



## WHEELER COUNTY FAIRBOARD

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**To:** Joint Committee on Ways and Means General Government Subcommittee

**From:** Wheeler County & Wheeler County Fair Board

**Re:** Use of Funding Received via HB 5202 (2022)

Co-Chair Patterson, Co-Chair Smith, and members of the Committee,

We appreciate the opportunity to express to you how important the funding provided via HB 5202 has been for our county's fairgrounds and to update you on the projects which will be partially or wholly delivered as a result.

The Wheeler County Fair Board has engaged the community via open meetings and surveys to ensure that our use of these funds meets the needs and priorities of the communities we serve. Through this process three projects have been identified as top priorities.

The largest project and top priority identified by the community is replacement of the grandstands. The current grandstands have not been updated in many decades. The built-in concession stands and office space on the back side of the structure do not meet current fire and life safety standards. The wood bench seating is deteriorating and many survey respondents complained about discomfort and slivers. Consultation with prospective contractors has occurred and additional necessary funding has been secured via a Business Oregon County Fairgrounds Grant. The project is anticipated to begin this summer when the Business Oregon grant funding becomes available.

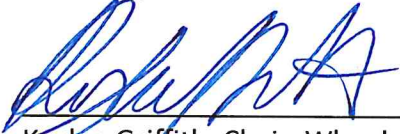
The next project is an upgrade of the electrical system. The Wheeler County Fairgrounds has experienced repeated electrical systems failure in our full-service RV sites. Additionally, as our events grow and attract more vendors, we have upgraded the system to include appropriate connections at all vendor sites and the kid's games area for our annual inflatable water slides and bounce house. We have engaged a local electrician to review and recommend further upgrades for the entire Fairgrounds electrical system.

The water system serving the Fairgrounds is also in need of a complete overhaul. The system is aging and has failed repeatedly over the last several years. Burst pipes, leaks and emergency repairs complicated by the collocation of electrical and water systems have taxed our budget

and part time maintenance workforce. Additionally, good records as to the exact location of the system are unavailable. The Fair Board plans to launch a project to locate, assess and upgrade the entire water system beginning this summer.

It is safe to say that without the funding provided via HB 5202 none of these projects could be completed. Wheeler County and its Fair Board are very grateful for the Oregon Legislature's continued investment in county fairgrounds and will happily report on the progress of our projects as needed.

Sincerely,



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Kaylee Griffith, Chair, Wheeler County Fair Board