



Hermiston Herald, File

Customers place orders at the Hermiston Lions Club food cart on at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center during the 2017 Umatilla County Fair.

Advisory committee agrees on long-term plan for EOTEC

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center could look much different 20 years from now.

During the Monday, April 12, Hermiston City Council meeting, the council approved a 20-year master plan for the complex. The plan was crafted with the city's advisory board for EOTEC, with the help of Architects West.

The map lays out a footprint for improvements that will be added to the site over time. Some of those improvements include turning the current overflow parking into grassy sports fields, expanding the current event center building, adding an indoor area, creating an improved outdoor concert venue, and forging agreements with the neighboring airport to use some space for overflow parking during fair week.

City Manager Byron Smith said the timing of those improvements over the next two decades will depend on funding availability.

"We don't plan to go and build everything on this map tomorrow," he said.

Mike Kay, a member of the Farm-City Pro Rodeo Board representing the rodeo on the EOTEC advisory committee, thanked the city council for being willing to slow down the planning process when stakeholders were unhappy with the direction it was taking.

Since then, he said, there had been a significant

amount of additional discussion and compromise, creating a collaborative plan that everyone, not just the city, was satisfied with.

"I think we've got a great plan here," he said.

Mayor David Drotzmann agreed, saying while the process was long and involved some "pretty strong wills," the end result was a better plan that everyone was in unanimous support.

"It's hard to believe we're fighting over 95 acres when we used to exist on 7," he said, referencing the old fairgrounds on Orchard Avenue.

He described the plan for EOTEC as one that will create a resource for the community for decades to come, not only for the fair and rodeo but for many other events and activities.

In other business during the April 12 city council meeting, the council approved a contract with Sineco Construction to replace nearly 2,000 feet of sewer main on Southeast Seventh Street between Newport Avenue and Highland Avenue.

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said the project is part of a larger effort to replace undersized sewer mains in that part of town that have been overburdened as the city continues to grow, and will present further problems with continued development of the South Hermiston Industrial Park if not replaced.

Sineco was the low bidder on the project at \$596,485, which Morgan said was in line with estimates from city engineers at Anderson Perry.

State budget hearings offer virtual participation

By GARY A. WARNER
OREGON CAPITAL BUREAU

Oregon residents can testify about the state's upcoming two-year budget during online hearings that begin this week.

The Oregon Legislature's Joint Ways & Means Committee will take virtual and written testimony for the state's revenue and spending plans for 2021-22 that must be finalized by June 28.

The committee of House and Senate members will take testimony, then vote on the budget in committee work sessions still to be scheduled. The state budget is usually among the last set of bills passed during the odd-numbered year session.

The budget-writing committee will hold five regional hearings, with congressional districts used to group testimony.

The first hearing is Wednesday, April 14, at 5:30 p.m. for the 1st Congressional District, which includes Northwest Oregon.

Congressional District 2, which covers most of Oregon east of the Cascades, including Umatilla and Morrow counties, will be Saturday, April 17, at 1:30 p.m.

Other hearings are:
CD3: Wednesday, April 21, at 5:30 p.m., CD4: Thursday, April 22, at 5:30 p.m., CD5: Saturday, April 24, at 1 p.m.

To find your congres-

sional district: go to www.oregonlegislature.gov/find-your-legislator/leg-districts.html or call your county clerk's office.

The hearings cover the 2021-22 state budget, which would go into effect July 1. The budget will be in Senate Bill 5555, which currently is a mostly blank framework.

An overview of the committee's plans are at bit.ly/ORbudget and Senate Bill 5555 as it now looks can be found at bit.ly/SB5555.

The hearings will be streamed live, and available for later viewing, at bit.ly/ORbudgetlive.

Written testimony can be submitted at any time, but for specific regional issues, will be taken up to 24 hours before a hearing. To submit testimony electronically, go to: bit.ly/ORbudgettestimony.

To submit testimony by mail, send to: Joint Ways and Means Committee, 900 State Street NE, Room H-178, Salem OR 97301.

Registration is required to testify by phone or video link. Registration closes at the time the meeting is scheduled to begin.

Those who sign up to speak online to the committee will be limited to two minutes each.

To register electronically, go to: bit.ly/ORbudgettestify.

For assistance, call 833-698-1371.

Rocky Heights murals have watched over generations of students

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

While the groundbreaking of a new Rocky Heights Elementary School means more room and nicer facilities for students and staff, when the time comes to tear down the old building, Linda Hagemann and Paula Jennings will be a little sad.

The women worked together in the summer of 1984 to paint a series of murals in the breezeway of Rocky Heights, which still stand today. The building was originally built in 1962.

Jennings said she and Hagemann both had children in the school at the time, and were part of the parent group supporting the school. Both are "artsy," she said, they and wanted to do something nice for the students.

"We're both creative people, so it was kind of serendipity," she said.

In fact, the "Serendipity" books, by Stephen Cosgrove and illustrated by Robin James, were what inspired them. Hagemann said she liked the short stories in the series, and the lessons they taught about topics, such as friendship, and based the murals on imagining scenes from the books.

One mural, for example, features Berry the Hucklebug, a young bug who runs away so he can play all day and not do any chores. Once he sees how difficult the world can be, however,



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Students at Rocky Heights Elementary School walk past a series of murals, painted by Paula Jennings and Linda Hagemann, on April 13, 2021.

*"THEY'VE REALLY
STOOD THE TEST
OF TIME."*

Paula Jennings, who with Linda Hagemann painted a series of murals at Rocky Heights Elementary School in 1984

he learns gratitude for his home and returns, promising to do his part to help out.

"They were such neat books," Hagemann said.

Jennings said she hasn't seen the murals in 20 years, but plans to visit the school sometime in the next year before the new Rocky Heights is finished and the old one is demolished. Friends have sent her pictures, and she said she is

amazed that the murals still have such vibrant colors after so many years.

"They've really stood the test of time," she said.

Hagemann also said she is also happy to see

how well the murals have held up, and like Jennings, wishes there was some way to preserve them for use in the new building.

She said she enjoyed the experience of painting them at the time and likes the idea that so many generations of students have enjoyed them. Recently she was a substitute at Rocky Heights, and said she enjoyed sharing the history and meaning of the murals with Principal Stefani Wyant and other staff there.

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