

# EOTEC CLOSER TO AWARDING RODEO ARENA CONTRACT

**By JADE McDOWELL**  
Staff Writer

Hendon Construction submitted the only bid as the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center tried for the second time to find someone to build a rodeo arena, but the contract was not awarded during the EOTEC board's Friday meeting.

Board chair Byron Smith said there were some parts of the bid that needed to be addressed with Hendon, which will affect the final price.

"There were some slight discrepancies that legal counsel found, but nothing that is not correctable," Smith said.

He told the board that the contract could likely be awarded at a special meeting in about two weeks.

The board had previously issued a request for proposals for the arena, but on Aug. 4 rejected both bids. David Bothum, a founding member of the Farm-City Pro Rodeo, had resigned from the EOTEC board in February with the stated intent of bidding on construction of the arena through his company Bothum Construction.

During the Aug. 4 meeting, however, John Frew of Frew Development Group told the board that their legal council did not believe Bothum Construction — a residential contractor — met the legal definition of a "responsible bidder" for the scope of that contract. He

also recommended rejecting the competing bid from Kirby Nagelhout Construction Company of Bend because it came in \$740,000 over EOTEC's \$4 million budget.

The board rejected both bids during that meeting and issued a new request for proposals that pared down the base bid to the essentials and marked components like restrooms and lighting as optional add-ons. Neither Bothum Construction or Kirby Nagelhout Construction Company submitted a bid on the new request.

Since Hendon Construction of Umatilla was the only bidder on the new request, the board voted to declare them the low bidder but hold off approving a contract until the issues Smith referenced were addressed and they had a final price to consider.

During Friday's meeting, the board also heard a construction update from John Eckhardt of Knerr Construction, which has partnered with Frew Development Group to oversee day-to-day construction of the overall EOTEC project.

Eckhardt told the board that they were almost done paring down the barn designs to meet budget, and planned to issue a bid package for the metal buildings Oct. 1. That leaves a tentative construction start date of Nov. 1 and a finish date of July 17, 2017.

"Right now that looks pretty realistic," he said.

Landscaping of the vendors commons area can't happen until the paving and site electrical work have finished, he said, but they have plans to lay down grass seed in the spring, protected by a layer of dead winter wheat to keep it from blowing away, and they are almost ready to dig a second well for irrigation.

Contractors have already been selected to perform site electrical and paving work, which should be completed later this fall. Perimeter fencing will be put out to bid Oct. 1 with a plan of completing it by Nov. 14. The scope of signs, food vendor stalls and exhibitor staging areas are still being discussed.

The rest of the board agreed with Dan Dorrn that after the rodeo bid is awarded the board should schedule a work session to review the history and purpose of EOTEC, review the current structure of committees, discuss upcoming operational issues such as staffing and decide "what our expectations are" for the 2017 fair and rodeo.

"We need to sit down and really know where we are," he said.

After the committee reports, Umatilla County Fair board member Gay Newman told the board he had

been hearing from community members who have said they don't have the money to make a donation to EOTEC but they would be very willing to donate their time. The current fair and rodeo grounds have been built and maintained by volunteer labor, he said, and people have been disappointed not to be able to do the same for the new grounds.

"You're starting to lose some of the people who really support us, because they're not being asked to do anything," he said.

Eckhardt said the problem is that state regulations require a project such as EOTEC, which is using millions of dollars of state money and administered by a government entity, to pay a prevailing wage for all work done.

EOTEC board members said they would love to accept volunteer labor, but they have to be careful not to run afoul of the Bureau of Labor and Industries. However, they did say they would look at ways to legally allow volunteer involvement for some projects such as planting trees.

"I think there are a lot of different opportunities," Dorrn told Newman, "but they are going to have to be more well-defined than what you and I are used to at the fair."

## IN BRIEF

### Temp agency to lease space in East Oregon building

A Hermiston business that started in a garage in November has already grown out of its first home.

Jiovanni Staffing LLC will be renting the back office of the Hermiston Herald/East Oregon building at 333 E. Main St. in Hermiston. The business is a "temp-to-hire" model that provides temporary labor to companies with an eye on getting employees permanent placements at those companies when an opportunity comes available.

Jaime Ruelaz said he named the business after his son. He and his father started it last November with two employees and one client. Now after relying solely on word of mouth and Facebook he said they have more than 50 employees available for temp jobs and six local businesses that use them. As a result, Ruelaz said he felt the time was right to move into a more legitimate-looking office space and start doing things like joining the Chamber of Commerce.

He said the staffing agency mostly focuses on factory and warehouse work. Interested businesses and employees can contact Ruelaz at 541-571-9682 or via the Jiovanni Staffing LLC Facebook page.

searchers found him about an hour later in a field approximately half a mile from home.

