

Fair and rodeo move took massive effort over decades

Community support still needed the next phase of project

By DENNIS BARNETT
GUEST COMMENT

As the preparation for the 2017 Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo continues to increase in pace, the board of directors of the Friends of the Fair and Rodeo Inc. wanted to take a moment to reflect on the relationships and needs of the four entities involved in the events. This may help clarify the understanding of what is happening next to the Hermiston airport.

First, the fair and rodeo facility is owned by the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center. EOTEC is a joint activity of Umatilla County and the city of Hermiston. It is charged with building

and maintaining the facilities located on 90 acres next to the Hermiston Airport. Those facilities include an Event Center, a common area, barns, and a rodeo arena. Those facilities are currently being completed from funds that were provided by the city, county, the state of Oregon, and donations from individuals and businesses across Umatilla and Morrow Counties. The facilities are limited by these funds, because EOTEC has built these facilities without any bonded debt.

Secondly, a brief review of the makeup of the Umatilla County Fair and the Farm-City Pro Rodeo. The Umatilla County Fair is run by a fair board appointed by the Umatilla County Commissioners. These board members are non-paid volunteers who manage the annual event. The fair is actually part of Umatilla County. This board and hundreds of volunteers come together each year to produce the fair. The Farm-City Pro Rodeo

Please keep in mind the effort in man hours and money that has been expended for the benefit of our county and our communities.

Company is a non-profit whose volunteer board is involved in producing a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association rodeo each year. The rodeo also has many volunteers who help the board manage the event. The rodeo is completely independent of the Umatilla County Fair. The fair and rodeo cooperate with each other to hold the events in conjunction with each other each year.

Thirdly, the Umatilla County Fair and the Farm-

City Pro Rodeo do not own any of the facilities. They merely rent the facilities to hold their annual events at the EOTEC site. Both entities have long-term leases with the landlord, EOTEC, to hold their events there. The fair and the rodeo both have made substantial leasehold improvements to the facilities to assist in the operations of the fair and rodeo outside of what EOTEC has provided. These improvements are not owned by the fair or rodeo.

This all brings us to the discussion of what the Friends of the Fair and Rodeo is. The Friends of the Fair and Rodeo is a charitable non-profit formed to support the needs of the Umatilla County Fair and the Farm-City Pro Rodeo. This entity was formed to allow businesses and individuals a way to donate for the benefit of the fair or rodeo, or both. Because the Friends of the Fair and Rodeo is a charitable non-profit, all donations to it are tax deductible. The board of Friends of the Fair and Rodeo is made up of two rodeo board members, two fair board members, and an outside member, independent of each board.

As the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center comes to the completion of Phase 1 of its development, and the Umatilla County Fair

and Farm-City Pro Rodeo gear up for their first event at the new location, please keep in mind the effort in man-hours and money that has been expended for the benefit of our county and our communities. If you have interest in helping with the needed funds to put the finishing touches on the facility, and assist the fair and rodeo in putting on their events, please do not hesitate in contacting one of the Friends of the Fair and Rodeo board members. They are Dan Dorrn, David Dickmeier, Roe Gardner, Lucas Wagner and Dennis Barnett.

Dennis Barnett is the co-owner of Barnett & Moro, P.C., in Hermiston, a member of the Farm-City Pro Rodeo board of directors and a board member of Friends of the Fair and Rodeo.

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