

HERMISTON

# Bulldog facilities a cash cow

## Events hosted by school district net millions for city

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Community investment in Kennison Field and other Hermiston School District facilities are paying dividends.

According to a third-party report commissioned by the district, events hosted at those facilities generated an estimated \$7.3 million economic impact for the region last year.

Deputy superintendent Wade Smith told the school board Monday night that the report, generated by economic consulting firm EcoNorthwest, finally put a number to what the city had witnessed during large tournaments hosted by outside groups on district property.

"The improvements made to our facilities in 2008, Kennison Field, and our staff, who continue to be great hosts and welcoming to outside constituents, have provided an economic engine for our community that you would be hard-pressed to find anywhere else in the state," he said.

About \$5.8 million of that was money spent by visitors on food, lodging, gas and other supplies. Another \$1.5 million was "recirculated" dollars spent by businesses as a result of the boost to their revenue. Altogether the money supported the equivalent of 78 full-time jobs, according to the report.

Athletic tournaments and other events hosted at district facilities on a regular basis drew an estimated 71,000 visitors to Hermiston during the 2013-2014 school



**A 400-pound bronze bulldog statue stands guard just inside the gates of the new Kennison Field Complex at Hermiston High School. The school district has hosted an estimated 71,000 visitors and generated \$7.3 million in economic impact for the city, according to a report written by EcoNorthwest.**

year. Dividing the \$5.8 million they spent in Hermiston represents an average of \$82 per person.

A closer look at the numbers shows Hermiston's food service sector benefited the most, with EcoNorthwest estimating more than \$1.5 million spent at restaurants. Hotels got the next-biggest windfall at about \$1.25 million and the rest of the money was spent at grocery stores, gas stations, retail outlets and entertainment/recreation venues.

District media relations officer Briana Cortaberra said the biggest event hosted in the last year was the 124-team AAU basketball tournament that took place in January. Before capital improvements paid for by the 2008 bond, the district

hosted a few 30-team AAU tournaments. Now the district hosts four AAU tournaments per year with an average of 110 teams in each.

Local businesses told the *East Oregonian* during the January 2015 tournament that reservations for their services were pouring in, and that the difference between a non-event weekend and a weekend the district hosts a large event is very noticeable.

"It's extremely good for our purposes, and the city's purposes," Hermiston Rodeway Inn manager Nakul Butta said.

Contact Jade McDowell at [jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4536.

BRIEFLY

### Juvenile with weapons arrested near Heppner Elementary

HEPPNER — Heppner Elementary went into a brief lockdown Monday morning after a juvenile with multiple weapons was arrested near the school.

Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack said his officers were reporting to a burglary in progress at a residence on Elder Street in Heppner, near the school. Officers located a juvenile male in the school parking lot and discovered a loaded .22 revolver, two knives and a stolen Ford Taurus in his possession.

The school was contacted and a brief lockdown was instituted. No students or staff were injured or threatened.

The juvenile was arrested and charged with unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, identity theft, unlawful possession of a firearm, theft and carrying a concealed weapon.

Two search warrants connected to the juvenile were executed Tuesday night. The arrested juvenile may have connections to other crimes in the Irrigon and Heppner areas, said Matlack in a release.

### Pendleton Radio Shack not on chopping block

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Radio Shack is not among the 1,784 stores slated for closure nationwide after the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last week.

The 95-year-old company based in Fort Worth, Texas, announced the closures Tuesday, including 16 stores in Oregon as part of a reorganization that will sell the rest of the 4,400 stores. Those locations to be closed by the end of March include Washington Square and Clackamas Town Center in Portland and Columbia Center in Kennewick, Washington.

Radio Shack reported net operating losses of \$344 million in 2014. The hedge fund Standard General will purchase the remaining stores, which will be operated by Sprint, according to the Associated Press.

### Dust clouds, ground vibration possible during Navy training

BOARDMAN — A training exercise scheduled for Wednesday at the Boardman Bombing Range could kick up dust and shake the ground, though the U.S. Navy says safety precautions are in place to protect people and property.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment Northwest, based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, will practice explosive demolition operations during daylight hours at the range, located south of Interstate 84 near

Boardman. The exercises pose no threat to public safety. Anyone with questions or concerns should call the NAS Whidbey Island Public Affairs Office at 360-257-2286.

### Morrow County school board calls special session

HEPPNER — The Morrow County School District's Board of Directors has called a special session for 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17 at Heppner Elementary School, 235 E. Stansbury St.

