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## Arts & Events in Eastern Oregon

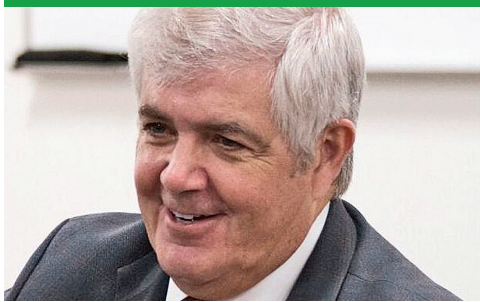
Popular magazine spotlights the best in local entertainment.

## LIGHTER SIDE



Three Minutes With ... Lori Davis. **A2**

## LOCAL NEWS



Rep. Bentz holds town hall in Boardman. **A3**

## COMMUNITY



Showcasing the last days of the 2022 Umatilla County Fair. **A7**

## BUSINESS & AG



Hermiston getting new tattoo business. **A8**



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Lori Browning, fair volunteer and Lions Club member, hands a meal to a fairgoer Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022, at the Umatilla County Fair, Hermiston.

BY ERICK PETERSON  
Hermiston Herald

The Umatilla County Fair survives because of its volunteers, according to fair administration. And the volunteers state they are happy to do the work.

"This fair could not happen without them," Fair Manager Angie McNalley said. She said more than 400 people volunteer at the fair. These people are not just giving free work during fair week; they are performing tasks throughout the year and do a variety of labor. Some are board managers and sales committee members. Others help out with animals in barns. McNalley said she has a small staff of five em-

ployees in the fair office. They work hard, she said. Other paid workers, including the employees at vendor booths, similarly put forth great effort. Still, McNalley said, the volunteers are essential and dedicated.

She said she sees them throughout the year, working and anticipating this event, which this year takes place Wednesday, Aug. 10, through Saturday, Aug. 13. These volunteers are of all ages, she said. They have varied backgrounds and skills. What unites them, however, is their passion, she said. She added she is frequently taken aback by their devotion.

"It's hard for me to take a compliment," Mc-

Nalley said of her own work. "I'm paid to do it." The volunteers, on the other hand, are not paid, leading the fair manager to state that she "honestly doesn't know" if she would be doing what they do if she were in their shoes. "They love this fair," McNalley said.

### VOLUNTEERS SPEAK THEIR MIND

Umatilla County Fair Board Director Kelly Burke agreed with McNalley about the devotion of volunteers and the fair's need for them. "We wouldn't be able to do what we do (if not for them)," he said.

See **Fair** / A12

## EPA to Oregon: Take action against nitrate polluters

BY ANTONIO SIERRA  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is urging state officials to take more action on nitrate pollution in Eastern Oregon's Lower Umatilla Basin.

A July 29 letter from the EPA to the Oregon Health Authority, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Oregon Department of Agriculture praised the state for some of the measures it's taken to provide clean water to residents in Morrow County, but said that's not enough.

"EPA expects the state to hold nitrate sources accountable by requiring them to assume some of the responsibilities set forth above and, more importantly, to change their practices to reduce the amount of nitrate they discharge to groundwater," wrote Edward Kowalski, director of EPA Region 10's enforcement and compliance division.

Nitrates are a chemical commonly found in fertilizer. In excess amounts,



Monica Samayoa/Oregon Public Broadcasting

This April 15, 2022, photo shows Silvia Hernandez's private well in the outskirts of Boardman. The Environmental Protection Agency lauded the state's efforts to deliver clean drinking water to Morrow County residents affected by nitrate pollution but wanted more action to address the issue at its source.

they can affect the health of people's lungs, thyroid and bladder.

High nitrate levels in Morrow

County and western Umatilla County's groundwater supply has been on the state's radar for more

than 30 years, but a recent round of water testing of private wells in the Boardman area found many residents had unsafe levels of nitrates in their drinking water.

Kowalski highlighted a Lower Umatilla Basin work plan completed by the three agencies, the plan including initiatives for nitrate contamination education, free drinking water tests and alternative water sources where necessary. He also gave plaudits to the agencies' plans to seek funding for these initiatives at the Oregon Legislature Emergency Board's September meeting and the long session in 2023.

But Kowalski wrote the state could no longer rely on voluntary practices and had to address the source of nitrates. According to a 1997 study by the state Department of Environmental Quality, agricultural and industrial operations were among the top sources of the chemical.

See **EPA** / A12

## OUTSKIRTS



Irrigon Marina looks to make improvements. **A9**

## UMATILLA COUNTY



Veteran prosecutors rejoin district attorney's office. **A14**



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