

Umatilla County cuts drug court

By PHIL WRIGHT
Staff Writer

Umatilla County is cutting its drug court program due to reductions in funding from the state. The move is effective June 30 and means laying off six employees.

Larry Givens, chairman of the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners, said the county has a general policy of not backfilling when the state stops providing money.

"We've seen that happen time and time again," Givens said, "... and we're at the point we can't keep doing that."

Drug court provides court supervised alcohol and drug treatment for offenders. County counsel Doug Olsen said the decision to end the program came March 15 from the local public safety coordinating council, the body of law enforcement and community leaders responsible for recommending to county commissioners how to use state resources to serve the local offender population. Olsen said the county sent layoff notices to four drug court alcohol and drug counselors and two staff in the Community Justice Department, which oversees the court.

Dale Primmer, director of Community Justice who is also a Pendleton city councilor, said eliminating drug court resulted from an unfortunate budget trend and shows the state-wide funding gap of \$1.8 billion hits local services.

Primmer recalled the local public safety coordinating council applied for and received a grant from the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission to begin drug court in 2006. That grant covered 100 percent of the cost of the court and pro-

vided contributions to help facilitate the program.

Around 2010, he said, the state moved to a funding model of providing \$14 per day per drug court participant, but that only applied to offenders serving parole and probation. Primmer said that was about 140 people, and Community Justice covered the budget difference to keep the court going.

The state in the last biennium dropped the rate to \$12, he said, and Community Justice used about \$273,000 to bridge the funding gap. In this biennium, he said, the state is offering \$9 per day per participant, and drug court has 90 people.

"So not only is the rate substantially reduced, so is the total people being served," Primmer said.

Last biennium, the county received about \$976,000 to support drug court, and the next biennium would be about \$591,000. Primmer said when he ran the numbers on drug court's total cost, it came out around \$516,000 in the hole.

"You take three bienniums in a row when the budget keeps getting cut ... you get to the point when the gap becomes too wide," he said.

He took the numbers Wednesday to the coordinating council, where he presented a few scenarios.

Community Justice could cover the cost of drug court with money from other programs, such as the day treatment operation for high-risk offenders or treatment for people in the county jail. Or drug court could end, and Community Justice could re-evaluate how to best use its resources to serve as many people as possible with an eye toward finding sustainable replacement money to

restart drug court in the future.

Ending drug court also comes after a state review found shortcomings in the program.

Primmer said his department asked the state to conduct an evaluation in January to see how well Community Justice implemented drug court and delivered evidence-based practices. A final report is forthcoming, he said, but the summary showed the department scored high in areas related to oversight, policy and assessment.

However, he said, the examination also determined delivery of services and treatment staff characteristics were in the lower ranges of "moderate and needs improvement."

And the weight of those two categories, he said, brought down the overall evaluation.

Primmer attributed the findings to new staff who are still learning and acquiring training hours to reach state certification. He said he would expect a better result from a follow-up evaluation as the staff gains experience.

That, however, is likely a moot point.

Primmer also stressed ending drug court came down to the money, not the evaluation. He called this an opportunity for the county to "push the reset button" and evaluate how to deliver quality services.

The county also sent pink slips to two staff members in the Water Resources Department, but that came from the state's plan to take over the program. Olsen said at this time the county does not anticipate more cuts.

Givens added, "We're hopeful this is it."

Majority of seats in the special election draw only one candidate

Hermiston Herald

Candidates in Umatilla County won't face much competition in the upcoming May elections.

After the Thursday filing deadline, a list of candidates published by the Umatilla County Elections Division revealed that 70 percent of the 124 seats up for election had only one candidate running while 18 percent had no candidate at all.

Held in May during odd numbered years, the "special election" is used to vote on candidates for school boards, fire protection districts and other service districts.

Despite the low number of participants, there are still a handful of contested elections local residents will see on their ballots.

The Umatilla Morrow Data & Radio District, a taxing district that provides communications system support for almost every law enforcement and emergency services

agency in Umatilla and Morrow counties, has two contested races that could significantly change the composition of its board.

Position 1 incumbent Mike Roxbury, the former chief of the Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District, is being challenged by Loren Dieter, a lieutenant with the Boardman Police Department.

Dieter's chief at the Boardman PD, Rick Stokoe, is also mounting a challenge against Position 2 incumbent Kathy Lieuellen, Umatilla County Sheriff's Office communications manager.

If both Dieter and Stokoe are elected, four out of the five seats on the board would belong to people from Morrow County.

Position 4 incumbent Ken Matlack, the Morrow County sheriff, is running unopposed.