The purpose of the meeting is for long-range planning. Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said the board will discuss facilities, property and personnel as part of the session.

For more information, contact the district at 541-676-9128.

### Sweetheart ball benefits Eagles Heart Fund

HERMISTON — A prime rib dinner, dessert, a silent auction and live music are featured during the Hermiston Eagles Lodge's annual Sweetheart Ball.

The event is Saturday with dinner being served from 5-8 p.m. at 160 N.W. Second St. The cost is \$15 per person. The evening also includes the crowning of a queen and king and dancing to the music of Stone Country from 7-11 p.m.

The evening serves as a charity event for the Heart Fund. For more information, call Toni at 541-564-2050.

### Children's Museum offers space experience

PENDLETON — Visitors are invited to step into an inflatable dome to discover subjects ranging from constellations to the weather.

The Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon has a Star Lab Portable Planetarium available each Saturday throughout the month of February.

"We hope to spark some curiosity about the sky as we give the children in our community an opportunity to explore constellations, the weather and Greek mythology in a stimulating and thrilling new way," said Heidi Anderson, museum director.

Most children have never seen a night sky that isn't destroyed by light pollution. In the exhibit, young guests will enter the inflatable dome with adult supervision for their first in-depth look at the sky. Similar to a full size planetarium visitors will be able to sit and enjoy the view as the constellations and stars move around them.

The museum is open Monday through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 400 S. Main St., Pendleton. Admission is \$4 for all ages, except those under 12 months are free. For more information, call 541-276-1066 or visit [www.cmeo.org](http://www.cmeo.org).

# Painted Hills offer unique photo field trip

East Oregonian

Volcanic ash and flood-plain deposits with unique chemical compositions present as stripes of color at the Painted Hills Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds.

The ever-changing canvas varies with moisture levels and light conditions. As spring wildflowers blanket the area, the area offers additional photo opportunities. Hermiston Parks & Recreation is planning a photo workshop to the area, which includes transportation.

Along with fellow photographers, participants can learn how to capture unique aspects of the landscape. The trip includes some photographer instruction and time to explore the area on your own.

The Painted Hills Photography Workshop is Saturday, March 14, departing at 1:30 p.m. An evening meal, which is included with registration, is planned in the historic town



**The Painted Hills section of the John Day Fossil Beds offers a picturesque landscape. Hermiston Parks & Recreation is planning a photography field trip to the location.**

of Fossil. The anticipated return time is 11:30 p.m. Those planning to attend don't need any experience, but an ability to hike short distances is recommended.

Seating is limited. The

trip is open to ages 16 and up. The cost is \$60 for Hermiston residents and \$75 for non-residents.

Because space is limited, people are encouraged to register early — the deadline

is Friday, March 6. For more information, visit [www.hermistonrecreation.com](http://www.hermistonrecreation.com). To register, call 541-667-5018 or stop by the recreation office, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

HERMISTON

# Woman receives award for service to sheep industry

East Oregonian

The National Lamb Feeders Association has honored Karin Watson, of Hermiston, for her 23 years of service to the sheep industry.

Watson was one of three producers to receive the Cane of Appreciation during the 65th NLFA annual meeting held Jan. 29 in Reno, Nevada.

The Cane of Appreciation was first awarded in 1996 to honor individuals for their service to the American sheep industry. Martin Auza of Yuma, Arizona, and Mark

Dumdi of Keenesburg, Colorado, also received the 2015 award.

Watson, who served as past secretary and board of the NLFA Board of Directors, was also acknowledged for assisting with the organization and promotion of the NLFA Howard Wyman Sheep Industry Leadership School. She participated in nearly all of the past 28 schools.

Watson and her husband, Tom, operate Silverdale Farms in Hermiston, producing Texel and Suffolk sheep, as well as meat goats.



**Karin Watson, center, of Hermiston, was honored with the Cane of Appreciation for her 23 years of service to the sheep industry during the 65th annual meeting of the National Lamb Feeders Association.**

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: [community@eastoregonian.com](mailto:community@eastoregonian.com) or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

Save the Date SATURDAY, FEB. 14 —  
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 (old Lucky Endz location)  
 Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**STUDENT OF THE WEEK**  
**Skyler Grigg**  
 HERMISTON HIGH SCHOOL

Fantastic student that takes challenging courses such AP Language, AP Government, and is well on his way to an Honors Diploma as a Junior in high school with a strong GPA. Skyler has also participated in wrestling and tennis at Hermiston High School.

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