

New publisher takes the reins at the Hermiston Herald

By ALEX CASTLE
STAFF WRITER



Cutler

A familiar face is taking on new roles within EO Media Group. Andrew Cutler, who has spent the last 13 months as editor of the *East Oregonian*, is stepping into the duties of publisher of the *East Oregonian* and *Hermiston Herald*, taking over the role from Chris Rush. Cutler takes over as publisher on Wednesday, July 1. "Sometimes you have good luck and don't have to look very far to find the right person," said EO Media Group Chief Operating Officer Heidi Wright. "It's critical to be able to have someone with the past experience of Andrew to maintain our role in the communities we serve and keep a relevant, reflective and credible connection to those communities." Cutler said the past year as editor of the *East Ore-*

gonian has been eye opening but he's excited to assume the new role managing operations and to help the paper moving forward. "It's incredibly humbling and gratifying," Cutler said of being named publisher. "The company and its east side papers have a long, proud history, and I don't take my position and responsibility of continuing it lightly." Rush is leaving after a little more than two years in Pendleton to move to Amarillo, Texas, with his wife at the end of July to be closer to their family in the region. "I am hoping to leverage my many years of experience in the news industry into a possible teaching career at the college level, as well as some other professional projects," Rush

said of his next steps while speaking highly of his replacement. "Andrew Cutler is a consummate journalist and one of the best editors I've ever had the privilege to work with. He places high value on accuracy and telling the full story." During his time, Rush helped lead the company through its regional transition when it purchased the *La Grande Observer* and the *Baker City Herald* in 2019. "These last couple of years — and especially these last few months — have been a challenging time for the newspaper industry, and Chris Rush has been an integral part of helping EO Media Group navigate through these times," said EO Media Group Vice President Kathryn Brown. "We will miss his wisdom and experience, but he leaves the *East Oregonian* and our sister papers in the region in

good hands." In addition to the publisher duties, Cutler will also serve as the regional editorial director overseeing the *East Oregonian*, *Hermiston Herald*, *Blue Mountain Eagle*, *Wallowa County Chieftain*, *La Grande Observer* and *Baker City Herald*. Cutler will team with Karrine Brogoitti, the regional publisher of the *La Grande Observer* and *Baker City Herald*, to oversee the company's east side publications. In March, Brogoitti was named regional sales director for EO Media Group's east side operations. Born in Pocatello, Idaho, and raised in Fruitland, Idaho, Cutler, 48, has long had his roots in the Northwest and spent five years as the editor of the *La Grande Observer* prior to joining the *East Oregonian*. Cutler got his start in journalism as a senior sportswriter for Ontario's

Argus Observer in 2000 before being promoted to sports editor shortly after in 2001. He then spent time on the Boise State University sports beat for the *Idaho Press-Tribune* before returning to the *Argus Observer* in 2004 in a dual role as sports and news editor. Cutler later spent time as managing editor of the *Capital Journal* in South Dakota, where he and his newsroom were awarded the 2008 South Dakota Newspaper Association General Excellence Award for the state's daily newspapers with a circulation under 16,000. It was the first time the *Capital Journal* had earned the award in 126 years of existence. Cutler was also a part of general excellence award-winning newsrooms at the *Argus Observer* and *Rapid City Journal*, and he led the *La Grande Observer* to a second-place finish in general excellence for the

Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association Division C category. While in La Grande, Cutler spent three years in a joint role as editor and publisher. "Andrew Cutler's knowledge of Eastern Oregon, and his experience as both an editor and publisher, made him the logical successor to head up the company's editorial team in this region and take on the publisher role here in Umatilla County as well," Brown said. A 1990 graduate of Fruitland High School, Cutler joined the U.S. Army in 1991 and served as a combat medic in Germany, Fort Stewart, Georgia, and Honduras before his discharge in 1995. He went on to earn an Associate of Arts degree from Treasure Valley Community College in 2000 and a Bachelor of Arts degree in multidisciplinary studies from Boise State University in 2016.



