

**Project:**

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Levy said the water projects are something the state needs to commit to in the years to come and not forget that the true scope of the project has yet to be completed. She added that she has submitted a \$6 million funding request to fund the Ordinance Project, the third of three water projects proposed in 2015 that include the East Project and West Project, which was completed in May 2020.

**Higher value crops**

Although the primary goal of the project is to allow for the recharge of aquifers in the Columbia Basin, the increase in consistent water supply will allow farmers in the region to grow higher value crops, such as onions, potatoes and other produce that yield higher dollar returns per acre.

St. Hilaire said that the sandy soil and dry climate requires a lot of water to grow crops, but when water is plentiful these factors make for perfect conditions.

“The soil type and the climate over here are extremely dry and it requires a lot of water to grow things,” he said. “On the flip side, if you have water there are a lot of different types of high-value crops you can grow.”



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**IRZ Consulting President Fred Ziari explains the technical specifications of the East Project pumping station from within the facility during a tour of the facility on Tuesday, May 11, 2021.**

St. Hilaire said farmers have been hurt in recent years by low commodity prices, and that the ability to switch to higher value crops not only helps farms but also the local economy.

“Water is the critical resource, so for us it means the possibility of farming some high-value crops, including organic, and having a consistent source of water for them,” he said.

All of these advancements in farming would not be possible without an efficient means of transporting the water from the Columbia River.

**Technological advancements aid efficiency**

Fred Ziari, president of Hermiston-based IRZ Consulting, said of the thousands of irrigation projects his company has completed in all corners of the globe, the East Project ranked at the top in both design complexity and technological advancements.

“We’ve done thousands of designs all over the world,” he said. “This is by far the most advanced system that we have ever designed and built.”

For this, Ziari credits not only his staff, but the farmers behind the project who

he said prioritized technology and efficiency throughout the project. Ziari said the main pumping station and the booster pumps at each outlet are managed remotely and can be monitored for function and flow rate from a cellphone.

“We had foresight from the farmers,” he said. “They didn’t want to shortchange the system, so they wanted the highest level of technology that is totally controlled and measured 24/7.”

Ziari added that each pump has a variable-frequency drive allowing it to scale quickly to the needed

flow rate. The pumping station is capable of moving up to 100,000 gallons per minute at peak operation.

Moving that amount of water is no small feat; the pumping station, located 7 miles east of McNary on the Columbia River, uses 19,000 horsepower worth of pumps to carry the water out of the station in an 84-inch diameter pipe and across 8 miles over a 500-foot elevation gain.

“It was a labor of love from our side,” Ziari said.

In addition to technologically advanced mechanical equipment, Ziari credits the use of fiberglass reinforced pipe (FRP) with keeping costs down and increasing the efficiency of the design.

“First, it’s 35% cheaper than steel and second, it has tremendous energy efficiency,” he said. “I would have needed to add an additional 3,500 horsepower if I had steel pipe rather than this FRP.”

**Next steps**

For Northeast Oregon Water Association Director J.R. Cook, the dedication was both a celebration of how far the project has come and a reminder of how far they have to go.

“What we’ve been trying to remind people is this is just the cornerstone,” he said. “Now we’ve got the mitigation program, we’ve got to

get the groundwater savings program done and we have a huge project in the Ordinance pipeline that needs to be finished.”

Cook said the past few years have been a constant struggle to keep everyone up to date with the project and its purpose. In addition to transitions in Salem, he said he has had to ensure that a new generation of landowners within the land base are brought up to speed on the process as well.

“What made this work was commitments that we don’t just use these projects to go squirt a bunch more water on, grow a bunch more vegetables and make more money,” he said. “It had to be a uniform effort of mitigated water, groundwater saving all of the additional benefits than just the financial side.”

Cook said it’s important to keep up with the pace after the completion of the pumping station and target that energy into the mitigation and groundwater savings that made it possible. He added that the process that brought everyone to the dedication on Tuesday is worth recognizing.

“The farmers are the ones that wrote the check and made it happen, but it’s the generations of representatives, and like Bobby (Levy) said – the whole process itself – is what made this happen,” said Cook.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**Miguel Ramos-Avelino receives a set of graduation honor cords during the IMESD's Migrant Education Program graduation ceremony at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in Hermiston on Saturday, May 15, 2021.**

**Grads:**

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and first-generation college graduate from Western Oregon University.

Flores and several other graduation specialists help to ensure that students are on track for graduation and help them prepare for life after high school, whether that be work, trade school or college. This year, the program will see 49 students graduate from high schools across Umatilla and Morrow counties, according to Flores.

“We just help our families look for resources and help our students figure out how to get on track,” she said. “A lot of our students are first generation and although they know how school works, they don’t know what they need

to do to reach some of their goals.”

This year, Migrant Education Program staff have been working especially hard to navigate the changing educational landscape as a result of COVID-19 and ensure students from preschool through high school have access to the tools and resources they need.

“With COVID it has been really hard because a lot of our families didn’t have Wi-Fi at home or didn’t have computers or they had a shared computer,” Flores said.

Flores, and parent involvement specialist Obdulia Munoz, have seen an uptick in the involvement in students’ home lives over the past year, as they work to ensure families have the tools they need to navigate remote learning and other COVID-19 issues.

“Instead of just having the parent meetings that we usually have during the regular school year, we try to meet physical needs like food and rent and emotional support with parents,” Munoz said.

Munoz said she works with outside organizations to try and get families the support they may need and ensure students are able to continue to thrive in the school system. According to Munoz, the Migrant Education Program serves roughly 700 families from preschool through high school, as well as out-of-school students who are working and pursuing a GED, English language classes or other additional education.

“What I’m trying to bring with my students is just showing them that they’re not alone and provide them that support that I would have wanted,” Flores said.



## “Scramble for Scholarships” Friday, June 11th

..... 1pm Shotgun Start .....

### Big River Golf Course - Umatilla

Golfers of all skill levels are invited to participate in the 28th annual “Scramble for Scholarships” golf tournament. Four person teams can sign up together or individual pairings can be made by the tournament committee. Your \$70 entry fee covers green fees, a box lunch, and makes a charitable donation to the foundation to use in awarding scholarships to local medical students.

**Register at [gscfscramble.eventbrite.com](https://gscfscramble.eventbrite.com) or call 541-667-3405. Entry deadline is June 9th.**

Great prize holes and Hole-in-one on #1 & #9  
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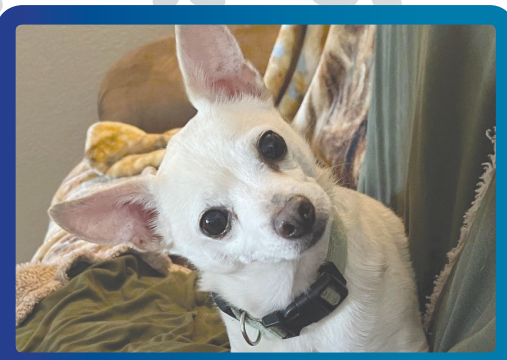
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## PET OF THE WEEK



### MEET MAX

Max is a senior-ish boy who loves his person. Does fine with cats and dogs but wants to be right next to you as much as he can. Does fine on a leash. Loves to sleep in bed with his people. He recently had a dental and had several teeth removed.

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If you are not able to adopt, but would like to foster or donate, visit [fuzzballrescue.com](http://fuzzballrescue.com) or you can mail in donations to Fuzz Ball Animal Rescue, PO Box 580, Hermiston, OR 97838

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