



## City moving forward with Hermiston Loop Trail

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
Staff Writer

Another mile of trail will be added next year to the 6.5 mile loop the city is building around the western half of Hermiston.

The city council approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Department of Transportation on Monday, Oct. 24, to build a trail for cyclists and pedestrians along the south side of Highland Avenue between SW 11th Street and SW 23rd Street near Riverfront Park. Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said the trail could end up going even farther along Highland than that, depending on “when he money runs out.”

The \$663,225 West Highland Trail project fits into the wider vision of a Hermiston Loop Trail that will eventually allow bicyclists and pedestrians to make a 6.5 mile loop around the western side of Hermiston.

The first leg of that project came when the popular Oxbow Trail opened in 2014, creating a meandering 1.5 mile asphalt trail connected to Riverfront Park.

The stretch of Highland featured in the West Highland Trail project is currently bordered by a patchwork of sidewalks, bike lanes and gravel shoulder. A contribution of \$150,000 from the city and \$513,000 from ODOT would turn it into a multi-use trail running parallel to the road on the south side of Highland. Construction is expected to take place next summer.

City Manager Byron Smith told the council that the city was still working with the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the right of way to extend the trail through the Steelhead Park area, which would loop it from the top of the Highland Extension bridge, under the bridge and into Riverfront Park.

“They seem very open to it, it just seems like they may be bogged down working through it,” he said.

Smith said getting the trail under the bridge so that people weren’t tempted to

try and cross Highland was a high safety priority, and if the money from ODOT “doesn’t get us all the way under, we will come back with a plan.”

That will allow walkers and runners to make a loop of approximately 3.5 miles using the new trail, Riverfront Park, the Oxbow Trail and the sidewalks along SW 11th Street between Highland Avenue and the start of the Oxbow Trail across from Good Shepherd Medical Center.

Smith said ODOT had originally planned to do the work with the city contributing \$150,000 plus any costs overruns. But ODOT came back with a proposal for the city to handle engineering and construction instead and be reimbursed at 77 percent, which city staff was “pleased with.”

“We think we can get the project done quicker and keep a better handle on cost,” he said.

One afternoon last week, Kim Popham was one of several people walking the path around Riverfront Park. She said she uses the park about three times a month and walks the Oxbow Trail usually once a month, depending on weather.

“I like that it’s paved and clean,” she said.

After hearing about the plans for a trail along Highland Avenue, she said it sounded “pretty cool” and she would definitely use it when it is finished.

Rebecca Artz brought her sons to Riverfront Park recently, pushing one in a stroller and letting the other one run a short way ahead. She said she comes into Hermiston from Stanfield “a couple of times a week” to go walking, or sometimes roller blading, at Riverfront Park or on the Oxbow Trail because Stanfield doesn’t have a good walking route away from traffic for young children. She said she would be excited about more walking options in town.

“I like the exercise and the scenery,” she said.

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# EOTEC: 2017 & beyond

## Work session examines Hermiston project’s future

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
Staff Writer

An Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center work session held Friday featured plenty of discussion, but no firm answers on who will run the 2017 Umatilla County Fair.

The five-hour work session, held after the EOTEC board’s regular business meeting, covered operations, staffing, maintenance and fee schedules.

First, however, the board took time to review the history of the EOTEC project and appreciate how far they have come in building a multi-million dollar facility with no general obligation bonds.

“People just basically laughed at us when we gave our first presentation,” Dan Dorran said. “... It takes a long time to explain that you’re going to build a \$21 million facility with no money.”

That dream has since been scaled down, but as the finished project comes closer to reality, the board is looking to tackle questions about what happens when the last nail is in.

### Staffing

EOTEC’s current staff comprises full-time business manager Heather Cannell,

## Board approves 50-year lease with Farm-City Pro Rodeo

Hermiston Herald

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center board approved a lease with the Farm-City Pro Rodeo during its regular meeting Friday morning.

The board had examined a 50-year lease last week that would grant the mercantile area outside the rodeo grounds to the Farm-City Pro Rodeo for a one-time payment of \$50. After city and county officials expressed concerns about how cutting such deals would affect EOTEC’s financial viability, the revised lease approved Friday was a 30-year lease for \$500 per year.

The lease acknowledged the rodeo board’s plans to make significant improve-

ments to the property, and to allow EOTEC to use the mercantile area for events when the rodeo is not using it. If the rodeo board wants to use the mercantile area at the same time another event is being held in another area of EOTEC, the updated lease states that the EOTEC event takes precedence if there is any conflict.