HH file photo

Umatilla businesses can qualify to receive a one-time grant from the city if they were impacted by COVID-19.

Umatilla establishes small business grants

HERMISTON HERALD

The city of Umatilla has established a grant program for small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The Umatilla Small Business Emergency Assistance Grant Program will provide one-time payments to businesses and sole proprietors with fewer than 25 employees. According to a news release by the city, it is funded in part by funding from the state's general fund and Lottery Funds administered by the Oregon Business Development Department.

Applications can be submitted until July 15 at 5 p.m. and are available at www.umatilla-city.org or at Umatilla City Hall, 700 Sixth St. Funds will be awarded on a first come first served basis. Businesses can qualify for the grant if their principal operations are within Umatilla's city limits, have fewer than 25 employ-

ees and have not received CARES Act funding, including the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan. They must be able to show that they were forced to shut down under one of the state's executive orders relating to COVID-19 or they can demonstrate a one month decline in revenue greater than 50% in the month of March or April 2020 as compared against January or February 2020. Nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status can also qualify under similar criteria. Inel-

igible applicants include passive investments and real estate holdings, businesses delinquent in taxes that were due before April 1, businesses that do not comply with laws, businesses not headquartered and with principals operations in Oregon and businesses not registered to do business in Oregon through the Secretary of State's office. For more information contact community development director Brandon Seitz at 541-922-3226 ext. 103 or brandon@umatilla-city.org.

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"Where flowers are our business"

Dr. Robert Rolen retiring after 35 years in Hermiston

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR



Staff photo by Jeanne Jewett
Dr. Robert Rolen is retiring from optometry.

Decades after he first set up shop in Hermiston in 1985, Dr. Robert Rolen has closed his optometry business. "I've been thinking about optometry for about 40 years," he said. Now, he is retiring and clearing out his former office at Grainary Square in Hermiston. His patient files have been entrusted to Lifetime Vision Source, where he said he is encouraging new patients to transfer their care.

Rolen grew up in The Dalles and got interested in optometry while he was in the U.S. Army working in the medical services department and getting exposed to all different types of medical fields. "The optometry department seemed like they were having the most fun," he said. After he went back to school and got his degree, he decided he wanted to return to Oregon and become a family eye doctor in a smaller town like the one he grew up in. He ended up in Hermiston,

and said there was plenty to keep him rooted there, from the outdoor recreation to his church community. "It's a good place to raise a family," he said. Rolen said a lot has changed over his years in the business, but one thing that hasn't changed his the enjoyment he has gotten out of helping people lead a better quality of life through improved vision and eye health. Some optometrists specialize in certain types of eye health, like treating glaucoma, but Rolen described himself as a "generalist" who sees patients young and old for all different aspects of eye health.

"The one that most immediately affects people is they walk into the DMV and can't pass the eye test, or their teacher says, 'I think you need some help seeing the board,'" he said. Rolen said he doesn't actually teach young children to read, but he can greatly help their ability to read if he can fix vision problems that are keeping them from being able to see the words their teacher is putting up at the front of the room or showing them on a printed page. He said he had been hoping to work one more year before retirement, but COVID-19 has placed so many restrictions on his ability to practice he decided that it would be better to retire now and hand his patients off to a bigger office. "A family eye doctor is in it by himself, pretty much, but the people at Lifetime Vision Source have plenty of resources and people to help deliver services to people during COVID-19," he said. Lifetime Vision Source is at 1160 W. Elm Ave. and can be reached at 541-567-6623.

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PET OF THE WEEK
Reece is a very chill & sweet old man that is about 10 years old. He loves to be around his people, but not super cuddly, but he loves to have his ears rubbed. He loves to sit outside in the shade and feel the wind on his face. Reece does have some aging issues, is on a strict diet for his weight and will need regular grooming. Due to his age and health, we prefer he isn't around young children.
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