"He's OK," Rowan said Saturday, "but a little cold."

Rowan said the boy's family was having a barbecue at their home Saturday and left the front gate open, which they believe he walked out of.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston reported two Hermiston officers joined the effort, as did Oregon State Police troopers and a LifeFlight helicopter with an infrared night vision camera.

Rowan said searchers, which also included Morrow County Sheriff's Office, Umatilla and Stanfield Police Departments and an estimated 100 local citizens, initially did a grid search of the neighborhood. He added that LifeFlight was "pretty instrumental" in locating the boy, as were the volunteers who helped with the search.

"I just really appreciate the outpouring of support not only from other agencies, but also the community," Rowan said. "If not for them who knows what would've happened? It was a pretty chilly night and the boy was not dressed for the weather."

### Stanfield officer to graduate police course

Stanfield's newest officer is about to graduate from the Oregon Public Safety Academy, Salem.

Tristan Walker joins 39 other new officers that will leave the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training's basic police course on Friday, Sept. 9, to join agencies throughout the state.

Walker, 27, was a reserve officer for several years and in February 2015 was part of a crew of volunteer firefighters that used ropes to rescue a dog that fell over a 30-foot cliff.

## West Nile detections high in Umatilla County this year

### County has most positive tests in state

**By GEORGE PLAVEN**  
Staff Writer

Though summer is winding down, West Nile virus remains a concern in west Umatilla County.

Not only have 23 samples of mosquitoes tested positive for the disease so far this year, but two horses near Umatilla also became infected recently. Neither horse was vaccinated, and one had to be euthanized, said Randy Gerard with the West Umatilla Mosquito Control District.

Gerard said residents still need to protect themselves from mosquito bites, despite cooler weather over the holiday weekend.

"I don't want people to let their guard down," he said.

West Nile was first detected in Umatilla County this year on June 28, about a month earlier than usual. High temperatures hastened the cycle of mosquitoes in the area, which Gerard said has kept the district busy all season.

"It seems like once you get that initial detection, you'll be fighting it the rest of the summer," he said.

Another six mosquito samples are currently being tested at the Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Corvallis, which could bump up the number of positive tests. Neighboring Morrow

County has had a total of seven positive samples, and another eight samples tested positive in Baker County.

West Nile is primarily a bird disease, with magpies, blue jays and crows especially susceptible. Mosquitoes become vectors by feeding on dead or infected birds and passing it along to humans and horses when they bite.

Gerard said horse owners are encouraged to check with their veterinarians for information on vaccinations.

"We've been asking people to vaccinate their horses going on 10 years now," he said. "It really helps."

Most people who become infected with West Nile do not become ill, though one in five may experience mild flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache and body aches. In rare cases, West Nile can cause what's known as encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain. Anyone experiencing severe or unusual headaches should seek immediate medical care.

Tips to reduce the risk of exposure to West Nile include:

- Get rid of old tires or other containers where water can accumulate and serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Flush or replace the water in horse troughs weekly.
- Flush or add mosquito fish to ornamental ponds.
- Avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.

at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.

- Wear long-sleeve shirts and pants when in mosquito-infested areas.
- Use insect repellent while outdoors.
- Screen doors and windows.

The West Umatilla Mosquito Control District will conduct an aerial spraying for mosquitoes Saturday evening between 7:30 and 8 over

approximately 10,000 acres near Diagonal Road in Hermiston. The operation should take about an hour, Gerard said.

To report mosquito infestations or dead birds, Gerard said to call the district at 541-567-5201.

"We run our program all year," he said. "When the virus elevates like this, we do a lot more spraying in the areas that need it."



## LOVE YOUR JOB

- Flexible schedules
- Fun environment &
- Competitive salary
- enthusiastic team members
- Benefits & Incentives
- Leaders that put YOU first

Meaningful work, rewarding careers, awesome people, amazing opportunities. We have a passion for service, a love of team work and a vision for transforming customer care.

Find the job you'll love at [www.sykes.com/Milton](http://www.sykes.com/Milton)

# SYKES®

¿Hablas español e inglés?

Se parte de algo diferente! SYKES te ofrece la oportunidad de trabajar en nuestro excelente grupo de trabajo.

Aplica en Línea: [www.sykes.com/Milton](http://www.sykes.com/Milton)  
o llama al (541) 938-1223

## Car Shopping?

Financing for New & Used Autos, Boats, RVs, & Trailers

- New financing for most recent two model years
- Used financing for vehicles up to 7 years old
- Used Boat/RV/Trailers up to 8 years old
- Amounts from \$3,000 and up
- Contact branch for available terms

Stop In and Check Out Our Great Auto Loan Rates!

**Community BANK**  
Member FDIC