



## POWER PLAY

### Locals express concern about a project that changes the landscape of Eastern Oregon

By ERICK PETERSON • Hermiston Herald

**R**ichard and Jean Hemphill can look out the window of their Pilot Rock home and see where massive towers will stand and carry the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line.



Photos by Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald  
**Richard Hemphill on Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022, indicates where the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line will cut across his property near Pilot Rock.**

Those towers will stand 100-140 feet tall, according to Idaho Power Co., the primary force behind the 500-kilovolt line that would stretch almost 300 miles from a substation in southwestern Idaho to Boardman.

The Hemphills traced the route with their hands. They said they felt bad about a line that they believe will mar the beauty of the area.

"I love it," Jean Hemphill said of her view, pre-B2H. "In the summertime, I sit out on the deck in the evenings and enjoy this beautiful view all the way around. I'm always sorry when winter comes and I can't do that anymore. I truly love it."

She and her husband are the respondents in a petition for precondemnation that attorneys for Idaho

Power filed. The petition, if a judge grants it, would allow Idaho Power to enter and survey their property.

The petition is one of seven Idaho Power filed in Umatilla County to gain access to private property, according to state court filings. The company has filed six petitions in Morrow County and about two dozen more in Malheur, Baker and Union counties.

Jean Hemphill said her family moved to a nearby property in 1942, and she has lived there all of her life. She and her husband moved into their home after its construction in the early 1970s.

"For us, who have lived here all our lives, we cherish our lands and our views," Jean Hemphill said.

While many areas nearby have grown a great deal, they said their own view has changed little, by comparison, since they moved in roughly half a century ago.

The region means a great deal to them, they said. Both Hemphills trace their family tree to ancestors who farmed the land with their hands.

The land also is meaningful to the Hemphills because of their dreams for the future.

"My granddaughter's starting a sheep herd," Jean Hemphill said. She said it would be nice to have this land available for her granddaughter and future generations.

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**ABOVE: Jean Hemphill flips through a folder of information on the Boardman-to-Hemingway transmission line Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022, at her home near Pilot Rock.**

**BACKGROUND: The setting sun silhouettes transmission lines Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022, near the future starting point for the approximately 290-mile transmission line in Boardman.**



## Apartment complex offers buyouts to tenants willing to vacate



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**Vehicles sit in the parking lot of the 46-unit Highland Manor apartment complex Friday, Feb. 4, 2022, in Hermiston. Residents on Feb. 2, 2022, received notices to vacate by March 1 so the new owners can renovate the complex.**

By ERICK PETERSON  
HERMISTON HERALD

Residents of a 46-unit apartment complex in Hermiston have to find new places to live.

When the residents of Highland Manor apartments got home on Wednesday, Feb. 2, they found a letter posted on their doors.

The letter from the new apartment owner, Clover Housing Group LLC, complimented residents for the way they have taken good care of the apartments. But there was more to the letter.

"We will be vacating the apartment complex for remodeling and updating as soon as possible," the letter states. "We know moving is difficult and we do apologize for this inconvenience."

The letter offers \$2,000

payments to help with moving and the expenses. If they could vacate by March 1, one month after the letter's date, they would receive the payout, plus a full refund of their security deposits, "as long as the apartment is reasonably clean."

Highland Manor, at 1205 W. Highland Ave., has 40 two-bedroom apartments, five one-bedroom apartments and one three-bedroom apartment.

"At some time in the near future, we will be canceling tenancy for everyone at Highland Apartments," the letter continues. "Currently we are offering this assistance to help anyone willing to move voluntarily."

Isaac Pulido received the letter. A Highland Manor tenant since December 2020, he lives in an apart-

ment with two beds and one bath, and he pays \$630 per month in rent, he said.

Pulido reported feeling "stressed out" by his situation, as there are not many available places to live in Hermiston.

Hermiston is a good place to live, he said, because it is close to his work at Amazon Web Services. The prospect of moving out of the area, perhaps to the Tri-Cities, does not thrill him, he said. He added, if he cannot find a new apartment in the area, he might have to move in with his parents and find another job elsewhere.

Looking at this situation, he said he is not just concerned about himself; he is worried for other Highland Manor residents.

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