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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Umatilla Business Center

Umatilla, OR- OCTOBER 11, 2024— The City of Umatilla is proud to announce the groundbreaking ceremony for the long-awaited Business Center, a transformative project that will significantly enhance the downtown area marking a new era of business development. The ceremony will take place on October 15th, at 4:30 PM at the old Post office building, 830 6th St Umatilla OR 97882 (next to City Hall).

The Umatilla Business Center will occupy the greater part of a city block, except for a warehouse on the southwest corner. This development is a key element of the Umatilla Civic Center Master Plan, designed to energize the downtown and create a vibrant city center that includes civic facilities, office spaces, and cultural offerings. Perhaps the most important feature of this facility will be the implementation of the City's Business Incubator program. This program will provide for any new-to-Umatilla business to rent space at the Business Center at significantly below market rates, in exchange for "education equity" from the businesses. Those businesses will work closely with the Community Development Department and our partners to learn more about business fundamentals like marketing and sales, finance, taxes, accounting, local and macroeconomics, operational management, conflict resolution, customer service, strategic planning, incorporating technology, networking, and much more. Participants in the Business Incubator program will be able to use their cost savings and educational training to invest both financial and learned resources directly back into their business with the goal

of graduating from the program in two to three years' time where they would then move to another location within the City and make room for the next participant.

The project will repurpose the old Post Office, which the City purchased in 2019, and will feature a new two-story addition immediately north of the existing building. This mixed-use facility will encompass 11,500 square feet and will prominently front 6th Street, creating an inviting space for businesses and the community. The project will also include an all-new community space to host meetings or small conferences or recreational programs. There will also be a commercial kitchen available for public use that could be rented to help meet community gathering needs. Village Square Park will also be modified to incorporate a more modern plaza feel with infrastructure for food trucks and other vendors to be able to use and where community gatherings could be held. This feature will also provide for the re-incorporation of the City's Saturday Market and the beginning of new community gathering opportunities.

“We are so very excited to get started on this highly anticipated project. This facility will support local business growth initiatives and help provide local businesses the training and resources they need to successfully grow their business. It will also provide for quality-of-life improvements by helping create a new gathering space for our community. Having a community space, centrally located in the downtown, where families and businesses can include gatherings with a commercial-sized kitchen available will be a game-changer for our residents to have a place that meets their needs to host their friends and family and associates” said Dave Stockdale, City Manager.

Construction of the new Business Center will be performed by Cliff Thorn Construction, LLC. Construction will run from October 2024 through January 2026 (15 months). The total cost for the project is \$7.9 million. The City was awarded funding from the Economic Development Administration and the State of Oregon, and from Umatilla County, in addition to reserving ARPA funds for this important initiative.

The Business Center aims to create a true city center that integrates office spaces with supporting functions and urban open space improvements, offering a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike. This project will not only boost local economic activity but will also provide cultural event offerings to enhance community engagement.

The City would like to invite the community to join us in celebrating this significant step forward for Umatilla. Together, we can look forward to a revitalized downtown that supports small businesses and enriches our community.

For more on this project and other City projects, we encourage you to visit our website at <https://www.umatilla-city.org/city-projects>.

About the City of Umatilla

The City of Umatilla is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for its residents through thoughtful urban planning, community engagement, and sustainable development initiatives. With a focus on innovation and inclusivity, Umatilla strives to create vibrant, accessible spaces that foster a sense of belonging and well-being for all.

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