



Umatilla County

Board of Commissioners

NEWS RELEASE

-- For immediate release --

October 29, 2014

UMATILLA COUNTY REORGANIZATION

Pendleton, Ore. – Robert Pahl, finance director for Umatilla County since 2004, has been named chief financial officer, according to George Murdock, vice-chair of the Board of Commissioners and the liaison for budget and finance.

Pahl's new position will become effective with the retirement of Bob Heffner who has served as budget officer for the county. Heffner is retiring December 31, 2014 but will remain with the county throughout the budget process this spring to assist with the creation of the 2015-2016 county budget and to help with the transition to the new administrative model. Heffner has been with Umatilla County since 2001.

Murdock said he was pleased Heffner had agreed to assist with the creation of a new budget. "He has a wealth of experience," said Murdock, "and it will be invaluable during this transition."

Board Chair Bill Elfering added that Heffner joined the county at a time when there were significant challenges balancing the budget. "Bob has done a remarkable job of righting the ship," said Elfering.

Commissioner Larry Givens, who has worked with Heffner throughout his time as a commissioner, said "Heffner has built a tremendous foundation for the budget process."

The position of chief financial officer was created by the Board of Commissioners at their October 29 meeting. In the past, the county has maintained both a finance director and a budget officer. As part of a reorganization effort which places more responsibility with the commissioners in terms of management activities, the two positions were combined.

A year ago, the county eliminated the position of executive assistant to the commissioners—a position which was essentially a county administrator. Many counties in Oregon have a county administrator; however, the decision in Umatilla County was made to have all senior managers report directly to a liaison commissioner. This provides commissioners with the opportunity to be more engaged in the functions of each department.

Prior to joining the county as finance director in 2004, Pahl was accounting manager at RDO Equipment. From 1989-2003, he was controller for Pioneer Implement in Pendleton. Prior to joining Pioneer, Pahl worked for All Copy Corporation/TRM Copy Centers and Barnett-Rugg.



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A graduate of Helix High School, he currently lives with his wife Tamara in Pendleton. They have six children. He is currently president of the Hall of Fame Board and has been involved with Ducks Unlimited, Happy Canyon, the Cotillion, Festival of Trees, Boy Scouts, and served as treasurer of the First Church of God for ten years.

The new chief financial officer has two degrees from the University of Oregon. He earned a bachelor of science in accounting and also a bachelor of science in computer and information science.

Elfering also announced that Hulette Johnson, Community and Economic Development director for the county since 2001, will retire at the end of December. Johnson has been prominent in economic affairs throughout the State of Oregon since taking the job.

Prior to coming to the county he was active in the savings and loan business, commercial banking, in property management, was a general contractor, and worked as a property and facility manager.

Elfering indicated Johnson's duties would primarily be handled by commissioners with some other responsibilities spread to other departments. Those accustomed to contacting Johnson will now be directed to Elfering.

One of Johnson's duties was overseeing Harris Park. That job, according to Givens, will now be under the responsibility of Tom Fellows, director of Public Works. Givens is liaison for Public Works while Elfering is the liaison for Economic Development.

Jennifer Blake, coordinator of Human Resources for Umatilla County, estimated the savings from the overall reorganization plan, which has been under development for the past year, will be about \$304,000.

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