

Council discusses EOTEC priorities, name

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Hermiston city councilors discussed their top priorities for the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center and whether it was too late to change the center's name on Monday.

City manager Byron Smith said the city needed to find the right balance for EOTEC between drawing people in for larger regional events and serving the local community.

Dennis Doherty, one of EOTEC's founders, shared with the council that the regional aspect was what encouraged local hoteliers to voluntarily implement a tourism promotion assessment on their rooms, and helped get millions of dollars in funding from the state.

"I was a part of that and I would be embarrassed if I had to go back and talk to them and they're asking, 'What's going on?'" he said. Councilor Lori Davis asked whether the city needed the "trade" part of the project's name anymore, and it sparked a discussion about EOTEC's name. Some councilors pointed out that the "event center" part of the name confused people who thought the event center building was the entire project, and suggested perhaps the city could keep the recognizable acronym but call it the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Campus or Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Complex. Mayor David Drotzmann said it would be ideal if a big donor stepped forward and the event center building at EOTEC could be renamed after the donor.

EOTEC manager Al Davis said the biggest question he gets when he tries to market the center is where in Eastern Oregon it's located.

He suggested the logo and other marketing mate-

rials might say something like "The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center at Hermiston," but councilor Doug Primmer said the city wouldn't be able to use the acronym EOTECH because it would infringe on the copyright for a private company by that name.

Out of the priorities listed for EOTEC's continued development, most councilors agreed water was probably the top priority, followed by landscaping that would increase shade and block dust and noise.

"We have to know we're going to have water before we plant the trees," Jackie Myers said.

The city has potable drinking water available for use at the site but is hoping to develop a more affordable option for irrigation, either by purchasing water rights or digging a deeper well. The city does have two alluvial wells on site but they have only been used for testing purposes due to neighbors' concerns about dropping water levels in the neighborhood.

Councilor Roy Barron said he thought building an RV park on the site was still the number one priority, because the park would start earning money to fund the other projects.

"If we don't have anything to generate revenue, it's going to be very hard on the taxpayers of Hermiston," he said.

Smith said traffic and parking at EOTEC is another priority. He said Umatilla County has done the design work for widening and improving Airport Road and the county hopes to have the project done by this year's fair and rodeo in August. Both he and Drotzmann expressed skepticism that would happen.

The council plans to continue the discussion of EOTEC at their next work session.



Angie Treadwell, center, talks to members of the Cooking Matters class at the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center in Hermiston on Wednesday.

Cooking Matters expands classes to seniors

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

It's never too late to learn how to cook.

Last Wednesday at the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center in Hermiston, 16 senior citizens were steaming asparagus and being quizzed about saturated fats at a Cooking Matters class.

Kathy Burns said she was there because she wanted to move beyond heating things up in a microwave and learn recipes that fit diet restrictions her doctor had given her.

"I'm the worst cook in the world," she said.

The free, six-week class sends participants home with a free cookbook and ingredients for the week's recipes at the end of each two-hour session.

Burns said she was glad the senior center was willing to host the classes so that seniors can learn new skills. She said she wished more men were taking advantage of the opportunity (there was only one present Wednesday) because sometimes seniors find themselves in a tough spot when the spouse who does all the cooking passes away.

Angie Treadwell, the class' instructor, usually teaches Cooking Matters classes to parents and chil-



Class members chop asparagus for the Ginger Asparagus recipe at the Cooking Matters class at the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center in Hermiston on Wednesday.

dren as part of a partnership between Umatilla Morrow County Head Start, Oregon State University Extension and area school districts.

She said OSU plans to expand the Cooking Matters program to seniors over the next few years, and seniors in Hermiston are helping to pilot the idea thanks to a generous grant from Lamb Weston. Each week she gets feedback from class members — portion sizes are too large, there aren't enough lactose-free options — and passes it on to the university.

"We're trying to find out what seniors want," she said.

Treadwell said there are many health issues seniors

face that are preventable with the right diet. Often as people age they start feeling like it's not worth cooking for just themselves, or they suddenly find themselves with special dietary needs they don't know how to cook for.

"Nutrition is so important in older adults," she said. "It can make a huge difference in medical costs."

Cooking classes provide a social outlet too. Lupe Housden said she ended up in the class because a friend signed her up.

"It's always nice to have a group to cook with," she said.

Housden said she has also

learned a lot about how to read labels on food, and the importance of whole grains.

On Wednesday Treadwell started off by asking participants if their cooking habits had changed after their first two classes. One woman said she had made the previous week's recipe and had so many leftovers she shared with her neighbors. Another said she made one of the recipes but it didn't turn out well. A third said she had put her own spin on it with ingredients she had at home.

One recipe — a southwest-style Cowboy Salad — was so popular that the senior center is adding it to their lunch menu.

After discussing recipes Treadwell taught the group about different types of fats and how to look for healthier ones. She answered a variety of questions about the health of different foods and summed up her advice as eating food "as close to the form nature gave you as possible and using moderation in all things."

During the hands-on portion of the class, the group worked together to make pasta with beans and greens, and ginger asparagus using fresh local asparagus from Walchli Farms. Ingredients for both recipes were waiting for them in a take-home bag at the end of class.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Second-grader Michael Fisher makes a tree bark rubbing on Thursday during Arbor Day festivities in Echo.

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