The board also discussed bringing the trailer that used to house the EOTEC offices from the Stafford Hansell Government Building in order to provide a base for law enforcement and medical help to operate out of during the fair or if the grounds were being used for some sort of emergency.

full-time administrative event assistant Cyndie Driscoll, plus a quarter of a financial position at the city of Hermiston. Cannell said she relies on temporary labor provided by Express Staffing to help out for some large events, but for the most part she and Driscoll have been trying to do as much set-up, take-down and cleaning as they can to save money.

Board member Vijay Patel said a maintenance employee needed to be hired soon, because he wanted to see Can-

nell’s sole focus stay on marketing and booking events.

“Setting up tables and cleaning bathrooms is not what we hired her for,” he said.

The rest of the board seemed to agree that a maintenance employee was needed at EOTEC, but who should run the entire project was a less clear matter.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners laid off fair manager Don Slone earlier this month as a money-saving move as the fair



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

The EOTEC board of directors met Friday to discuss the staffing and operational needs of the new facility.

Longer version of the story online at [HERMISTONHERALD.COM](http://HERMISTONHERALD.COM)

shifts to EOTEC, but no decision has been made about what type of position would run the fair instead.

Don Miller said that when looking at the finances of the county and EOTEC, “a shared position would be beneficial.”

Byron Smith said the board needed to decide what an EOTEC general manager’s position would include, and whether to have a separate marketing person. If a general manager had someone working on marketing, he said, there could be an opportunity for the county to contract with EOTEC to run the fair on their behalf.

Smith, Patel and Dorran were in favor of hiring a consultant to help craft a plan for marketing and management.

## Hermiston native named UEC chief operating officer

Sonja Bogart, a Hermiston native with 20 years of experience working with electric utilities, is coming home to serve as chief operating officer of the Umatilla Electric Cooperative.

A graduate of Hermiston High School, Bogart has spent the majority of her career working with the Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association in Rockford, Minnesota, just west of Minneapolis. Since

2002, she has served as the utility’s vice president of customer service, sales and marketing.

“UEC is going through an exciting time with growth and opportunity, and I’m glad to be here,” Bogart said in a statement.

Bogart’s Hermiston roots run deep in her family. Her great-grandfather, Albert Prann, was an



**Sonja Bogart**

early Hermiston mayor and the town’s first drugstore owner. Robert Echenrode, UEC general manager and CEO, said that Bogart has knowledge and appreciation of the area, along with her breadth of experience at Wright-Hennepin.

“She has proven herself, rising to a high level in a well-respected cooperative,” Echenrode said.

Bogart has a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Oregon, and a master’s degree in business administration from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has two grown children: Allison, a pediatric nurse at the University of Minnesota children’s hospital; and Matthew, who works in the warehouse at Wright-Hennepin.

### IN BRIEF

#### County jail scores high on inspection

The Umatilla County Jail tied its highest score during a recent jail inspection.

A team of jail inspectors from the Oregon Jail Command Council scrutinized the jail Oct. 20 and 21, the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office reported in a written statement. The jail received a score of 99.2 percent compliant, according to the statement, which “ties the highest score in the history of the facility in 2011.”

The Oregon State

Sheriff’s Association developed the 309 jail standards the inspectors use, which address inmate rules and discipline, staff training, and many other categories and procedures, most of which state and federal laws and rules require.

“This year’s score is especially commendable since our jail population is at an all-time high, and significantly higher than in 2011,” according to the sheriff’s office, which also noted the “responsibilities that go along with managing many more inmates and programs have

increased” since Terry Rowan became sheriff in 2013.

Rowan is seeking re-election. Pendleton Police Cpl. Ryan Lehnert is challenging Rowan for the sheriff’s post.

#### Business owner receives certification

Danita Smith, of Third Day Creations, LLC, Hermiston, recently earned the certification administered by Promotional Products Association International.

Individuals with the cer-

tification are considered industry leaders who have attained a higher standard of professional competence, knowledge and experience. Those attaining the status have completed a combination of required classes, demonstrated years of employment in the industry, education, industry contributions and a successful demonstration of expertise.

Third Day Creations specializes in promotional products and business gifts. For more information, contact 541-564-9219, [thirdday97838@gmail.com](mailto:thirdday97838@gmail.com) or visit [www.thirddaycreations.net](http://www.thirddaycreations.net).

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