Other boards that feature contested races in-

clude the Stanfield School District, the Echo Cemetery District and the Umatilla County Library District.

Some seats drew no filed candidates, including the Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education Zone 5 seat, which is currently vacant, and Hermiston School Board Position 3 seat, which will be vacated by Don Rankin.

Umatilla County elections manager Kim Lindell said the elections division will accept write-in votes for all the seats without a declared candidate.

Once the write-in votes have been counted, the winner will be asked to accept the position. If they decline, then the local board is given the authority to declare the seat vacant and appoint someone to fill the seat for the next two years.

The election will be held May 16.

Dance teams score at state

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
Staff Writer

The Hermiston and Pendleton dance teams scored big at the state competition this weekend, with Pendleton taking second place for the 5A category, and Hermiston taking fifth. There were 13 teams in the 5A competition.

The Hermiston dance team, which has 18 students, performed a jazz routine, titled "The Witch Hunt."

Hermiston senior Aristeia Loveland was also selected to the All-State team.

"All season, we floated

around in the top six, so we knew [...] a trophy was feasible," said Hermiston coach Ashley Seibel. "It was a tough division, and we feel genuinely honored to be considered one of the top five in 5A."

The two teams got together at Homecoming and performed a dance to "Thriller," by Michael Jackson.

Pendleton performed a jazz routine, called "Fear the Mindkiller," and received several individual honors as well. Senior Ashleigh Bolling received a \$1,500 dance scholarship, and senior Abby Rinehart received a \$1,000

academic scholarship. Two students, Bolling and Madison Cates, were also voted to the All-State team, which honored eight dancers from the 5A category.

Pendleton head coach Debbie Kishpaugh said the team, which has 31 students was hoping to finish fairly high. They came into the competition ranked third, Kishpaugh said.

"The Pendleton and Hermiston dance teams don't treat each other as rivals," Kishpaugh said. "They're really good friends. They get along really well. The kids support each other, which is nice."

Sunset Elementary principal resigns

The Hermiston School District will hire a new principal for Sunset Elementary School, it posted on its district website Monday.

Principal Devin Grigg submitted his resignation for the end of this school year, and will be moving out of the area with his family, according to assistant superintendent Tricia Mooney.

Applications for the new principal are due April 10, and from April 11-14 district staff will review and screen applications. Can-

didates will be interviewed and visit the district between April 20 and 21.

The new principal will start July 1.

Grigg said he and his family are moving to the Phoenix, Arizona, area to start a small business. He was the principal of Sunset for eight years, and before that a middle school assistant principal for four years, two at Armand Larive and two at Sandstone.

"I love this community, love this district," Grigg said. "There are phenomenal people, they've been

very good to us."

Grigg said the hardest part of the decision to move was leaving the people in the district — but he wanted to try to pursue his dream of owning a small business.

"I love the community support for the schools, and the schools' support for the community," he said. "It's been a very neat thing to be a part of."

Grigg was named district administrator of the year for the 2015-2016 school year.

IN BRIEF

Sheriff's office warns of jury duty scam

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office announced it recently received complaints about scam callers trying to solicit money from citizens for missing jury duty.

"The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office has not and will not contact citizens for this purpose or in this manner," the sheriff's office said

in a written statement. "Neither the courts nor law enforcement will solicit money from citizens for not showing up for jury duty."

In recent complaints, the caller claims to be a member of the sheriff's office and tells the potential victim they missed jury service and there is a warrant for their arrest. They are told they can avoid jail by paying a fine immediately or giving personal information, such as bank account, credit card or

Social Security numbers.

Don't provide any personal or financial information to the scammers, the sheriff's office warned. Citizens are urged to report any suspicious phone calls or possible scams to local law enforcement.

For more information about jury duty scams, visit www.ord.uscourts.gov. For tips from the Federal Trade Commission on how to avoid fraud, go to www.consumer.ftc.gov.

EAST OREGONIAN Hermiston Herald

BUTTE CHALLENGE



SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2017

5K Run, 5K Walk, 10K Run, Kid's Butte Scoot

All races begin & end at Hermiston's Butte Park

DRAWINGS • FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Online registration & race information at

WWW.BUTTECHALLENGE.COM

Register online by April 22nd to order a custom technical race T-Shirt

All proceeds benefit THE HERMISTON CROSS COUNTRY PROGRAM

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

I found Dad's remote in the fridge again. ...I'm beginning to get worried.

IT'S NOT LIKE HIM.



WE CAN HELP.

Call us with questions about aging and Alzheimer's.



1-855-ORE-ADRC
HelpForAlz.org

ADRC
Aging and Disability Resource Connection
of OREGON

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAM