

EOTEC

continued from Page A1

The project broke ground in December 2014 and finished construction in August 2017, just in time for last year's fair and rodeo.

How was EOTEC paid for?

Money for the construction of EOTEC came from a variety of public and private sources. The city of Hermiston donated the land, and Umatilla County sold the old fairgrounds in the middle of Hermiston to Hermiston School District for \$3 million, which it then donated to EOTEC as seed money.

More than \$8 million of the \$17 million it took to build the facility came from state and federal money, mostly from an Oregon state lottery grant. More than \$2 million in private donations was raised to support the project, and another \$1 million came from local hoteliers who agreed to assess an extra dollar per room per night to go toward EOTEC construction.

As EOTEC continued to come up short for construction, the city and county each agreed to pitch in another \$600,000 apiece. Other sources of funding included the Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo.

Money for the operation of EOTEC has come from \$75,000 per year base payments by the city and county, which then split whatever additional money is needed after event rental revenue and expenses are totaled. Money for marketing comes from a \$1 per room per night tourism promotion assessment that local hoteliers and RV park owners agreed to.

Who currently owns and runs EOTEC?

EOTEC was first formed by an intergovernmental agreement between Umatilla County and the city of Hermiston, meaning both



Hermiston Mayor Dave Drotzmann lists the benefits of moving the Umatilla County Fair from its old location in Hermiston to the new site at EOTEC during a special joint meeting of the Hermiston City Council and the Umatilla County Commissioners in January in Hermiston.



A sign marking the fundraising efforts for the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center on Highway 395 in Hermiston in 2016 showed more than half of the \$2 million goal has been raised.

entities are co-owners of the facility. They appointed a seven-member volunteer board made up of representatives from the city, county, fair, rodeo and hoteliers to oversee the facility but final liability and ownership lies with the city and county.

The board, with the approval of the city and county, recently hired a professional venue-management company called VenuWorks to run the facility's day-to-day operations, including event booking, marketing, set-up and take-



The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center

down for events and care of the physical facilities.

The Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo pay to lease the property for their events.

What would change under the agreement being discussed Monday?

If the city and county agree to a new arrangement, the county would withdraw

from ownership of EOTEC and the city would be the sole owner. The city council would call the final shots, with input from some sort of advisory committee, and for the foreseeable future VenuWorks would continue to manage day-to-day operations.

The final text of the agreement isn't available

quite yet (check the city website later in the week) but will be similar to Murdock's original proposal that the county honor several of its earlier financial commitments. That includes having the county pay its half of the \$1.2 million VenuWorks says the facility still needs to finish the RV park and fully equip EOTEC, pay the \$105,000 it had agreed upon to help cover construction overruns, continue to pay \$75,000 annually for operations for the next five years and provide an additional \$85,175 in 2018 and \$75,399 in 2019 based on projections by VenuWorks for operational overruns. The cost for the Umatilla County Fair to lease the facility for the fair and set-up/clean-up would increase from \$10,000 to \$100,000 per year.

The city would work toward creating some sort of storage and office space for the fair on-site. Smith said Murdock's original proposal had included the city taking over part or all of the neighboring Ott and Airport roads, but they are holding off on that for a separate agreement later due to some delays with the Oregon Department of Transportation providing funding for improving both roads.

So remind me what's happening Monday?

At 7 p.m. at city hall, during their regular city council meeting, the council will discuss the agreement with the county to take over EOTEC, and will be taking public comment on the topic. At that time the council can choose to vote to approve the agreement or move the vote to a future meeting if councilors decide they want more time to study out the issue. An agenda packet for the meeting with the details of the agreement will be available on the city's website prior to the meeting.

BTW

continued from Page A1

short on people," Stanton said in an email to the Herald. "While the three fires were going we also had to run two more medicals. For a couple of hours it was very interesting. We couldn't have handled one more call."

A pair of job fairs are available in the area, including Wednesday, March 7 in Boardman and Wednesday, March 14 in Hermiston. Admission is free at both events.

A variety of industries, educational institutions and government agencies will be on hand during the **Agriculture, Energy and Processing Job Fair**. The event is Wednesday, March 7 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the **SAGE Center**, 101 Olson Road, Boardman. Attendees can visit with area food processors, utilities, farms, local government agencies, data centers and educational institutions about careers, education and job-seeking assistance.

For more information, including a list of organizations attending, visit www.visitsage.com or call 541-481-7243.

The **Resource and Job Fair** will assist people looking for jobs in all industries, as well connecting agricultural workers with the community. It is Wednesday, March 14 from 4-7 p.m. at the **Hermiston Community Center**, 415 S. Highway 395. Those attending can also learn about training and

employment programs.

For more information, contact the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce at 541-567-6151, debbie@hermistonchamber.com or visit www.hermistonchamber.com.

The February **American Red Cross** blood drive in Hermiston included first-time donor **Madison Kitchin**.

"It is people like Madison that keep our blood supply strong," said volunteer **Patti Perkins**.

The Feb. 19 event, which was held at Good Shepherd Medical Center, included 40 donors, which resulted in 35 units being collected, Perkins said. Also, the canteen was provided by the **Boardman Community Women's Group**.

Blood products are always in high demand, but with the high number of those effected by flu the blood supply is low, Perkins said. Each blood donation can save the lives of up to three people.

This month's blood drive is Monday, March 19 from noon to 6 p.m., also at GSMC, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. While walk-ins are welcome, appointments assist with scheduling. To make an appointment, call 1-800-448-3543. For more information, visit www.red-cross.org.

You can submit items for our weekly *By The Way* column by emailing your tips to editor@hermistonherald.com or share them on social media using the hashtag #HHBTW.

Bailor, Pullen challenge Murdock for county commissioner

By PHIL WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Two challengers are looking to oust George Murdock from another term as Umatilla County commissioner.

Tom Bailor and Rick Pullen filed Monday for Position 1 on the board of commissioners. Murdock, Bailor and Pullen all live in Pendleton.

Bailor ran for commissioner in 2013 and again in 2016. He said he's giving it another go because he believes the county needs new leadership.

"It's time for diversity," Bailor said. "We need leadership that not only respects traditional values but also understands and embraces the dynamic digital age and economy in which we now live."

Murdock and fellow commissioners Larry Givens and Bill Elfering are in their mid-70s. Bailor contended they represent only one generation.

"As someone in my 50s, I think it is important to have leadership with diverse generational experience and connection," Bailor stated.

He ran on similar notions before, but he also said

county commissioners approving themselves pay raises of \$8,000 did not sit well with him. That move in 2015 increased the salary for the post to \$86,273 a year. Commissioners now have an annual salary of \$90,852. Bailor stated Murdock took raises while arguing against wage increases for working people.

Bailor also said Murdock expressing partisan opinions in local news violates the non-partisan spirit of the county charter. County commissioners should be trying to build solutions to local problems on common ground, he said, rather than fuel partisan politics within the community.

Rick Pullen worked for Umatilla County from 2004 until he quit on Dec. 15, 2017, when he was in the assessor's office.

Pullen is a singer and portrays Daddy Warbucks in the College Community Theatre production of the musical "Annie." Pullen did not immediately return calls Tuesday.

Commissioners serve four-year terms. The last day to file for the May 15 primary election was Tuesday.

Man killed in Hermiston work site accident

HERMISTON HERALD

HERMISTON — A man died in an industrial accident southwest of Hermiston on Tuesday morning, but much of the information about the accident is still yet to be released.

At 11 a.m., Umatilla County Fire District 1 officials were dispatched to an industrial site on Cottonwood Bend Road, where an Amazon facility is being built.

Battalion Chief Corey Gorham said one man died as a result of an accident, but did not confirm his name or exactly how he died. Gorham said the incident is being investigated by Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and that he couldn't release any more information about it.

Dispatchers on the emergency scanner said the man had been hit by highly pressurized water, and that CPR was administered. Shortly afterward, a dispatcher said a chaplain had been sent to scene.

Moments before that call, UCFD crews had been dispatched to a wreck between a van and small sports utility vehicle that T-boned in front of the Tom Denchel car dealership at 81143 Highway 395.

Two adults and one child were taken to the hospital with non-life threatening injuries, according to Lt. Matt Fisher. Traffic was shut down in the northbound lanes for 30 minutes.

CHAMBER

Continued from Page A1

Chamber of Commerce & Western Umatilla County Community Facility." In a news release, Rep. Greg Smith of District 57 said the new facility will provide space for community meetings, education and workforce development training events, as well as the headquarters of the chamber of commerce.

"The growing communities of Western Umatilla County continue to need additional meeting and workforce development training space, and I believe this facility will help meet that need," he said in a statement. "I am also excited

this facility can serve as a new home for the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce as they continue their work in supporting local business and community activities."

Both Burns and chamber director Debbie Pedro expressed their appreciation for Smith's work in getting the funding.

"The Greater Hermiston Chamber of Commerce would like to thank Representative Greg Smith for his unwavering support and working towards this opportunity to serve West Umatilla County in a greater capacity as we develop our new facility," Pedro said in a statement.

Smith is co-vice chair of the Joint Ways and Means Committee, which over-

sees the state's budget, and sits on the committee's subcommittee on capital construction. A news release from his office after the session concluded counted \$25 million in projects benefiting Eastern Oregon that he helped get funding for. The largest was a \$9 million appropriation for a new fieldhouse at Eastern Oregon University, as well as \$1.1 million for track and field renovations there.

The next largest was \$6,125,000 for biomass heating upgrades for Camp Umatilla, the National Guard training facility being renovated and expanded on the former Umatilla Chemical Depot, and more than \$6 million for the Veterans Home in The Dalles.

One project that didn't get funded was \$1 million requested by Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan to better accommodate mentally ill inmates at the Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton.

"Needless to say, I'm disappointed," Rowan said.

Rowan had testified before the Joint Ways and Means Committee's capital construction subcommittee two weeks ago, asking for \$1 million to upgrade the jail in Pendleton to create new holding, booking and storage areas that would allow the jail to serve inmates suffering a mental health crisis or under the influence of drugs. But the project didn't make the cut. Rowan said when Sen.

Bill Hansell called to personally deliver the news, he told Rowan not to give up.

"He had some very positive comments," Rowan said. "He said the committee felt very positive toward the project, and they recognized the need. He also advised me that some of the projects that did go through, this might be their third or fourth bite of the apple."

He said he planned to pursue different grants and other funding opportunities and if he didn't find another way he would be back next session. He said after going to Salem last week to testify he learned a lot for next time. It was difficult to fit all of the information into

his two-minute time slot, for example, and so next time he will bring multiple people to help testify.

Hansell and Rep. Greg Barreto of District 58 both showed up to the capital construction committee meeting where Rowan testified in order to express support for the project. Barreto said when he asked the speaker of the house Tina Kotek why the project ultimately did not make the list this session, he didn't get a concrete answer, but like Hansell he pointed to the fact that it often takes multiple tries to get a capital project funded by the legislature.

"I do think the jail next time around would have a good chance," Barreto said.