

**StoryWalk:**

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and information about plant and animal species in their neighborhood.

A Citizen Science grant from the University of Pittsburgh helped fund the StoryWalk project, according to City Finance Director Melissa Ince.

Children who participated in the grand opening received free books at the end of the trail, but starting with the next book featured, at the end of each story will be a Q code that people can scan with their smartphone to receive a free physical copy of the book featured that month.

Ince said a few other communities in the area, including Stanfield, recently installed StoryWalks of their own, so libraries will be able to exchange books with each other in addition to adding their own.

The Stanfield Public Library has been setting up a more portable version of the StoryWalks behind the library near the water tower, and at Bard Park. Information about the StoryWalk events are announced on the Stanfield Public Library Facebook page.

Another outdoor literacy effort is the Little Free Library book exchanges that organizations put outside. The boxes, which often look like old-fashioned red phone booths, are stocked with used books that people can take for free, and



Elina Dugan, 3, adds birdseed to a pinecone bird feeder during an activity table at Umatilla's StoryWalk on Wednesday, April 14, 2021.



A pile of donated books and educational materials awaits walkers to pick them up at the end of Umatilla's StoryWalk on Wednesday, April 14, 2021.

Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

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**Power:**

Continued from Page A1

plant, its primary goal was to support renewable energy in the area. The plant would be able to power up in as little as 10 minutes, he said, as a way to quickly and reliably backfill other sources of energy when, for example, the wind stops blowing at an Eastern Oregon wind farm.

The project received its site certificate from the Energy Facility Siting Council in 2015, but it finally broke ground in September 2020, when developers started clearing land for a road at the site to meet a regulatory deadline.

According to the lawsuit filed by Columbia Riverkeeper and Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Perennial would have to reapply for a new site certificate from EFSC if it did not begin construction on the project by Sept. 23, 2020. To meet that deadline, Perennial began construction of a road despite not having a required stormwater permit from the Department of Environmental Quality.

Jennifer Kalez, communications director for Oregon Department of Energy, told the *East Oregonian* in October 2020 that DEQ could choose to take enforcement action against Perennial for being out of compliance with its rules, but that the permit was not one of the "preconstruction" conditions that Perennial was required to meet in order to meet EFSC's Sept. 23, 2020, deadline.

The project was the last of several proposals for new gas-fired power plants in Oregon that have been canceled over the past five years, and now, "no proposals to build any new gas-fired power plants in Oregon remain pending with" the state, according to environmentalists.

Saylor said it's "very likely this will be the last proposed gas-fired power plant that we see in Oregon" because of the political and social climate and clean energy bills moving through the Oregon Legislature.

"Just five years ago, several proposals for new gas-fired power plants threatened to harm air quality in the Columbia River Gorge and exacerbate climate change, but public opposition to each of these projects has prevailed," said Nathan Baker, an attorney for Friends of the Columbia Gorge. "We hope and expect that Oregon's future begins today, free of new fossil fuel power plants, which are dirty dinosaurs of a bygone era."

those who are able are encouraged to leave a book in return as well.

Altrusa International of Hermiston has been instrumental in bringing several of the libraries to the area, including ones at Belt Park, Green Park and Sunset Park in Hermiston.

Umatilla Morrow Head Start also added one outside its offices at 110 N.E. Fourth St.

Irrigon installed a Little Free Library in 2016 across from the Irrigon Post Office, while Echo added one by the H&P Cafe, 231 W. Main St. in Echo, in 2018.

**Umatilla County on two-week warning for COVID risk levels**

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

Umatilla County could be back under high risk restrictions for COVID-19 in two weeks if the county isn't successful in bringing the spread of the virus back down after a recent increase. Based on the rising number of COVID-19

cases in Umatilla County, and an increasing percentage of positive tests, Gov. Kate Brown announced the county will enter a two-week warning period starting Friday, April 23.

The county has been in moderate risk, but its numbers over the past 14-day period passed 100 cases per 100,000 people, qualifying it for high risk. The state is giving Umatilla County

two weeks to bring its numbers back down, however, instead of immediately moving it to high risk. A move from moderate risk to high risk would reduce the number of people allowed in various businesses. Restaurants would be able to allow indoor dining at 25% capacity instead of 50%, for example.

Brown encouraged everyone to get vaccinated soon.

"As we face more contagious variants and increased spread of COVID-19 in our communities, the best way to protect yourself and others is to get vaccinated," Brown said in a statement. "Until you, your family, your friends, and your neighbors are fully vaccinated, it's also critical that we all continue to wear masks, maintain physical distance, and stay home when sick."

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