled event in our local Farm-City Rodeo Arena. This generous and well-run organization utilizes volunteers who assist individuals with disabilities as they experience the excitement of various rodeo events including the opportunity to ride a real horse.

All participants received a shirt, hat, bandana and either a sheriff's badge or crown at no cost to the participant. The rain and mud did nothing to dampen the spirits of the cowboys and cowgirls "yee-hawing" their way through the five different activities.

One of the best aspects of this event is that there is not an age limit for the participants. So often these wonderful opportunities are limited to children and do not include young adults with disability. At first, my young adult daughter, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder, was hesitant about attending, but the minute we arrived at the arena she immediately began rotating to the stations ranging from "milking" a cow to riding a bucking unicorn!

We are truly fortunate to have the caliber of people who helped provide this positive event for the disabled in our community. I know that my daughter will look forward to attending another Rascal Rodeo event and I would encourage anyone who has a child with a disability to consider attending.

More information can be obtained about this organization by visiting the Rascal Rodeo website.

KRISTI SMALLEY, SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND ARC OF UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD MEMBER

Time to name this center

New event center building needs a name to distinguish it from EOTEC grounds and authority.

The first building at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center is now open and it will become a new gathering place for our community. But, what will we call it?

Is the new building the Event Center? Is it the event center building at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center? Or are the entire grounds to be known as the Event Center and will this first building come to be known by some other moniker?

The building itself definitely needs a designation.

I'm certainly not a fan of the EOTEC acronym for the grounds or the authority that governs it. EOTEC sounds like the place I would call when my Internet service is out, not where I go for a trade show or community celebration.

We are now one step closer to moving the Umatilla County Fair, which outgrew its facilities long ago, and providing another venue for events, large and small. The new building, unveiled to the public for the first time last week, will be a place for locals and visitors to gather, do business and celebrate.

It needs a name, or at the very least a nickname.



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith, the city's first city manager, Tom Harper, and the immediate past city manager, Ed Brookshier, pose for a photograph at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center open house on Friday. There have only been four city managers in the city's history and all three men have played a role in moving the Umatilla County Fair to, and creating EOTEC, with both Smith and Brookshier now serving on the EOTEC board.

Names are important. It could honor our region's history: a tribal name, something recognizing our area's location along the Oregon Trail and near Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery route.

With that idea in mind, here are a few suggestions.

Youmalolam Center: Youmalolam, according to the journals of Lewis and Clark, means "water rippling over sand." It is the word from which the Umatilla River, the city of Umatilla and Umatilla County are named. Water rippling over the desert sand has been the key to the community's subsistence, growth, settlement and economy for centuries.

Cold Springs Center: Cold Springs and the Cold Springs Reservoir were key to the early

growth of agriculture in western Umatilla County and Hermiston in particular. Cold Springs dam created the reservoir as part of the Umatilla Basin Project with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 1908, two years after Hermiston's incorporation as a city.

Coho Center, Chinook Center, Steelhead Center or Sturgeon Center: Because these fish are some of the species for which the Columbia and Umatilla rivers and our area are known.

Coyote Center or Coyote Hall: The local predator is a common site around our area.

Basalt Center: Basalt is an igneous rock common in lava flows and has created some of our area's most prominent geological features — including the Hermis-



Gary L. West
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